



Jesus said:
Follow Me!
and I will make you
fish for people.

**AND IMMEDIATELY
THEY LEFT THEIR NETS
AND FOLLOWED HIM.**

General Assembly **2021**

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**COMMISSION IN FAVOUR OF
HRH THE PRINCE WILLIAM ARTHUR PHILIP LOUIS,
DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE, EARL OF STRATHEARN, KG, KT, PC
TO BE
HER MAJESTY'S HIGH COMMISSIONER TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

ELIZABETH THE SECOND, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of Our other Realms and Territories QUEEN, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith, to all whom these presents may concern.

GREETING! WHEREAS We taking into Our Royal consideration that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was appointed to meet on the twenty-second day of May and seeing We by reason of Our other weighty affairs cannot in Person be present in the said Assembly.

AND WE being desirous that Our most dearly beloved Grandson His Royal Highness The Prince William Arthur Philip Louis, Duke of Cambridge, Earl of Strathearn, Baron Carrickfergus, Royal Knight Companion of Our Most Noble Order of the Garter, Royal Knight of Our Most Noble and Most Ancient Order of the Thistle, Aide-de-camp, shall discharge the great trust of Our High Commissioner to the General Assembly:

WE ordain a Commission to be made and passed in due form under the Seal appointed by the Treaty of Union to be kept and made use of in place of the Great Seal of Scotland, nominating, constituting and appointing like as We by these presents do nominate, constitute and appoint the said Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, Earl of Strathearn, Baron Carrickfergus, to be Our High Commissioner to the said General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

GIVING AND GRANTING unto the said Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, Earl of Strathearn, Baron Carrickfergus, power commission and warrant to represent Our Sacred Person and Royal Authority and supply His Presence and hold His Place in the said ensuing General Assembly as Our High Commissioner specially appointed for that effect, and to do all and everything belonging to the power and place of a High Commissioner to a General Assembly as fully and freely in all respects as any other in that High Station hath done or might have done in any time heretofore and as We Ourselves might do if Personally present, We hereby ratifying and approving all and whatsoever things the said Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, Earl of Strathearn, Baron Carrickfergus, shall in the discharge of this Commission lawfully do or cause to be done:

WE HEREBY require and command all the Ministers, the Diaconate and Elders of the said Assembly and Church with all other of Our good subjects in Scotland of whatsoever degree or quality to acknowledge reverence, honour and obey the said Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, Earl of Strathearn, Baron Carrickfergus, as Our High Commissioner to the effect and manner above mentioned, and We declare that this Commission shall commence and be in force from the twenty-first day of May and from thenceforward to continue during the ensuing session of the said General Assembly or until this Commission be by Us revoked and discharged:

AND WE ordain the said Commission to be further extended in the most ample and best form with all clauses needful and to pass the Seal aforesaid per saltum without passing any other Seal or Register.

These presents shall be a sufficient Warrant to the Keeper of the Registers of Scotland for writing the said Commission in the Register of the Great Seal, and to the Keeper of the said Seal for causing the same to be appended thereto.

Given at Our Court at Windsor this sixth day of May 2021 in the seventieth year of Our Reign.

Per Signaturam Manu Serenissimae Dominae Nostrae Reginae Supra Scriptam



**HER MAJESTY'S LETTER
TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND**

Right Reverend and Well Beloved, We Greet You Well.

We gladly renew on this Occasion Our pledge to preserve and uphold the rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland. In doing so, We acknowledge, with Gratitude to Almighty God, the Church's steadfast witness to the Christian faith and its services to our people in Scotland and in many lands overseas.

We are aware that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is still being felt by the people across the country. Many have suffered illness and bereavement whilst others have lost their businesses or employment. The Church, which is so often a pillar of strength within the community, has not been immune. We pray for the whole of the Church of Scotland as in the General Assembly, Presbytery and Kirk Session as she seeks to discern God's will in challenging times.

We have been pleased to learn how the Church has developed deeper relationships within the Christian family, with neighbours of other faiths and with those who hold responsibility in government and parliament. These new bonds have been forged in times of emergency but they will serve us all well in the future as the United Kingdom seeks to rebuild and reshape community life.

Knowing that the Church has long had a concern for the care of God's earth we are heartened to know that she is engaging in many ways with the discussions and events which will be brought to Glasgow for COP26. As stewards of creation, Christians have much to offer to the shared task of ensuring that we bequeath to our children a planet which will continue to be a good place to live.

May your faith and courage be strengthened in your deliberations during the week ahead and through the times to come. As We are unable in Our Own Person to be present at your Assembly this year, We have chosen Our Right Trusty and Right Entirely Beloved Grandson, His Royal Highness The Prince William Arthur Philip Louis, Duke of Cambridge, Earl of Strathearn, KG, KT, PC to be Our representative being assured that Our choice will meet with your approval.

And so, praying that the blessing of Almighty God may attend your deliberations, We bid you heartily farewell.

Given at Our Court at Windsor this sixth day of May 2021 in the seventieth year of Our Reign.

ELIZABETH R

**ANSWER
TO
HER MAJESTY'S LETTER**

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

May it please Your Majesty

We, Your Majesty's loyal subjects convened in General Assembly, have received with pleasure Your Majesty's gracious letter to us.

We greatly value Your Majesty's continuing pledge to maintain the historic rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland.

Your Majesty has been continuously in our thoughts since the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh. We know that you will have been sustained by your Christian Faith yet your loss will have been keenly felt and we wish to assure Your Majesty that many people in the Church of Scotland and beyond have prayed for you and members of the Royal Family in these testing times. In due course, and when pandemic restrictions allow, we will gather in St Giles' Cathedral to give thanks for the Duke's life and his contribution to the nation of Scotland.

We are grateful for Your Majesty's concern and prayers for the people of this land as they have journeyed through the pandemic. These have indeed been difficult days shadowed by illness, bereavement, unemployment and economic damage. We would want to humbly acknowledge Your Majesty's steadfastness throughout these troubled times – leadership that has never been wanting throughout the years of your reign. We have sensed always your desire to serve and in that we are minded that Our Lord came not to be served but to serve.

As Your Majesty has acknowledged, the Church has also been deeply affected and in this General Assembly we will be seeking to find where God will lead us as we look to heal and support the various communities which we are privileged to serve.

The depredations brought by Covid-19 have made it essential to forge the links to which Your Majesty has alluded. We are already beginning to see how we might build on these relationships as, God willing, we leave behind emergency restrictions.

We take encouragement from Your Majesty's appreciation of our commitment to the care of this planet. Along with other churches and faith groups we will seek to bring that sense of stewardship and responsibility to the delegates from around the world who will gather in Glasgow for COP26 later this year.

Finally, we commend Your Majesty to the unfailing grace and protection of Almighty God, and as we begin our deliberations we pray that God will continue to bestow favour upon Your Majesty, that you may long reign over us.

Your Majesty's most faithful and loyal servants.

THE MINISTERS, ELDERS AND DEACONS OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND CONVENED IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Signed in our name, in our presence and at our appointment by the Lord Wallace of Tankerness, Moderator of the General Assembly on this 24th day of May 2021.



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General Assembly **2021**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2021

Reports

- 1/1 Assembly Business Committee
- 2/1 Delegation of General Assembly
- 3/1 Assembly Trustees
- 4/1 Special Commission on the Effectiveness of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government
- 5/1 Legal Questions Committee
- 6/1 Ecumenical Relations Committee
- 7/1 Faith Nurture Forum
- 8/1 Housing and Loan Fund
- 9/1 Church of Scotland Guild
- 10/1 Theological Forum
- 11/1 Registration of Ministries Committee
- 12/1 Faith Impact Forum
- 13/1 Board of the Iona Community
- 14/1 Social Care Council
- 15/1 Safeguarding Committee
- 16/1 Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces
- 17/1 General Trustees
- 18/1 Church of Scotland Pension Trustees
- 19/1 Nomination Committee
- 20/1 Church Hymnary Trustees
- 21/1 Church of Scotland Trust
- 22/1 Church of Scotland Investors Trust

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the order of business for the first two days.
3. Appoint Rev Colin Renwick to be Precentor until May 2022.
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 24 May at 12pm, nomination(s) of Commissioner(s) to serve on the Selection Committee.
6. Approve the Overture amending the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000) as set out in Appendix C and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.
7. Pass as an Interim Act the text of the Overture amending the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000) as set out in sections 1 and 2 only (but not section 3) of Appendix C.
8. Instruct the Committee to develop the fast tracking of deliverance approval necessitated by online Assemblies and continue in future Assemblies.
9. Instruct the Committee to continue its work on General Assembly reform, including engagement with the Legal Questions Committee's work on the Church Courts Act, reflection on the report of the Special Commission on the Effectiveness of the Presbyterian Form of Church Governance, and to share proposals with Presbyteries for early consultation, prior to reporting to the General Assembly of 2022.
10. Invite the Legal Questions Committee to explore the feasibility of legislation enabling all or part of future General Assembly business to be conducted online, and report to a subsequent General Assembly with draft legislation if appropriate.
11. Urge the Scottish Bible Society to pursue its ongoing efforts to address the challenge of global Bible translation and distribution.
12. Support the Society in its desire to work in partnership with congregations to improve people's experience of the Bible and its impact on their life.
13. Endorse the Society in its efforts to encourage confidence in the Gospel and in providing Scripture resources for mission purposes.
14. Commend the Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members.

Report

1. THE VERY REV DR W MARTIN FAIR

Very Rev Dr Martin Fair's year as Moderator has been distinct. He was just the right person to be the first to moderate an online General Assembly and to lead us all in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. Throughout his year he has adapted, thrived and encouraged, and enabled others to do so. Prayer and reflection resources have been greatly appreciated by the whole church family and beyond, particularly by those leading worship who have been able to have occasional time off. While actual travel has been minimal, Martin has zoomed around cyberspace; engaging with ministers, congregations, Presbyteries, military personnel, ecumenical partners at home and abroad and many more.

His series: 'It's a Fair Question' has been able to open up conversations on significant issues facing the church, nation and the world.

The Church is indebted to Martin for his dedicated service at this time, and we wish him and Elaine well as they adapt to their new normal.

2. THE PRECENTOR

The Committee is grateful to Rev Colin Renwick for his willingness to be Precentor at the General Assembly. During Covid-19 constraints his work has been limited, and we hope that General Assembly 2022 will be one where we are able to gather and be led in praise.

3. PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATION

The Presbytery returns show that there are in all the Presbyteries 1,010 charges, whether vacant or not and that there are 173 other ministers (excluding retired ministers) 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: 327 Ministers, 327 Elders and 21 Deacons.

4. AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

In light of this Assembly being held online, changes are required to the Standing Orders and these are set out in Appendix B. The relevant section of deliverance is contained in the Report of the Legal Questions Committee.

5. PROPERTY

5.1. Moderator's Residence

Following the annual inspection of the Moderator's flat in January 2020, several minor repairs and improvements were carried out. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the property was little used during the year. Repairs to the roof area have been completed, the costs being shared by the other proprietors in the block. The motor of the external hoist is being replaced and a cover installed to deal with the problem of water ingress.

Last year's inspection highlighted a number of more serious defects in this property, which has a dual purpose: that of providing a high-quality venue for official entertaining on the ground floor and as living accommodation for the Moderator and family members on the upper floor. The latter aspect of the flat is far from ideal, since there is no kitchen, no study, only one living room and two bedrooms on the upper floor, which is inaccessible for anyone with a mobility issue. It has therefore been agreed to review the long-term future of the Moderator's residence, in terms of expenditure, accessibility and necessity.

5.2. Assembly Hall

Since both meetings of the General Assembly were held online and there were no external lets (apart from the Hall being used for the New College Student Induction Week), there was little use of the Hall in 2020, but no reduction in net expenditure. Problems highlighted in earlier reports continue to cause concern: increasing repair and maintenance costs, a limit on the revenue that may be generated through short-term lets, and restricted disability access. To these must be added the cost of replacing critical items of equipment installed many years ago. As changes to health and safety regulations mean that lift breakdowns due to water accumulating in the sump are costly to repair, a permanent solution is being sought, so that the Hall is ready for use when the current restrictions are lifted. It should be noted that the University of Edinburgh is undertaking a major renovation of New College, designed to stop the spread of fire and protect the fabric of their building.

Given the role of the General Assembly as the supreme decision-making Court of the Church of Scotland, the place where its decisions are currently debated and determined may no longer be wholly fit for purpose. Since "a well-equipped space in the right place" is clearly as important for the Church as a whole as it is for individual congregations, it has been agreed to explore options for the future of the building.

6. PRESBYTERY DEVELOPMENT

The work of Presbytery Development has two strands. The first strand is the restructuring of the existing Presbyteries to form a smaller number of larger Presbyteries, with the aim of establishing around ten new Presbyteries. This major piece of work is being led by the Principal Clerk, who has been facilitating discussions and supporting dialogue between groups of Presbyteries. The approach has been that an outcome which best reflects geographical and cultural connections is more solidly achieved by being shaped from the ground up rather than being centrally imposed. Progress with this restructuring is set out as follows:

| | New Presbyteries Formed | Date of Commencement |
|---|---|--|
| 1 | Aberdeen/Shetland | 1 June 2020 |
| 2 | Fife | 1 January 2021 |
| 3 | Clyde | 1 September 2020 |
| | Presbyteries currently in Discussion | Proposed Date for Overture to GA and Date of Commencement |
| 4 | Aberdeen/Shetland, Gordon, Buchan, Kincardine & Deeside, Orkney and part of Moray | GA 2022 1 January 2023 |
| 5 | Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, Inverness, part of Moray, Abernethy, Lochaber, Lochcarron-Skye, Uist and Lewis | GA 2022 (possibly) 1 January 2023 (possibly) |
| 6 | Angus, Dundee, Perth, Dunkeld & Meigle, Stirling | GA 2022 Summer 2022? |
| 7 | Edinburgh, West Lothian, with discussions to be entered into with Lothian, Duns, Melrose & Peebles and Jedburgh | GA 2021 1 January 2022 for Edinburgh-West Lothian Wider reform under discussions |

| | | |
|----|---|---|
| 8 | Glasgow | Cumbernauld charges have now been transferred |
| 9 | Hamilton and Lanark | GA 2021 1 January 2022 |
| 10 | Ardrossan, Irvine & Kilmarnock, Ayr, Wigtown & Stranraer, Annandale & Eskdale, Dumfries & Kirkcudbright | GA2021 30 September 2022 |
| 11 | Argyll and Falkirk considering direction of travel | |
| 12 | The Presbyteries of England, the Presbytery of the International Charges and the Presbytery of Jerusalem are discussing what Presbytery Reform means for them in their unique position. | |

The second strand of Presbytery Development is concerned with exploring, encouraging and supporting ways in which Presbytery life will develop within the newly shaped Presbyteries. This is presently an open space where fresh and inspired thought can take place as Presbyteries seek to find new ways of working which will best shape the Church of the future. The Committee will be consulting with Presbyteries in the coming months to identify matters of common interest or concern which, building on the Conference held by the Committee in March 2020, could usefully be shared and discussed in conference for the benefit of all Presbyteries and the national base.

6.1 Communication with Presbyteries

Communications which are clear, informative and responsive give confidence in process and build space for creative thought. Good communication between Presbyteries and the General Assembly, through its Business Committee, will be increasingly important as the restructuring of the Presbyteries, and the general work of reform, progresses. The Committee is considering ways in which good communications with Presbyteries may be developed, and will be consulting with Presbyteries in the coming months.

6.2 Presbytery Accountability to the General Assembly

During the last year Presbytery Reviews have not taken place due to Covid-19 limitations. The Committee is working towards a peer review process including reporting to the General Assembly. In the meantime, a number of Presbyteries have been invited to make a five-minute presentation to this Assembly in order that good news stories might be shared.

7. ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

The Assembly Arrangements Sub Group is tasked with ensuring all preparations are in place for the General Assembly to occur. Due to the ongoing nature of the Covid-19 pandemic, the decision to hold the 2021 General Assembly online was made by the Assembly Business Committee in January 2021. Following the first online General Assembly in October 2020, the Sub Group has carefully reflected on the Commissioner experience in considering the format of this Assembly. As a result, a number of significant changes to the usual practice of the General Assembly are proposed to reduce the screen-time Commissioners are exposed to, and to help the Assembly to focus its time on discussion and decision making.

These significant changes include business being scheduled only for the afternoons of Monday to Thursday, and the length of the Assembly reduced by a day. Conveners' speeches have been filmed in advance, and are available for

Commissioners to watch as part of their preparation for the business of the Assembly. We are also introducing a 'fast track' process, by which only those items selected for discussion by Commissioners will be debated in full. These changes are proposed in the Order of Business and by amendment of the Standing Orders of the General Assembly, the latter of which can be seen in Appendix B.

7.1 Assembly Hub

To enable Commissioners to engage fully in the Assembly, further investment has been made to the 'Assembly Hub', where Commissioners, Members, Delegates and Representatives can lodge requests to speak, propose new sections of deliverance or amendments, as well as vote (if authorised to do so) on matters before the Assembly. To ensure that this software can be utilised, training events have been organised for all who will need to access the Assembly Hub.

7.2 Virtual Backgrounds

We are conscious that an online Assembly means that Commissioners are joining from their homes. To safeguard privacy, a number of virtual backgrounds will be made available for Commissioners to download. All Commissioners, Members, Delegates and Representatives are invited to make use of this resource.

7.3 Covid Compliance

We have worked closely with the Church of Scotland Health and Safety Team to ensure the General Assembly Hall is a Covid Compliant workspace, and are ensuring that robust procedures are in place and followed by all who are required to be present in the Assembly Hall.

7.4 Celebration of Holy Communion

Standing Order 21 asks that provision be made for the celebration of Holy Communion as part of the business of the Assembly. The Assembly Business Committee recognise that there will be divergent opinion across the Church of Scotland regarding online Communion, and therefore have scheduled Communion to take place outwith a business sitting of the Assembly. No Commissioner will be required to attend this session but it will also be open to the whole membership of the Church, and streamed live to enable participation from anyone who wishes to partake of the Sacrament in this way.

8. MONITORING OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISIONS

The Committee was given the remit to monitor decisions of the General Assembly and report any non-compliance or failure to implement decisions and instructions. The Covid-19 pandemic caused work patterns and priorities to change and understandably some Assembly decisions have not been implemented. The Committee has been monitoring the implementation of recent Assembly decisions and will be noting reports of completed instructions at this Assembly. We will follow up on any instructions remaining open.

9. GENERAL ASSEMBLY REFORM

The Committee's predecessor, the Assembly Arrangements Committee, was instructed by the General Assembly of 2019, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, "to bring proposals to the General Assembly of 2020 which would lead to a reduction in the membership of the General Assembly". This was in the context of noting that the current one in four ratio had been in place since 1997, and from 2000 to 2017 there has been a 55% reduction in Church membership, yet the size of the Assembly had remained unchanged.

The Committee therefore brings an Overture to this Assembly which proposes a reduction in the number of commissions from one in every four charges and ministerial appointments to one in every five. This is a simple way of

achieving a meaningful reduction in the number of Commissioners to the Assembly.

The Report of the Assembly Arrangements Committee to the General Assembly of 2019 mentioned this as a possible option. It was noted that such a change would reduce costs (particularly, of course, for an in-person meeting) and is good stewardship of resources. It would also benefit Presbyteries who find it difficult to fill commissions.

According to our most recent calculations, based on the Presbyteries' returns for the 2021 Assembly, changing from one in four to one in five would reduce the number of Commissioners from around 700 to a figure more in the region of 550. As this is a Barrier Act matter, even if the Overture is passed at next year's Assembly, the change could not take effect until 2023. Given that this adjustment has been trialled in advance and a year has effectively been lost with the cancellation of the Assembly of May 2020, with this matter not being brought to the shortened October 2020 Assembly (which considered only the most urgent essential business), the Committee believes it is right to act more quickly. Believing this to be a change that is sought, the Committee therefore proposes the passing of an Interim Act to enable the change to take effect for the Assembly of 2022.

The 2019 Report also noted that consideration was being given to the number of former Moderators currently receiving an automatic commission. In parallel to reducing the overall number of Commissioners, the Committee proposes removing the additional commissions for all former Moderators (along with equalising elder/minister) and instead that the five most recent past Moderators be appointed as *ex officio* members of the General Assembly. It is recognised that former Moderators bring a significant amount of expertise and experience to the debates; however, unless this aspect is changed, as the number of overall commissions is reduced, the former Moderators will comprise an increasing proportion of the membership of the General Assembly. If the change is made, Presbyteries will remain entitled to give commissions from amongst their allocation to any former Moderators who are members of that Presbytery, in addition to the five with automatic membership. The Overture covers this proposal; however, this aspect of the Overture is not proposed for inclusion in the Interim Act.

The Covid-19 restrictions have necessitated altered work flow in an online setting, and we hope that many practices and lessons from this time will be carried into future Assemblies whether online or offline. The Committee has considered many aspects of General Assembly reform and will reflect further on these alongside the report of the Special Commission on the Effectiveness of the Presbyterian Form of Church Governance, and in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee which will be bringing a revised Church Courts Act to the Assembly of 2022. The Committee will continue to consult widely, especially with Presbyteries, prior to bringing further proposals to next year's Assembly. Current legislation does not include the possibility of remote access at General Assembly, and we propose that the Legal Questions Committee consider this and if appropriate include such provision in the revised Church Courts Act.

10. FASTI ECCLESIAE SCOTICANAE

The *Fasti* is a record of the ministers of the Church of Scotland since the 17th century. Good progress has been made towards fulfilling the instruction of the General Assembly of 2019: "to proceed with preparation of Volume XII of the *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticae*, to cover the period from 1 October 1999 to 30 September 2020 and to be published in 2021". Roy Pinkerton has taken on the role of Editor and Alison Murray was appointed Editorial Assistant. In the early months of 2020 draft entries were sent to about 1,900 ministers for checking and updating, responses were processed and edited, and by the end of November 2020 the text of the volume was finalised and to a large extent made

ready for publication. The Editorial Team is grateful to all those ministers who responded to their request for information. Negotiations are now underway with APS Group Scotland to produce the volume, which it is hoped will appear in early to mid-Summer. At the time of writing, the actual date of publication and the purchase price have not been finalised, but those who would like to know these details when they become available are invited to register their interest by e-mailing: fasti@churchofscotland.org.uk

11. REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

The 2019 Special Commission on Structural Reform proposed that the new Business Committee of the General Assembly should be given a remit: *“to advise the Moderator on his or her official duties if so required and to have oversight of the election, role and function of the Moderator”*.

A small Sub Group of the Committee was established in 2020 to consult as widely as possible in carrying out this remit with the aim of presenting a report and recommendations to the General Assembly of 2021. The Covid-19 pandemic caused delays and so the Committee will bring its recommendations to the General Assembly of 2022.

It has been important for the Group to hear from former Moderators and to that end many online interviews have already taken place, memories and experiences have been generously shared and important themes highlighted. The Moderator has a national and international role so investigating how the role is perceived both from within the Church and externally is essential to this study.

Many individuals and Groups will be canvassed for feedback, including spouses and Chaplains, Presbyteries, Faith Nurture Forum, Faith Impact Forum, CrossReach, National Office staff, the Communications Department, COSY Focus Group, Path of Renewal Ministers, the media, politicians, ecumenical partners and faith groups. The approach taken will be via online surveys or, in some cases, videoconferencing. Others with views on this remit are welcome to contact the Sub Group.

In the name of the Committee

DONALD G B MCCORKINDALE, *Convener*
SUSAN J PYM, *Vice-Convener*
GEORGE J WHYTE, *Secretary*

Addendum

Ms Judith J H Pearson

The Committee was greatly saddened to hear of the death of Judith Pearson, former Convener of the Assembly Arrangements Committee. Judith served the Committee faithfully and after a time as Vice-Convener to the Very Rev Dr Derek Browning, took up the Convenership for the remainder of that term. She will be fondly remembered for her gentle and gracious impact upon the life of the Church.

In the name of the Committee

DONALD G B MCCORKINDALE, *Convener*
SUSAN J PYM, *Vice-Convener*
GEORGE J WHYTE, *Secretary*

Appendix A

REPORT OF THE SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY

‘The words I have spoken to you bring God’s life-giving Spirit’.

John 6:63b (Good News Bible)

Extraordinary times demand extraordinary responses. In 2020 churches everywhere were faced with the challenge of major change in how and where their congregations worshipped; for many this was unknown territory and a new experience. 2020 was something of a transformational year for the Scottish Bible Society too as the Team worked hard to meet the emerging needs and opportunities for the Bible.

The need for new and creative Bible-based resources – online and in print – was clearly a priority for churches across Scotland in their congregational life and in their mission within the community. Our regular resources, including the ‘Read and Pray’ guide offering daily Bible readings, was necessarily supplemented by a range of new opportunities for Bible engagement for all during a time of uncertainty and change.

Over the Summer we worked with congregations and Youth Groups to distribute over 6,500 ‘Bags of Discovery’ – an all-age resource based on the themes of power, hope and love. Designed to integrate the Bible into the everyday lives of families, these resources proved to be hugely popular as churches added a variety of goodies into bags for local families. The Book of Ruth was part of the ‘Bag of Love’. It was augmented by an audio drama giving people an opportunity to connect with Ruth from a different perspective.

With church buildings closed, it was a challenge to see how Christmas would be celebrated. We put together a range of resources to help churches and individuals reconnect with the first Christmas story and to have cause to celebrate even in dark times. Almost 12,000 printed copies of our new Advent Reader were ordered. We were encouraged by feedback telling us that the Reader helped some people to feel more connected with others, ‘just as though they were in church’. The light of Christmas was shared through our ‘Christmas Windows’ campaign to encourage homes across the country to display images of the Christmas story in their windows.

The success of the Advent Reader led us to produce an Easter Reader. In the midst of the changes and challenges in our world over the past year this Reader helps anchor us in the unchanging truth and wonder of the Easter story. Printed copies sold out within a few days of the pre-sale notice, which was really encouraging.

Providing new print resources was part of the Scottish Bible Society’s 2020 story, but the demand for digital resources was greater than ever. When we launched our Bible 2020 Smartphone App at the start of the year, we could not anticipate how much of a global connection it was going to provide during a global pandemic. Its aim, to provide a forum for ‘anyone, anywhere’ to share daily selected Bible readings in a multitude of languages and post the reading of them aloud on to a video wall, exceeded expectation. 250,000 people across 130 countries engaged with it. In a period of just three months Bible verses had been read on the app almost half a million times.

Putting voice to God’s word was also shared through the launch of *The Outspoken Bible*, a series of Podcasts from the Scottish Bible Society.

‘Faith Comes by Hearing’ was the theme of one of our international projects. The response to an appeal to provide a Proclaimer (described as ‘the little black box that can change lives’) for villages in Mozambique was extraordinary. Thanks to the prayers and generous financial gifts of congregations, volunteers and donors, we also supported other projects including:

- The 'Bread of Life' project in Peru. The Peruvian Bible Society continued their vital ministry during lockdown and supplied over 6,000 children with food, Bibles and spiritual guidance.
- Support in providing Bible paper for the printing and distribution of Bibles to thousands of people in China where the church is still growing so fast that there continues to be a shortage of Bibles.
- Helping the Syrian Bible Society to distribute Bibles to children in cities and towns across the country. The horrors of war, displacement and now Covid-19 have not stopped this ministry and by the end of 2020 over 100,000 children had received a Bible.

Bible based trauma healing has been a growing ministry in Scotland since 2018, with over 100 facilitators now trained to run healing groups through Scotland's churches. During 2020 the Scottish Bible Society offered four trauma healing training courses - one residential in March and three online throughout the year. We are seeing an increasing demand for this vital ministry and will continue to train facilitators to run healing groups as part of the ministry of the church.

A walk outdoors has become a vital way of coping with lockdown restrictions and emerging mental health issues for many. As Spring approaches and signs of new life are appearing around us, the Scottish Bible Society launched its latest all-age resource: 'Wonder Walks'. Downloadable from our website, the 'Wonder Walks' packs offer families and individuals resources to appreciate the wonders of the world around them during their walks and experience God's love and life-giving Spirit. We pray that we can all walk with wonder and joy in our journey of faith.

Appendix B

PROPOSED STANDING ORDERS

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 be read as "circulated electronically in advance".

New Standing Order 8 - Assembly Hub: All Commissioners, Members *ex officio*, Corresponding Members, Delegates, Visitors (if any) and Youth Representatives shall require to use the Assembly Hub software application (the "Assembly Hub") to participate in the General Assembly. 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 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).

Amendments to specific Standing Orders:

Standing Order 5: No hard copy of the volume of Assembly Reports, Proposed deliverances or Assembly Papers shall be supplied; these documents will be supplied electronically.

Standing Order 15: The Order of Business shall be prepared and circulated electronically in advance.

Standing Order 20: No material shall be circulated through boxes.

Standing Order 25: No Panel of Tellers shall be appointed.

Standing Order 26: The list of Acts of Assembly shall be circulated electronically in advance.

Standing Orders 45 & 46: Any person who is entitled to do so and who wishes to ask a question or to make a comment on a Report is encouraged to give advance notice of their intention by entering a "request to speak" on the Assembly Hub against the relevant section(s) of deliverance.

Standing Order 87: Video recordings of all Conveners' speeches shall be uploaded to the Church's website at least one week before the opening day of the General Assembly and shall be available to be watched there, with all Assembly attendees encouraged to watch speeches in advance of that Standing Committee's business slot at the Assembly. The recordings of Conveners' speeches will **not** be replayed during business sessions of the Assembly. On rising to present the Report of his or her Standing Committee, a Convener shall state that his or her speech is available to view on the Church's website, shall present a short summary of key points from his or her Committee's Report lasting a maximum of two minutes and shall then state that he or she presents the Report and moves the deliverance as a whole, (or, if he or she is not a Commissioner, he or she shall ask the Principal Clerk to move the deliverance) with any debate then following.

Standing Order 89: Commissioners, Members and Youth Representatives are encouraged to register a notice of motion in advance in the Assembly Hub against a section of deliverance and in any event before the start of the relevant Standing Committee's business slot, i.e. before debate on the relevant Report starts. For each Standing Committee's business slot, after the Convener has presented the Report and moved the deliverance, and after questions for elucidation have been taken, the Moderator shall state, as at that time, which sections of deliverance have **not** had any notice of motion or request to speak registered against them in terms of this Standing Order or Standing Orders 45 & 46. The Moderator shall then allow a short period for any final request to speak to be registered. After that period, the Moderator shall confirm in respect of which sections of deliverance there has been no notice of motion or request to speak registered and shall confirm that such sections of deliverance have been agreed to by the Assembly without further procedure. Next the Moderator shall confirm that where a request to speak or notice of motion has been registered against a section of deliverance, there shall be an opportunity for debate in the usual manner until that section of deliverance is agreed and shall state to which sections of deliverance this applies. Debate shall then proceed in the usual manner according to Standing Orders.

Standing Order 95(i): Conveners' speeches shall be limited to 10 minutes in duration.

Standing Order 105: The vote on each section of deliverance which is debated shall be taken and conclusively determined by using the voting mechanism in the Assembly Hub. The result of the vote shall be displayed on the livestream and announced in each case by the Moderator. It shall be at the Moderator's discretion in each case to request whether the actual voting figures are minuted. In the event of a failure in the technology operating the Assembly Hub, the Assembly shall vote using Zoom Polls or shall use such other voting mechanism as may be prescribed at the time by the Procedure Committee. In no circumstances shall a second vote be taken on a matter which has already been the subject of a vote by electronic voting.

Standing Orders 106 - 110: 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 time of close of the last session of the Assembly.

Appendix C

OVERTURE AMENDING THE CHURCH COURTS ACT (ACT III 2000)

The General Assembly adopt the Overture the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.

The General Assembly, with the consent of a majority of Presbyteries, hereby enact and ordain that the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *In section 2, delete the words "one in every four or part of four" where they appear in the second line and substitute "one in every five or part of five".*
2. *In section 4, delete the words "one in every four, or part of four" where they appear in the second line and substitute "one in every five or part of five".*
3. *Delete sections 6(c) and (d) and substitute:*
"(c) 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 6(b) or otherwise members *ex officiis*, shall be members of the General Assembly *ex officiis*. They shall be appointed in addition to their Presbytery's number of Commissions in terms of section 2 but no equalising minister or elder shall be appointed. Their Presbytery shall remain entitled to give Commissions from amongst their allocation in terms of section 2 above to any other former Moderators eligible to be commissioned."

DELEGATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MAY 2021

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

1.1 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. 34 congregations adopted the Unitary Constitution in 2020 compared to 43 in 2019. Since 2004, the Unitary Constitution has been issued to 780 congregations. Approximately 500 have still to change their constitution.

1.2 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

GEORGE J WHYTE, *Chair*
MARY E MACLEOD, *Secretary*

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Acknowledge with gratitude the work and ministry of the Church at all levels during the Covid-19 pandemic. *(Section 1)*
3. Receive the 2020 Report and Accounts of the Church of Scotland Unincorporated Entities. *(Section 4)*
4. Note the challenging financial situation facing the Church as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and, while acknowledging the necessity of setting a Covid-19 recovery budget for 2021, reaffirm the need for budgetary prudence and the priority of resourcing Presbytery reform and supporting the growth of the local Church. *(Section 5)*
5. Thank the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr and the Ministries and Mission Review Group for their work and approve Giving to Grow as the new Ministries and Mission Allocation scheme to replace the current Ministries and Mission scheme. *(Section 7)*
6. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to report to the General Assembly of 2022 with further details in relation to:
 - (i) the funding models which will apply to the new Presbyteries;
 - (ii) the intended size, scope, terms and conditions of the proposed Transition Fund;
 - (iii) a comprehensive communication strategy for the implementation of Giving to Grow; and
 - (iv) the criteria and process for an annual review process for Giving to Grow. *(Section 7)*
7. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to present Regulations for Giving to Grow to the General Assembly of 2022 with a view to implementing Giving to Grow from 1 January 2023. *(Section 7)*
8. Lift the moratorium on increasing Ministries and Mission contributions imposed by the General Assembly of 2019. *(Section 7)*
9. Note the work done in projecting both the future availability and affordability of ministries across the Church of Scotland and set as a realistic aim that Presbyteries should seek to implement by 2025 Presbytery Plans based around 600 fulltime equivalent ministries and a target of no more than 60 further charges vacant at any one time. *(Section 8)*
10. Acknowledge that much has been learned through the consultations carried out on behalf of the Trustees by the Special Group (D10) which was exploring the most effective and efficient way of delivering the work of the Faith Action Plan and note that the Trustees, building on the lessons learned, will continue this work in a spirit of collaboration, bringing a final report to the General Assembly of 2022. *(Section 9)*
11. Note the recommendations contained in Appendix 2 and, for the time being, approve the placing of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and of the Theological Forum within the Office of the General Assembly. *(Section 9)*
12. Approve the placing of the Gaelic Group within the Faith Nurture Forum. *(Section 19)*
13. Approve the reduction in the number of members of the Nomination Committee from 24 to 18 in addition to the Convener and Vice-Convener. *(Section 20)*
14. Agree to increase the size of the Personnel Appeal Panel to twelve persons, each appointed to serve a four year term with the option of appointment for a further four year term and grant powers to the Convener and Vice Convener of the Nomination Committee to approve the co-option of new members of the group. *(Section 21)*
15. Thank those involved in the External Communications Review and welcome the setting up of the Communications Strategy Board. *(Section 29)*
16. Approve the decision of the Assembly Trustees to suspend the work on the future of the George Street buildings for two years whilst ensuring a basic maintenance programme commences. *(Section 35)*
17. Encourage Kirk Sessions to participate in a National Gift Day during Harvest time in 2021, promoting the offering of thanksgiving gifts to God for sustaining the Church through these challenging times. *(Section 45)*
18. Urge congregations to engage with the National Stewardship Programme, using the Narrative of Generosity resource to embrace a whole life of stewardship. *(Section 45)*
19. Note the appointment from 15 October 2020 of Gillian Elizabeth Coghlan as Depute Treasurer and confer upon the said Gillian Elizabeth Coghlan, Depute Treasurer, full power to discharge all legacies, bequests or donations which may have been or may be left, bequeathed or made to the Church of Scotland, or any of the Schemes, Councils, Forums, Committees or agencies thereof, or which may have been or may be left, bequeathed or made to the United Free Church of Scotland or to any of the Schemes, Boards or Committees or agencies thereof and which in terms of the Agreement with the continuing United Free Church of Scotland fall to the Church of Scotland or its Schemes, Councils, Forums, Committees or agencies, and to sign all Discharges, Agreements, Indemnities, Undertakings, and other Deeds which may be necessary in connection therewith. *(Section 49)*
20. Approve the amended remit of the Legal Questions Committee set out in Appendix 3. *(Section 50)*

Report

1. INTRODUCTION - A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

Foodbanks run from church halls. Soups delivered across parishes. Shopping for vulnerable neighbours. Establishing vaccination centres in church buildings. Finding new ways of being in touch with and supporting one another while we could not meet in person. Giving thanks and prayers for the work, witness and sacrifice of CrossReach staff on the real front line.

This past year has presented unprecedented challenges to each of us. Each one of us has lived with restrictions and cancelled plans, missed out on seeing friends and family, and experienced loss and pain. Despite the difficulties which we have all lived through, we have seen resilience, support, and love in the ministry of the Church. These examples only cover a small part of the work which Congregations have done this year, with many other ways of faithfully and creatively supporting local communities evident. As a Church, we have engaged with technologies, which were new to many of us, to enable social interaction and communal worship, and to support one another. Despite the difficulties brought about by not being able to meet in person, by working from home and the furloughing of many members of staff, the national staff and Forums have worked hard in embracing the Faith Action Plan and supporting Congregations. Presbyteries across the country are working towards reform, both in enabling the creation of new Presbyteries, and in determining the best ministry across their existing area.

We have all tried to work hard to help each other through the pandemic, and through the feelings of helplessness, sadness and uncertainty, in the circumstances where God has placed us. We give thanks for the work and ministry of the Church at all levels, especially at this time.

2. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

The restrictions of the past year have presented challenges for the way in which the Trustees and the Agencies of the Church have been able to develop working relationships. In terms of the Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees, our overarching duties are *"to seek to ensure the implementation of the policies, priorities and strategic objectives of the General Assembly through working with the Agencies to achieve a collaborative approach to the nurturing of the people of the Church in their witness, worship and service and through assisting the General Assembly to determine strategy for the Church."*^[1] With the almost simultaneous advent of the new Forums and Covid-19, remote working, communication and collaboration across the Church has been far from easy and we are acutely aware that our need to stand apart from the work of the Forums^[2] may at times have been viewed as a lack of interest and, in contrast, that our duty to ensure effective management of staff and resources^[3] may at times have been viewed as undue interference. With this in mind we have begun to re-engage with Agencies as to how the operation of liaison trusteeships^[4] can best be arranged to suit the relationship between the Trustees and individual Agencies.

3. AUDIT OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2020

It is the responsibility of the Assembly Trustees to prepare, approve and present annually to the General Assembly the audited Annual Report and Accounts of the Unincorporated Entities. The Report and Financial Statements describe, in detail, the Church's objectives, activities and governance arrangements. They are issued as a separate document on the Assembly website. The Assembly is invited to receive and view the Report and Accounts <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/79854>.

4. CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

The Covid-19 pandemic has not only been difficult for our working and social connections, it has also contributed to a significant reduction of income for local Congregations, and, as a result, for the Church as a whole. This loss of income, in turn, causes a lack of resources for local ministry and initiatives, and for the work of the national Church. Much of this report, therefore, must focus the Church's attention on finance: what the Church wants to achieve and what we can ask each other to provide.

The pandemic struck at a time when we were already facing substantial changes, in which difficult decisions had to be made. The General Assembly of 2019 marked a watershed moment; with the endorsement of the Radical Action Plan and the approval of the recommendations of the Special Commission on Structural Reform, the foundations for far-reaching change were laid. These show that pre-pandemic the direction of travel was already set, with the Assembly Trustees instructed to facilitate a programme of reform in every part of the life of the Church of Scotland. It was self-evident that the work to be done would have its challenges, but no one could have predicted how much more challenging the work of the Trustees and the new Forums would become when our church buildings were closed and the nation went into extended lockdown.

If anything, this background sharpened the Trustees' understanding of their principal purposes to use and steward the funds of the Church *to build and strengthen local congregations as centres of worship, care, nurture, service, witness and mission; and to promote, in partnership with other churches, the ministry and mission of the Church throughout all of Scotland, with particular reference to its poorest and most remote areas*^[5]. Never has this been so complex or so demanding of the commitment, time and energy of the Trustees, the Forums and the whole of the staff and other members of the Church with whom we work.

A prayer of the late David Ogston was recently used to open the meeting of the Trustees; it has the words: *Did You hear us, maybe, before we had spoken, beg You for a leadership only You could give, a landmark only You could build? Lord, we are still begging. Looking for the blueprint.* The power of these words expresses the desire of the Trustees for clarity of vision and resolve but they also express the desire of the Trustees to seek the will and purpose of God in the work for which they are responsible.

5. LOCAL AND NATIONAL FINANCES

Since the General Assembly in October 2020, work has been unremitting for everyone and the principal task of the Trustees, together with the Chief Officer and his staff in consultation with the Principal Clerk, has been to hone as accurate as possible an overall picture as to the impact of the pandemic on the life of our Church, both locally and nationally, so that the Church's human and economic resources can be applied as well as they can be to strengthen local Congregations.

Congregations have been affected in different ways by the pandemic. Some have been able to mitigate potential losses; their members have kept up or even increased their offerings. Others, however, who depended heavily on funding from sources such as hall lets or café income, have been hit hard. It will be well into this year before we have a complete picture of the overall impact but considering the challenges that have had to be faced it has been heart-warming to see the way in which individual Congregations have been generous in trying to share their means with others. As we have said, inspiration can be found in how ministers and Congregations have developed new ways to worship, to provide pastoral support and to expand community service activities to keep food banks open and provide support for the most vulnerable.

There can, however, be no doubt that the impact is stark. Out of a number, two stand out:

- In 2020 there was a reduction of about 3% from 2019 in Ministries and Mission Contributions paid by congregations by the year end and we believed that many congregations were using their reserves in order to maintain their contributions. This led to the decision that, for 2021, there should be an overall reduction in aggregate Ministries and Mission contributions of 18% to relieve the pressure locally. Initial analysis of congregational financial statistics confirmed that, on average, Congregations' 2020 income reduced by a percentage of that order.
- The pressures on CrossReach have been immense and additional costs together with enforced restrictions on filling vacancies in residential care have led and will continue for some time to lead to losses which can be managed but not immediately reduced.

The result has been that, in setting the budget for 2021, and even after achieving all of the central savings instructed by General Assembly 2019, making use of the Government's Job Retention Scheme and a significant reduction in costs through meeting electronically, we have budgeted to draw over £11m from reserves in 2021 to support the work of the Church. There is a high risk of exceeding this budget because of the two factors mentioned above. The deficit could increase significantly if the already reduced level of contributions is not met and/or if CrossReach cannot achieve its operational budget. A drawdown of that potential magnitude cannot be repeated on a yearly basis without our using up our reserves within five to ten years, particularly in view of the size of our stipends and salaries.

It follows that in the year ahead, our work must have two main aims. First, with Presbyteries, is to ensure that the local church is supported. Second, we must identify the extent to which Congregational income and contributions will recover and whether there are further areas where economies can be made so that the support of the local church is not diluted. As outlined within the Chief Officer's report, we are clear that, having achieved the requested savings in the budget of the National Offices, any further reductions could only be achieved at the expense of diminishing certain elements of the character and personality of the Church of Scotland as a national Church. It will be the principal focus of the new Head of Faith Action Programme to ensure that the aspirations of the Faith Action Plan are delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Against this background we see it as essential that the General Assembly affirms the direction of travel agreed in 2019 and confirms the Church's commitment to pulling the levers of change across every part of our life and work. It is clear that, coming out of this pandemic, we will not be returning to things as they were. Our financial profile will be quite different, our ways of working and ways of engaging socially will have altered and the ways in which we engage, online and in community, in the ministry and mission of the Church need to change accordingly.

6. PRESBYTERY REFORM

Working with the Principal Clerk and the Assembly Business Committee, our Presbytery Finance and Staffing Task Group has been considering appropriate structures, staffing and associated funding for this vital element of building and strengthening local congregations in regions whose assets and challenges vary greatly. In 2019 the General Assembly called for the creation of 10 - 12 well-resourced Presbyteries. Work on this reform is well underway with the likelihood that the Church will be served by the creation of 9 new Presbyteries. The Trustees understand the vital part that these new Presbyteries must play in the renewal of the Church, so it has become a priority to understand more clearly how they should be funded in the longer term. Until

now only interim arrangements have been put in place for the new Presbyteries of Clyde and Fife; but there is a degree of urgency around assuring a funding model that works across the complexity of the very different Presbyteries which are now emerging.

7. MINISTRIES AND MISSION REVIEW – *GIVING TO GROW*

Closely allied to this has been the work of our Ministries and Mission Review Group, convened by the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr. This Group was formed following the Assembly of 2019 and its remit was to make recommendations to the Trustees on how Ministries and Mission allocations might be reconfigured. The Group has now presented to the Trustees a very full report outlining the principles of a new scheme entitled *Giving to Grow*. [see appendix 1] The Trustees believe that this scheme offers the kind of clarity and transparency which is lacking in the current scheme. It describes clearly how much a charge contributes to the cost of its own ministry (Ministry Here) and how much it contributes to the wider work of the Church (Ministry Elsewhere). *Giving to Grow* has been tested and this shows that it would work as a direct replacement of the old scheme.

In the interim, however, new unknown quantities have emerged. The full impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Congregational income is unknown; but there is no doubt that the current level of income is severely depressed, and the Trustees believe that there is little point in introducing a new contributions scheme at time when the Church is operating a Covid-19 recovery budget. We hope that the Church's income recovery will be such that *Giving to Grow* can be introduced in January 2023, but even this date for introduction will be kept under review.

In addition, there are five other matters where more time is required in order to indicate to the Church how we envisage that *Giving to Grow* will operate in practice. These are:

- the funding model/s which will apply to the new Presbyteries
- the intended size and scope and terms and conditions of the proposed Transition Fund
- the development of a communication plan for the implementation of *Giving to Grow*
- the criteria and process for an annual review process which is built into the scheme and
- the provision of revised Regulations

At this stage, therefore, the Trustees seek approval of the new Scheme along with instruction to return to next year's Assembly with details in relation to each of the above matters.

In the meantime, the Trustees are of the view that the moratorium on increase in Ministries and Mission contributions imposed in 2019 should be lifted. This would give the flexibility, if needed, that some congregations whose position has been strengthened over the past year could be asked to contribute more to the wider work of the Church. In the main, however, those Congregations hardest hit by the pandemic will be provided with support to explore, along with Presbyteries, options for navigating through the coming months. To deliver this assistance we have formed a Task Group to work with those congregations who are most at risk.

8. PRESBYTERY PLANNING AND FUTURE MINISTRY NUMBERS

To be able accurately to respond to the realities that we face as a Church, as highlighted to GA 2020, a financial modelling system has been developed which will enable resource planning to be carried out with a significant degree of accuracy. We hope and pray for a resurgence in the life of the Church, but we have to begin from a place where we are realistic about the current trends in our demographic and in likely income and expenditure.

Whether viewed from the standpoint of the individual Congregation or from that of the whole Church supporting one another, we realise that for the purpose of Presbytery Planning for Mission it is essential to have as accurate as possible a forecast of what is both a realistic and affordable number of ministries. In reviewing this we see the impact of our failure to attract a significant number of candidates for full time ministry and we now see the imbalance with retirements, year on year, greatly outnumbering those presenting for ordination. Add to that the fact that, for the time being, our overall income is in real terms decreasing and we see the significant constraints with which we are working. With the range of financial predictions available from the modelling system and increasing clarity around ministerial recruitment and retirement, we consider that proper planning for a sustainable ministry throughout the country over the next five to ten years requires us to present to this year's Assembly an estimate of the number of all ministry posts which the Church as a whole will be able to afford through its Ministries and Mission contributions and which we may be able to provide through the present number of candidates in the system.

The figure for all ministry posts in just under five years' time (2025) to which we estimate we should work is in the region of 600 ministries^[6] in addition to no more than 60 vacant Charges. This paid-ministries figure presents a reduction of around 20% on the advisory figures which were produced by the Ministries Council in 2018. Whilst this is a significant reduction it takes account of the fact that it has been calculated that in 2020 40% of all current Full Time Ministers of Word and Sacrament were over the age of 60 with significant numbers, maybe as high as 60%, projected to retire over the next ten years. Any aspirations to increase the number of paid ministry posts is currently not feasible unless we see significant improvement in both the finances of the Church and in our ability to attract more applications to ministry. Further detail regarding how these revised numbers are to be deployed across the Presbyteries is discussed within the Faith Nurture Forum report.

These stark realities, however, come at a time when people have become used to change and there is a clear opportunity to reconfigure the life of our Church around fewer buildings and fewer Charges and to reshape our life for mission and service.

9. FORUM CONSULTATION - SPECIAL TASK GROUP (D10)

Following the instruction of General Assembly 2020, we convened a Special Task Group (the D10 Group), comprising two Trustees and four others, to consider whether there might be more effective and efficient ways to carry out the work which has to be managed and delivered from the Church's national base. An Update on their work which includes what the Group reported to the Trustees was published as part of the Trustee Update in March <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/79027>.

The Trustees have heard what the Group has said in reporting about how challenging 2020 had been for everyone. Communications could have been better, and it was evident that it was a difficult time to talk about change let alone to implement change. One of the challenges has

been that anticipated collaborative ways of working were overtaken by the need to respond to the circumstances brought about by the pandemic. We recognise too, that many may have assumed that the outcome following the deliverance from the Assembly in October 2020 would be a recommendation either to amalgamate the two Forums or to retain them as they were. The question, however, as the section of deliverance acknowledged, was bigger than that and we are grateful to the D10 Group and to those who were consulted for the fresh thinking which has emerged.

The Trustees, therefore, while acknowledging that work has to be done on building relationships and on better collaboration in working, are convinced that the D10 Group pointed the way towards more creative and cooperative ways of working across all areas and are keen that the work of the Group continues. The Group have identified areas where work could be done better, and have identified related concerns to do with communication, shared understanding, and what is asked of people who express a willingness to serve.

The big picture is: what will it take to see the Faith Action Plan come alive as a means of focussing the Church's priorities and stretching our ambition to be the very best we can? So, in the coming months, with the prospect that, post-pandemic, we can build closer relations with and between the Forums, with a Head of Faith Action Programme in place and with new ways of coordinating the work of the Faith Action Plan emerging, we intend to continue this process of dialogue with a view to reporting to the General Assembly in 2022.

The D10 Group also considered the place and management of the Theological Forum and the Ecumenical Relations Committee. Their report (Appendix 2) recommends that, for the time being, the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Theological Forum should be placed within the Office of the General Assembly.

10. TRAINING FOR ALL THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Another significant challenge is around the way in which we train and support elders and members to play their full part in the ministry and mission of the church with a particular emphasis on developing new ways of being church. The Training Task Group, which brings together the Trustees and the Faith Nurture Forum, is committed to establishing an integrated training programme which will provide learning resources from foundation level to in-service training. As a priority the Group has just completed discussion with the five approved academic providers considering how to deliver the best possible preparation for the Ordained Ministries of the Church.

11. SMALL GRANTS FUND

Having been unable to provide funds to commence our major *Seeds for Change* project, we have instituted a small grants scheme for local initiatives. The Trustees will be particularly interested in supporting projects which foster new mission initiatives. Further information on the scheme can be found here <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/79855>.

12. Each of the foregoing pieces of work is, in a sense, internal; but vital if the Church is to remain a vibrant force for local worship, mission and service. At the same time, the Church's future shape must include the more national and international engagement of Congregations and the whole Church with society, and in support of the economically poor, of the marginalised and of creation. These are the areas of work of the Faith Impact Forum and of CrossReach.

13. CROSSREACH

The challenges facing CrossReach are acute. Significant financial support continues to be provided by the Trustees;

this is likely to continue for some years and will have further implications for the use of our Reserves. Nonetheless, we record here, as elsewhere, our gratitude for the work of care home staff at every level and of all other staff who have courageously and inventively worked to keep people safe and in communication with their relatives, counsellors and support services.

For 2020 the budgeted deficit for operational matters in CrossReach was £1.3m. With the effects of the pandemic, the operational deficit was £2.4m (before past pension deficit repair contributions); although this may be reduced as a result of discussions between the Care Sector and the Scottish Government. In addition, the Church must now act as insurer for CrossReach as regards some Covid-19 matters where insurance is no longer available. Further, there are potential and unpredictable liabilities regarding historic cases of abuse, and possible participation in the new statutory Historic Abuse Redress Scheme. We continue to work with the Social Care Council to try to find ways of operating which allow greater freedom of decision making for CrossReach whilst retaining an appropriate element of oversight of this major section of the Church's charitable work.

14. FOSSIL FUEL AND NET ZERO TARGETS

We are pleased to have been able to work with the Faith Impact Forum and the Church of Scotland Investors Trust on a way forward in dealing with investments in Fossil Fuel companies and with the more general question of ethical investment policy.

The Trustees will also work with the Faith Impact Forum on considering the resource implications of the ambition to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions across the Church.

15. SALVESEN FUND

With the Faith Impact Forum, we have agreed to an alteration in investment policy so that one half of the assets of the Salvesen Trust, whose £16m assets form part of the charitable estate, is now invested in the COSIT Income Fund, with the balance remaining in the COSIT Growth Fund. This decision was made to help mitigate against reductions in income through falls in investment returns.

We have also discussed with the Forum, as trustees of the Salvesen Trust, whether the purposes of the Trust, last reviewed in 1991, continue to provide a suitable and effective method of using the funds, having regard to the spirit of its purposes. The trust was originally bequeathed for use by the Colonial Schemes of the Church and was varied by the Court of Session in 1991 to reflect the change to ministry abroad being carried out by indigenous churches rather than by the Church itself and the purpose approved then was for provision of the ordinances of religion to Scots. Thirty years on that restriction to Scots both leaves too large a fund for the modest requirements beyond the United Kingdom and, also, is not aligned with the more diverse viewpoint of the Church today. With the Salvesen Trustees, therefore we intend to approach the Scottish Charity Regulator to discuss the removal of the restriction and to make related revisals.

16. ISRAELI ENTITIES

We continue to support the work in Israel/Palestine at the Tiberias Hotel, the Jerusalem Guesthouse and Tabeetha School. In these much-altered financial circumstances we consider that we must keep under review whether, even if profitable, this continues to be the most effective and efficient way of maintaining our lengthy traditions of supporting justice and peace in the Holy Land.

17. LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, there are clear risks which we cannot avoid but must seek to mitigate. There is a risk that

Congregational giving will be further reduced; but our new capability for financial modelling should mean that we can plan for a wide range of economic circumstances. In addition, the Stewardship team will be progressing the broadening of approaches to increasing income through entrepreneurship and novel fund raising; and their plans for a Thanksgiving Gift Day are among other things which we hope will be moments to think about how we emerge from months of Covid-19 restriction.

There is a risk of continued economic impairment for CrossReach and there is a risk of significant liability for historic abuse. There is a risk that we do not manage to recruit a sufficient number of candidates for the Ministry or other worship leaders. There is a risk that, unless supported with proper management, accountability and good communication, our staff and Forums and Committee members will feel under too much pressure. Each of us, members of this Church, must value everyone who gives their energy and enthusiasm to the ongoing life of the Church. God is not finished with the Church of Scotland; together and together with sister Churches and organisations there is work to be done.

18. HOUSING AND LOAN FUND

As anticipated in Clause 41 of the Trustees' Constitution and remit, the Trustees have engaged with the trustees of the Housing and Loan Fund. The trustees of the Housing and Loan Fund are working on a Strategic Review of the Fund and recognise that the Fund now has more assets than it is anticipated will be needed to fulfil the Fund's current purposes. The Trustees are working with the Housing and Loan Fund Trustees and the Chief Officer to identify how, in compliance with the Fund's purposes for Housing for Ministry, those assets can be best applied for the benefit of the Fund's Beneficiaries and the wider benefit of the Church.

19. THE GAELIC GROUP

Having previously worked under the remit of the Council of Assembly, the Trustees have come to the view that the Gaelic Group reports into the structures of the Church under the auspices of the Faith Nurture Forum. The Trustees look forward to seeing how the work of the Gaelic Group develops over the forthcoming months.

20. NOMINATION COMMITTEE

Over the past year the Nomination Committee has operated with two vacancies and, with ten members completing their term in 2021 there are vacancies for half of the committee membership. The whole committee normally meets in August and January; with occasional subgroups of three or four fulfilling specific tasks as they arise.

The current standing order provides for 24 members in addition to the Convener and Vice-Convener; and the Committee is of the view that a membership of 18, in addition to the Convener and Vice-Convener would be quite adequate for the work and still allow for appropriate diversity and have asked the Trustees to consider if this reduction in membership would be acceptable.

In our view this reduction is in line with similar reductions in the Forums and the new CrossReach Board and we propose that it should be approved.

21. PERSONNEL APPEAL PANEL FOR THE EMPLOYING AGENCIES OF THE CHURCH

A Personnel Appeal Panel is maintained for the purpose of providing Groups to hear appeals in regard to staff grievances and disciplinary matters within the employing agencies of the Church (with the exception of the Social Care Council which has its own appeals procedures) as set out in an Appeals Procedure document which is provided by the HR Department.

Under the current processes, there should be eight members appointed by the General Assembly with the Solicitor of the Church as Secretary. Members may not include any former or current members of staff of any of the Church's Employing Agencies (including the Social Care Council), nor any current Forum or Committee member. When required, the Solicitor selects three members from the Panel to serve on an Appeal Group. The Group then agrees which of them is to convene the hearing.

Although Groups are infrequently required, a review of procedures has led to the view: (i) that there would be more flexibility – especially within constrained timescales – for the Panel to be increased to twelve; (ii) that there should be a limit on the term of service to four years, with the option of appointment for a further four year term; and (iii) that power should be given to the Convener and Vice Convener of the Nomination Committee to approve the co-option of individuals to the Panel as would be agreed with the Solicitor, as Secretary to the Group.

22. THE TRUSTEES

In 2020 our trusteeship maintained the skillsets and some of the diversity which the Constitution and Remit requires. The elected trustees currently comprise a gender balanced board. When the *ex officio* trustees are included, there are four ministers of word and sacrament (one retired, one Presbytery Clerk, one Parish Minister and one professor of Christian Dogmatics), an ICT and governance specialist, a professor of economics, a strategic HR specialist, an architect, a leading executive in a professional body, a retired

Regional Council chief executive, a group finance director, a former executive chairman, one charity and trust lawyer and one with significant parliamentary experience. In May 2021 we will welcome three new trustees upon the scheduled retirements of original trustees whose terms of appointment are non-renewable. All are active members of Congregations and most are elders. Many have significant third sector experience. We are also geographically spread with representation from Strontian, Garelochhead, Glasgow (2), Motherwell, East Lothian, Edinburgh (3), Dunfermline, Glenrothes, Perthshire, Aberdeen (2)

We were saddened to lose one of our younger members, Jamie Lockhart, who resigned in September 2020 as pressure of work was preventing him from keeping up with the Trustees' schedule. Following an open appointment process, Philip Ziegler, an ordained minister associated with the Kirk Session of the Cathedral Church of St Machar's and Professor of Christian Dogmatics at the University of Aberdeen was appointed. His many years' experience in ecumenical and theological education for ministry in the Kirk and before that in the United Church of Canada will be a considerable asset.

We were delighted that David Harrison felt able to offer his services as our new Vice-Convener in succession to Norma Rolls. Norma's assiduous connection with the work of the Trustees together with her wealth of knowledge of the workings of many parts of the Church has made an inestimable contribution to the ability of the Trustees to engage in the practical attainment of such wide-ranging reforms as were called for by General Assembly 2019.

23. TRUSTEE INFORMATION

Trustee information as at 11 March 2021

| Trustee | Meetings | Attended | Special reasons |
|---|----------|----------|---|
| Beth Ashcroft | 10 | 9 | Conflicting appointment which had to take precedence. |
| Anikó Schütz Bradwell | 10 | 10 | |
| Alan Campbell | 10 | 10 | |
| John Chalmers, <i>Convener</i> | 10 | 10 | |
| Jean Couper | 10 | 10 | |
| David Harrison | 10 | 10 | |
| Linda Irvine | 10 | 10 | |
| James McNeill, <i>Administrative Trustee</i> | 10 | 10 | |
| Geoff Miller | 10 | 10 | |
| Ann Nelson | 10 | 10 | |
| Norma Rolls, <i>Vice-convener</i> | 10 | 10 | |
| Philip Ziegler (<i>from December 2020</i>) | 5 | 5 | |
| Donald McCorkindale, <i>Convener, Assembly Business Committee (by virtue of office)</i> | 10 | 10 | |
| Raymond Young, <i>Chair of the General Trustees (by virtue of office)</i> | 10 | 9 | General Trustees business |

24. CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT

This is the second report of the Chief Officer to the General Assembly and provides an overview of work conducted from October 2020. The Chief Officer role was created following the recommendations of the 2019 Special Commission. The post holds overall executive responsibility for the employees and work of the Central Services Committee (CSC), for the budgets of the Unincorporated Entities and is charged with implementing the vision of a leaner and fitter central administration that is focused on the needs of the local Church. This requires the National Offices to have a clear

focus on equipping and supporting the Presbyteries and Congregations, wherever possible devolving responsibility. Whilst the role of the Chief Officer and his team has a strong focus on finance, accountability and governance requirements, we are at all times mindful that our financial decisions should be driven by priorities for our missional work – we do not exist to preserve our balance sheet.

Over the last year, the work of the Chief Officer and Staff has been heavily focused on supporting the Church through the pandemic whilst also striving to deliver a number of the

key milestones on the journey of transformational change. Recent achievements include:

- Significant advancement in the transformational change programme for the National Offices resulting in the removal of duplication, reduction in staffing numbers and the start of a much-needed journey to streamline work.
- The development of a single interactive financial and operational model to assist with setting policy, operational decision making and to gain a clearer picture of the future resources of the Church (in terms of finances, people and assets).
- Continued refinement of the Faith Action Plan and creation of the Head of Faith Action Programme post to provide leadership in the roll out of the plan whilst optimising the use of resources across the two Forums.
- A 30% target reduction (£6.6 m) in expenditure within the National Offices. This target, baselined against the 2019 budget, was achieved ahead of time, and met the savings targets laid down by the Special Commission.
- The development of an accountability framework complemented by the introduction of a values-based culture within the National Offices.
- The formation of a Research and Analysis Unit, assembled from existing resources, encouraging the move towards well informed evidence-based decision-making processes.
- The launch of projects across the Church including the Listening Project, targeted at gaining an understanding of what the Church has learned from the response to Covid-19.
- The introduction of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Programme which is intended to become an embedded part of the life of the Church.

25. FINANCES

One of the principal tasks of the Chief Officer was to progress towards a sustainable financial framework for the Church. This has been underpinned in the initial phase of work by achieving significant cost savings to the national budget by May 2021 well ahead of previously defined schedules. Savings have been progressed by implementing stringent control over budgetary spend including moving towards a zero-based budget process, a Voluntary Exit Scheme to facilitate reductions in staffing levels and a reprioritisation exercise with all programmes and projects examined. This has not been an easy task and areas of work, held dear by many, have had to be set aside. Further areas for savings measures are being progressed with all areas being kept under review via the accountability process.

The deeper savings required for the sustainability of the Church cannot however be found from the National Administration alone. The baseline, worked out for minimum operating viability in terms of people and finances required within the National Offices whilst retaining the character of the Church in terms of national and international work, has almost been reached. More radical changes are likely therefore to be needed as the short and longer-term financial impact of Covid-19 will, almost inevitably, exacerbate the already fragile status of the Church's balance sheet. The congregational response to the pandemic has been outstanding in every respect, with a drop of only 3% in Ministries and Mission contributions paid in 2020; but the underlying financial position is very worrying as local reserves are depleting and the Chief Officer and General Treasurer are directly aware of signs of financial distress across many Congregations.

The future financial sustainability of the local church is one that is a constant focus of activities for the Chief Officer and General Treasurer and will remain so over the forthcoming

year. Details of the 2020 results and 2021 budget can be found later within this report.

26. OPERATIONAL FUNCTION OF THE CENTRAL CHURCH AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In the period since the Chief Officer was appointed the importance of the six Operational functions of the central Church (Human Resources, Finance, Legal, Communications, Estates, Information Technology) in the transformation of the Church has become very clear. The Church is very fortunate to have access to a highly skilled and experienced workforce which has not been shown due appreciation in the past. This team is entirely focused on providing the necessary services and infrastructure to enable the defined work and supporting arrangements required by the two Forums and the local church. In order for Presbyteries and Congregations to make initial contact with the relevant departments, a clear, concise capability statement and directory of services has been produced <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/69794>.

Work has continued on the development of the operational plan for the delivery of the support service elements of the National Office. This will continue to be refined over the forthcoming period as the new structures within the National Office continue to embed. As recommended by the 2019 Special Commission report, a Research and Analysis Unit has been established by drawing together existing staff from across the organisation. Within the last few months major benefits have arisen from our use of data and statistical analysis to help inform decision making including the development of the financial model. Work is ongoing regarding data quality standards within the Church as this is increasingly being identified as a significant issue, particularly as the Church is becoming more evidence-focused regarding future financial projections.

The Central Services Committee and Principal Clerk's Office have continued to produce updated advice to Presbyteries and Congregations as legislation and recommended practice in relation to Covid-19 develops over time. Limited use of furlough arrangements has continued to be utilised by the CSC, principally in a part-time capacity in order to support staff with their caring arrangements.

The George Street building and satellite offices remain closed with controlled access into the building by prior agreement enabled to meet operational needs. At the time of writing, whilst a state of readiness to return to the building has been substantially achieved, it is not possible to forecast when the building will be able to reopen as the timescale relies on the progression of the pandemic and subsequent decisions at Government level. With the Church's reliance on its IT infrastructure, the IT Programme Board, comprising a multidisciplinary approach with Stakeholders represented including Ministers and Presbyteries Clerks, meets on a monthly basis to ensure the scope and roll-out of IT aligns to the needs of the users.

27. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW PRESBYTERY STRUCTURES

Undoubtedly one of the largest challenges currently being experienced by the Church, alongside operating within a pandemic is the creation of new Presbytery structures at the same time as revised Presbytery Plans are being produced. There are many changes ongoing in parallel that require co-ordination. Whilst the reforms of Presbytery are held in the remit of the Principal Clerk, Assembly Business Committee and Presbyteries themselves, close liaison is continuing between staff in the National Offices and Presbyteries regarding funding requirements and staffing structures moving forward. It is evident that there is no 'one size will fit all' solution in terms of funding arrangements and work will continue over the forthcoming months in order to establish appropriate financial arrangements. Close working with and

understanding of the needs of the Presbyteries is critical to the transformation of the National Offices resulting in significant levels of interaction and communication over the period.

28. LOCAL CONGREGATIONAL FINANCES AND SUPPORT FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICES

In recent months a number of local churches and Presbyteries have contacted the Chief Officer and General Treasurer directly to report serious financial challenges. In response, the Chief Officer has put together a task group comprised of individuals from across the relevant National Offices staff, including the Stewardship and Finance and Law departments, to work alongside Presbyteries and each of these Congregations in order to identify how such challenges can be met. This work is beginning in the first quarter of 2021.

29. COMMUNICATIONS ACROSS THE CHURCH

The Chief Officer has continued to give communications a high priority recognising the need to both listen to and learn from his interactions with the National Offices staff and the local church. Regular sessions with staff via MTeams, weekly communications through the Core Management Team and blogs on the Chief Officer's intranet page have continued. The Chief Officer and Core Management Team have taken part in a number of interactive sessions with Office Holders, Congregations and Presbyteries. The aim is to form ever closer links to the needs and work of the local church through close contact with the Office of the General Assembly, the General Trustees, Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions. The Chief Officer has also ensured that he has time to both listen to and talk to Ministers, Presbytery Clerks and representatives across the church aiming to speak directly to anyone who contacts him. This has been hugely helpful in understanding the local needs whilst improving both accessibility and networking.

The Chief Officer is clear that working with the youth and young adults within the Church must be one of our highest priorities and that their voices must be heard as we continue with our transformational journey. Over the period he has gained a personal understanding of the issues by working with a focus group who have volunteered their skills, experiences and time. The goals which the group are developing will be fed into part of an intergenerational strategy which is to be developed to complement the work of the Forums. These goals and a brief overview of this groups work to date can be found here <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/79854>.

30. FAITH ACTION PLAN AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A HEAD OF FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME

Work has continued on the development of the Faith Action Plan, as agreed at GA 2020, which is both rooted in theology and underpinned by the five marks of mission. One of the key requirements identified by the Chief Officer in ensuring delivery of the plan is the creation of the Head of Faith Action Programme, a new role based on Christian Leadership which was agreed by the Assembly Trustees and nationally advertised in January 2021. The post holder will ensure an integrated and coherent programme of work across the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums ensuring improved oversight and reduced expenditure by drawing to an end lower priority areas of work. Whilst creating this new role might seem at odds with the Church's stated aim to reduce the size of the central administration, this post replaces the four previous Council Secretaries and a deputy's role resulting in significantly reduced salary costs.

31. REVIEW OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

As encouraged by the 2020 General Assembly, the Head of Communications has carried out a review of the work of the Communications Department. Alongside this, the IT and Communications Task Group examined a number of other communications areas. The Chief Officer was involved on both accounts and the findings and conclusions can be found <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/79854>. We appreciate that the complexity of increased communications in the Covid-19 environment has found us more reliant on the use of electronic means and we must hold on to the benefits going forward and retain paper based publications only where they prove to be relevant. We appreciate the immense input from all involved in communicating the messages of the church during the past year and our wish is that by creating a Communications Strategy Board, whose remit will be guided by the Communications Strategy which is currently being developed, we can focus on what matters most while continuing to produce high quality, effective messages in perhaps a more efficient way.

32. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION GROUP

The Trustees have established an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group that is comprised of a number of stakeholders from across the Church of Scotland and beyond and who were selected from a wide group of applicants. One working group has already been established looking at issues of race, and the EDI group in addition to this will address the wider range of equality, diversity and inclusion matters that the Church should be bearing in mind. This is due to report to GA 2022. An initial membership has been brought together with assistance from the Nomination Committee. The Trustees and the initial members are discussing the appropriate terms of the remit for the Group and the Trustees will report on this and on the work of the Group to General Assembly 2022.

33. THE LISTENING PROJECT

In August 2020, an internal research group began an exploration of ways in capturing and sharing experiences of faith and church during the pandemic from amongst our communities. In order to complement other research among Scottish and UK churches, a wide variety of participants were invited to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words. They come from across generations, in different geographical regions, from those with internet access and those without and from people who engaged with the Church in different ways, including those who had only occasional or fringe involvement before the pandemic.

The project opened to contributions in early November 2020. Participants shared their contributions via an online form or by telephone. The project was promoted across a variety of networks within the Church. By early February, 225 people had participated, all target groups had been reached and no new discernible patterns in terms of insights were emerging. The project was then closed to further contributions. A team of volunteers was trained in analysis techniques and, under the supervision of experienced researchers, every contribution was scrutinised by at least three people in order for common themes to be identified. A specialist software package enabled the cross-referencing of all themes with the demographic details of participants. The project 'headlines' are now available <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/79854> with the full report shortly to be released. Commissioners are asked to take time to digest these findings and hear the voices of people from across the Church, as they have reflected on this time of crisis.

34. FORTHCOMING WORK OF THE CHIEF OFFICER

There is little question that considerable challenges are going to present over the forthcoming twelve months.

Alongside continued work around the impacts of Covid-19 the focus of the Chief Officer will be:

- **Staff:** Maintain our focus on staff health, safety, welfare, communications and development.
- **Congregational sustainability** – focus our resources on helping to address the local financial challenges, close working with Presbyteries who have responsibility, support to Priority Areas programme.
- **Continued focus of National Office staff support to meet local need** – consult with Presbyteries and Congregations. Pilot funding scheme in the absence of Growth Fund (2021 focus will be primarily on small projects arising from Covid-19).
- **Local Income generation project** – Stewardship and income generation to be a top priority.
- **Recruitment to Ministry posts** – continued focus to address demographics that is aligned with new target ministry numbers in 2025. Focus on provision of inspirational leadership and continuous development.
- **Learning and development strategy** – Deployment of an integrated training programme to ensure continued ministry across Scotland.
- **Presbytery reform** – Supporting work being undertaken by Presbyteries and the Principal Clerk's Office including the delivery of new structures, frameworks, arrangements and funding models which meet the needs of the local church.
- **Establishment of a robust future framework for the overall finances** of the Church and embed the funding of new Presbyteries.
- **Delivery of our overall plan**, including the approved work of the Forums, in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.
- **Presbytery planning** - forward plan to deliver an affordable, sustainable Church of Scotland. Revise associated Church Law that will assist reform.
- **Continued evolution of the Church's digital strategy** in order to support how Church communities flourish in the digital age.
- **Progression of our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programme.**

35. NATIONAL OFFICES BUILDINGS OPTION APPRAISAL AND BUSINESS PLAN: THE FUTURE OF 121 GEORGE STREET

The Assembly Trustees are conscious of what has become, in recent years, an annual report to the Assembly regarding the future of the George Street building. The Special Commission Report 2019 recommended that no decision on the National Offices should be taken until there is greater clarity on the future shape and needs of the central organisation of the Church and that the wider cultural impact on the organisation should be considered in this context. The Commission also recommend that steps be taken to carry out necessary repairs to ensure that the organisation can continue to function in 121 at least for the short term; and also recognised that current layouts and infrastructure present barriers to effective inter-team collaboration. As the Commission's report noted, there had been wide ranging opinions in terms of the future of the building and whilst the working party examining this issue recommenced work towards the end of 2020, it rapidly became clear that not only did the differing opinions still present but the matter had become further complicated by the pandemic.

As has been relayed throughout this report, the last 12 months have been unlike any others in respect of the levels of transformation and financial impacts experienced. In

deciding about the future of the building it is clear that the form of the National Offices, in terms of location, size and layout, should follow the functions to be provided. A year on, as the pandemic continues, the National Offices have adapted to remote working with increased use of technology and less reliance on physical processes and systems. Whilst the future is uncertain in terms of demands on physical office space, what is evident is that, with reduced staff numbers and new ways of working, including at a regional level, the National Offices' needs in terms of the nature and physical requirements of the space will again need significant revision.

The pandemic has also, and will continue, to impact on the property market. The overall impact of the changes on the commercial property market are still to emerge as occupiers seek to rationalise and release surplus space. It is anticipated that this structural change will feed through to rents, values of alternative property and also to the underlying value of the National Offices building itself, with higher value alternative uses such as the hotel sector also undergoing significant changes as a result of the pandemic.

The Assembly Trustees are therefore recommending that, with the current pressures on the Church in respect of people, finances and resources, this is not an appropriate time to determine the future use or disposal of 121 George Street. Therefore, agreement is sought from the Assembly to defer this matter for at least 2 years with work being bought back to the Assembly of 2023, on the future operational and staffing structure for the National Offices when, God willing, the pandemic crisis will have passed and the Church is beginning to stabilise with a new financial picture and resources allocated across the revised Presbytery structure.

In the meantime, significant work is going to have to be initiated on the George Street building to ensure the building remains safe and to facilitate the organisational and cultural changes underway. The cyclical review process has led to underinvestment in the building fabric and infrastructure, which needs urgent attention, even if the decision is ultimately made to dispose of the building. Whilst the Assembly Trustees understand the Assembly's potential frustration in this matter, unfortunately as those charged with the stewardship of resources this is the only viable option to take under the current circumstances.

FINANCE

36. Introduction

The Trustees give thanks for the faithful commitment of Church members and adherents in continuing to support the Church's work with their offerings during the most challenging and difficult of years. Particular appreciation is owed to all those treasurers, other office bearers and supporters of the Church who have gone to great lengths to set up digital giving facilities, collect freewill envelopes and innovate with new fundraising ideas.

The response from congregations asked to maintain, wherever possible, contributions to Ministries and Mission (M&M) has been truly remarkable. This, along with the mitigating actions taken by the National Church, has allowed the continuation of payment of all essential stipend, salary costs and other fixed costs during 2020. The outcome for the whole Church could have been far more serious without these collective efforts which have involved sacrifice on the part of our members and supporters as well as our beneficiaries. We are extremely grateful that 95% of M&M requirements for 2020 were paid by 31 December 2020. This compares with 98% paid in the previous year.

Prior to the Pandemic, the underlying trend for congregational income continued to be downwards. The latest congregational statistics for 2019 once again indicated a reduction in offerings and overall ordinary income. This trend, however, has to be viewed in the light of our decreasing membership.

The Stewardship team has been on hand to assist congregations during the Pandemic and has provided advice and resources on ways to maintain income. Their full report can be found overleaf at section 43.

37. Ministries and Mission Contributions

Congregational contributions fund Parish Ministries, the work programmes of the Forums, and the work of the departments which support Congregations and Presbyteries and National work. Each Congregation contributes according to its income. Those with the greatest financial resources contribute most and those with the smallest financial resources contribute least. In this way, the Church of Scotland is a sharing Church where each supports the other according to its means. This redistribution of contributions enables us to continue a territorial ministry throughout Scotland, an objective most recently re-affirmed by the General Assembly of 2010.

The current M&M system allows contributions to be increased in order to fund work or decreased should costs decrease, such as in those years when ministry numbers were falling. Recognising the financial challenges faced by congregations, the contribution level was held at between £46 million and £46.5 million over the five years to 2020, with the then Councils running annual deficits to fund some work programmes. The Presbytery discretionary 5% allowance has remained in place over this period, allowing Presbyteries to use the allowance according to local need and to assist congregations with paying shortfalls in their M&M contributions.

In the Trustees' Report to the General Assembly of 2020, we acknowledged that some congregations would be using reserves to continue to make their contributions and that this would affect their ability to meet a similar aggregate amount in 2021. The General Assembly approved an 18% reduction in aggregate contributions for 2021 to £38.172 million.

In 2019, aggregate offerings decreased once again by around 0.5%. The 2020 equivalents will be reported in the Trustees' Supplementary Report, offering a clearer picture of the impact of the Pandemic on congregations' income.

By 31 December 2020, congregations had remitted £41,444,985 in Ministries and Mission contributions for 2020, which was 95% of the total. In accordance with the Regulations, amounts for 2020 which remain outstanding will be deducted from the allowance available to Presbyteries. It is hoped that this will allow Presbyteries to engage with congregations and offer assistance where appropriate. Where there is sharing of information and resources between congregations and Presbyteries, there is likely to be more success in navigating the current and very difficult financial circumstances.

The Trustees wish to record their sincere thanks to all congregations making their 2020 Ministries and Mission contributions monthly by standing order and to all congregations which met their contributions in full by 31 December 2020.

Comparative returns for recent years are as follows:

| Year | Total to be Contributed £'000 | Total received by 31 December £'000 | % |
|------|----------------------------------|---|------|
| 2016 | 44,264 | 43,700 | 98.7 |
| 2017 | 43,969 | 43,300 | 98.5 |
| 2018 | 43,387 | 42,825 | 98.7 |
| 2019 | 43,917 | 43,187 | 98.3 |
| 2020 | 43,648 | 41,445 | 94.9 |

As is customary, due to the timing of printing deadlines, the proposed total Ministries and Mission contributions and

indicative budget proposals for 2022 will be presented in a Supplementary Report.

NATIONAL BUDGETS

38. 2020 Results

The unaudited operating result for the Unincorporated Entities in financial year 2020 was a deficit of £924,000 compared to the budget deficit of £1,856,000. This excludes gains on sale of heritable property and investments, and unrealised losses on investments. The deficits over the previous 5 years have totalled some £14m.

Forums, committees and departments worked with the Chief Officer to curtail expenditure to the absolute minimum and prioritised their programme spend including grant payments to partners. There were also savings as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions on the General Assembly itself and on travel and other costs. Government grants of £1.3 million were received through the Job Retention Scheme and CSC staff numbers reduced through natural attrition and a Voluntary Exit Scheme.

These mitigating actions preserved, to a large extent, the reserves available to meet further financial effects of the Pandemic.

39. 2021 Budget

Some of the budget savings from 2020, such as on staff posts, are carried over into 2021. In addition, as outlined in October, a cost saving of £4 million was sought on the programmatic work of the Forums. In October the draw on reserves in 2021 was estimated at a minimum of £6.88 million. The Forums submitted new bids for work they wished to carry out and while the Faith Nurture Forum was able to meet the target expenditure, the Trustees agreed to some additional expenditure by Faith Impact, where the work foregone was considered to have a serious negative impact. This was conditional on the Forum bringing forward a plan for future spending priorities, particularly from its restricted funds.

CrossReach had an assumed break-even budget other than for pension deficit repair payments, but with the continuation of the Pandemic and the financial challenges it faced in its care services, its final budget including significant contingency for Covid-19 related costs, was a deficit of £2 million before past service pension deficit repair contributions. It is anticipated that CrossReach will not return to a balanced financial position until 2023. These factors, together with a further down grading in the budget of investment income, stipend endowment income and an allowance for Presbytery start-up funding, brought the final budget deficit to £11.4 million.

40. MISSION AND RENEWAL FUND

The fund is the only entirely unrestricted fund available for any purpose. Following ongoing efforts to review and reorganise the funds of the Forums (former Councils) the balance on the Fund at 31 December 2020 was £9.2 million. This will be required to support the £11.4million deficit in 2021.

PENSIONS

41. Defined Benefit Pensions

Early in 2021 the Pension Trustees reported that the CrossReach section of the Church of Scotland Pension Scheme for Staff was almost fully funded. Following discussion CrossReach signed a new Schedule of Contributions effective from February 2021, allowing deficit repair contributions to cease.

42. Defined Contribution Schemes

The Group Personal Pensions Governance Group continued to meet during 2020, reviewing Legal and General's

performance reports; service provision and developments including on Ethical Social and Governance (ESG) issues.

The Assembly Trustees have agreed that the provisions of the Plan should be extended to allow employees of the Presbyteries to participate.

43. STEWARDSHIP

Stewardship touches all aspects of our lives. This holistic perspective underpins the Church's national stewardship function as it encourages, supports and equips congregations and individuals to be more effective and purposeful in all aspects of stewardship. This is not a departure from focussing on the stewardship of money. Rather, this whole-of-life approach to Christian stewardship calls for a deeper and more meaningful response to God through our giving in every aspect of our lives as followers of Jesus.

44. Current Context

The current context is certainly challenging. Whilst the work of the Church has continued in many new and imaginative ways, the restrictions on gatherings and programmes have impacted significantly on participation and income. Whilst income from offerings may have held up in some congregations, this is not the experience everywhere. Other income, from example from hall lets, has taken a particular hit. For many of our congregations, the situation is threatening sustainability.

45. Initiatives

The National Stewardship team has been working on a range of initiatives to help the Church over this period and into the future, offering practical advice and support, encouraging new methods of giving, developing engaging and accessible resources and utilising various platforms to communicate more effectively. Congregations are encouraged to consider the following developments at this time:

- **A Time of Offering**

Online weekly services of worship have enabled a continued sense of being together, regularly drawing larger 'congregations' than might normally be present in church on a Sunday. The inclusion of a time of Offering in such services helps demonstrate the significance of giving back to God as a part of our worship, even when we cannot be in church to place our offerings in the plate. We would encourage the inclusion of such a time in all online services of worship, just as we would expect to share in a time of Offering if we were together in church.

- **Contactless Giving**

As buildings reopen over time, and the handling of cash decreases, the team will be helping congregations to invest in the best contactless options for them. Whilst we are not recommending suppliers, up-to-date information is available on a range of providers and systems.

At the time of writing, the Presbytery of Edinburgh is piloting two contactless options within a number of its congregations. The Stewardship team is actively supporting the Presbytery, in the knowledge that this process will help inform future initiatives by other Presbyteries and congregations.

The team can support congregations in adopting a range of other methods of giving which include donate buttons, QR codes, giving apps and text giving. For congregations not currently in a position to set up their own contactless giving facility, the donate button on the Church's national website can be used by donors to direct gifts to specific congregations. Of course, the trusty Standing Order remains the most effective and efficient tool for maintaining regular giving, and its use is encouraged wherever possible.

- **National Gift Day**

A church-wide National Gift Day is to take place over Harvest time in 2021. It is envisaged that this initiative will provide people with an opportunity to offer gifts of thanksgiving to God for being with us and sustaining us through these challenging times. The monetary gifts received through this Gift Day will remain with congregations and will not be assessable for Ministries and Mission purposes in light of the challenging financial circumstances faced by our Congregations over the last year. It is envisaged that these additional monetary gifts will help Congregations offset deficits, finance specific work or get a new project off the ground. Resources to support this church-wide initiative will be made available online in the coming weeks.

- **Legacy Giving**

Legacy giving is a sensitive matter, but we should not avoid inviting church members and supporters to consider leaving a gift to the Church, whether that is directed towards a specific congregation or to the general funds or specific work of the National Church. Kirk Sessions are encouraged to determine and make known their own policies in relation to the use of such gifts. Resources to support legacy giving are available from the Stewardship team.

- **Fundraising and Income Generation**

Normal fundraising activities have been curtailed to a great extent. At this time, Kirk Sessions are encouraged to re-assess their usage of halls in preparation for the future: to take stock and to reimagine what their congregation could be moving forward. The Stewardship team has engaged with different specialists and organisations over the last year to aid its thinking, including an income generation specialist from the Church of England's Diocese of Leeds, the Cinnamon Network and the HeartEdge movement.

- **External Grants and Funding**

The team maintains a list of potential sources of grants and funding which can be accessed via the Church's website here: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/covid-19-coronavirus-advice/covid-19-funding>.

It is acknowledged that many Congregations would benefit from expert input to ensure that grant applications are as effective as possible, and this has now been addressed by the appointment of a dedicated Grants Officer based within the Office of Assembly Trustees.

46. Key Resource - A Narrative of Generosity

A Narrative of Generosity is a flexible resource developed to encourage individuals and Congregations to engage with stewardship in all aspects of a life of faith. Using twelve themes, it encourages the sharing of stories to prompt a more intentional and joyful approach to stewardship. Prompted by the *Narrative* resources, stories are shared, new ideas and insights reflected upon and actions agreed.

Work is progressing on expanding the *Narrative* to encourage engagement with children and young people on each of the twelve stewardship themes. Furthermore, the team has been finalising a new personal giving resource sitting within the *Narrative* called *Joyful Generosity*.

These resources are adaptable for online use.

In line with previous instructions of the General Assembly on the important place of stewardship within the Church, we would urge all congregations to engage with the National Stewardship Programme, using the *Narrative of Generosity* resource to embrace a whole life of stewardship.

47. The Stewardship Team

The Stewardship team currently consists of four consultants who bring a wide experience of the church and of stewardship practice. Contact details and outline resources can be found on the Church's website here: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/stewardship>. You may also follow this area of work on the 'Church of Scotland Stewardship' Facebook page.

48. Stewardship Support Network

An informal support network of sixteen ministers from different locations and contexts was formed in October 2020 to provide a sounding board for the stewardship team. This arrangement is proving to be extremely helpful, and the team is grateful to the network members for their willingness to be involved in this important work.

49. STAFFING CHANGES WITHIN THE STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Depute Treasurer posts

Both Depute Treasurer roles have been made vacant within the last year with new appointments to these posts.

Following Bob Cowan's departure, Gillian Elizabeth Coghlan was appointed as Depute Treasurer, Unincorporated Entities, on 15 October 2020. This role includes responsibilities for discharging legacies, bequests or donations on behalf of the Church of Scotland and this report includes a section of deliverance conferring the appropriate authority of Office.

Leanne Thompson was subsequently appointed as Depute Treasurer, Wider Church and Statutory Corporations, following the departure of Archie McDowall.

Archie McDowall

Archie McDowall joined the Stewardship and Finance department in 2006 having worked as a manager in public practice. Archie brought his professional skills and a depth of perception and wisdom to his role as Depute Treasurer, Congregational Finance. As well as his outward facing role where he was well known and respected by so many in the Church, he contributed to several working groups and new initiatives and the development of the Stewardship and Finance department where he was a huge support to colleagues. Following the creation of OSCR, the Scottish Charity Regulator, in 2008, Archie was responsible for ensuring much of the good financial governance standards we now see in the wider Church. Archie left the Church in October 2020, relocating to the south of England.

50. LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

Remit

The Legal Questions Committee has reviewed the current terms of its remit and has concluded that they should be updated and clarified. The remit now proposed is set out in Appendix 3 and the Trustees are happy to support this change. Accordingly, the Trustees recommend approval of the amended remit of the Legal Questions Committee as set out in Appendix 3.

51. CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS 2019^[7]

Overview

This is the first year that data collection has been overseen by the Church of Scotland's Church Statistician and will over the forthcoming years be undergoing revision and improvements in terms of data capture and reporting methods. Information pertaining to 2019 is found below. Results for 2020 can be found in the Supplementary report.^[8]

As of December 2019, there were 312,204 members of the Church of Scotland, a fall of 4% from 2018, and 32% from 2009. Increase in professions of faith, adult baptism, children receiving communion were all noted.

Church-level membership and participation, 2019

Congregations within the Church of Scotland come in various sizes from large city congregations to small rural or island communities. Table 1 shows the reported participation at the smallest 5% and 25% of churches, the median (i.e. middle) church, the largest 25% and 5% of churches (i.e. 75th and 95th percentile), and the mean (average) church. A few large congregations can result in a larger mean value that may not represent the overall data well – a "typical" church may be better described by the median value.

| | 5 th percentile | 25 th percentile | Median (middle) church | 75 th percentile | 95 th percentile | Mean (average) church |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Members | 28 | 100 | 194 | 324 | 582 | 237 |
| Adherents | 0 | 1 | 10 | 40 | 137 | 32 |
| Weekly attendance | 0 | 30 | 55 | 85 | 175 | 66 |
| Average Age | 45.7 | 55.9 | 61.5 | 67.0 | 72.9 | 60.6 |
| Professions of Faith | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 |
| Children | 0 | 1 | 10 | 40 | 137 | 32 |
| Children receiving Communion | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 2 |
| Elders | 4 | 9 | 17 | 29 | 56 | 22 |
| Baptisms | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| Weddings | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 1 |
| Funerals | 0 | 4 | 10 | 18 | 35 | 13 |

Table 1: Church participation summary, 2019

The “typical”, i.e. median, congregation in 2019 has just under 200 members (194), and 10 adherents. In the median congregation there are also:

- around 55 people in worship who have an average age of 62.
- no professions of faith in 2019.
- 10 children associated with the congregation, but none receiving communion.
- 10 funerals, 1 baptism and 1 wedding.
- The congregation is led by 17 elders.

Over three-quarters of congregations welcomed no new members through Profession of Faith, only 24% welcoming any new members in this way. 38% of congregations welcomed new members through certificates, and 32% through resolution of the Kirk Session. Children received Communion in 26% of congregations.

Persons and Agencies in Scotland for 2019

(cf Appendix II of the Reports of the Council of Assembly, 2019)

The membership statistics may be stated thus:

| | | | |
|------|---------------------------|--------------|--------|
| | Removals by Death | 9,655 | |
| Less | Admissions by Profession | <u>963</u> | 8,692 |
| | Removals by Certificate | 1,906 | |
| Less | Admissions by Certificate | <u>1,409</u> | 497 |
| | Other Removals | 5,194 | |
| Less | Restoration | <u>1,214</u> | 3,980 |
| | Total decrease | | 13,169 |

And shown graphically in Figure 1, below.

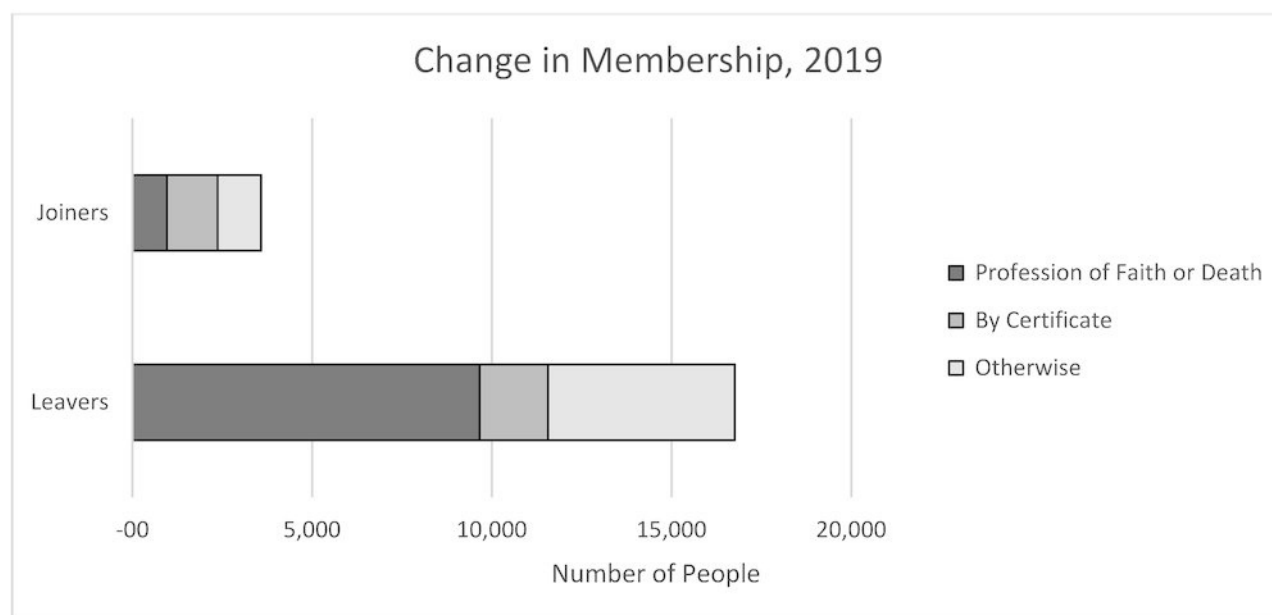
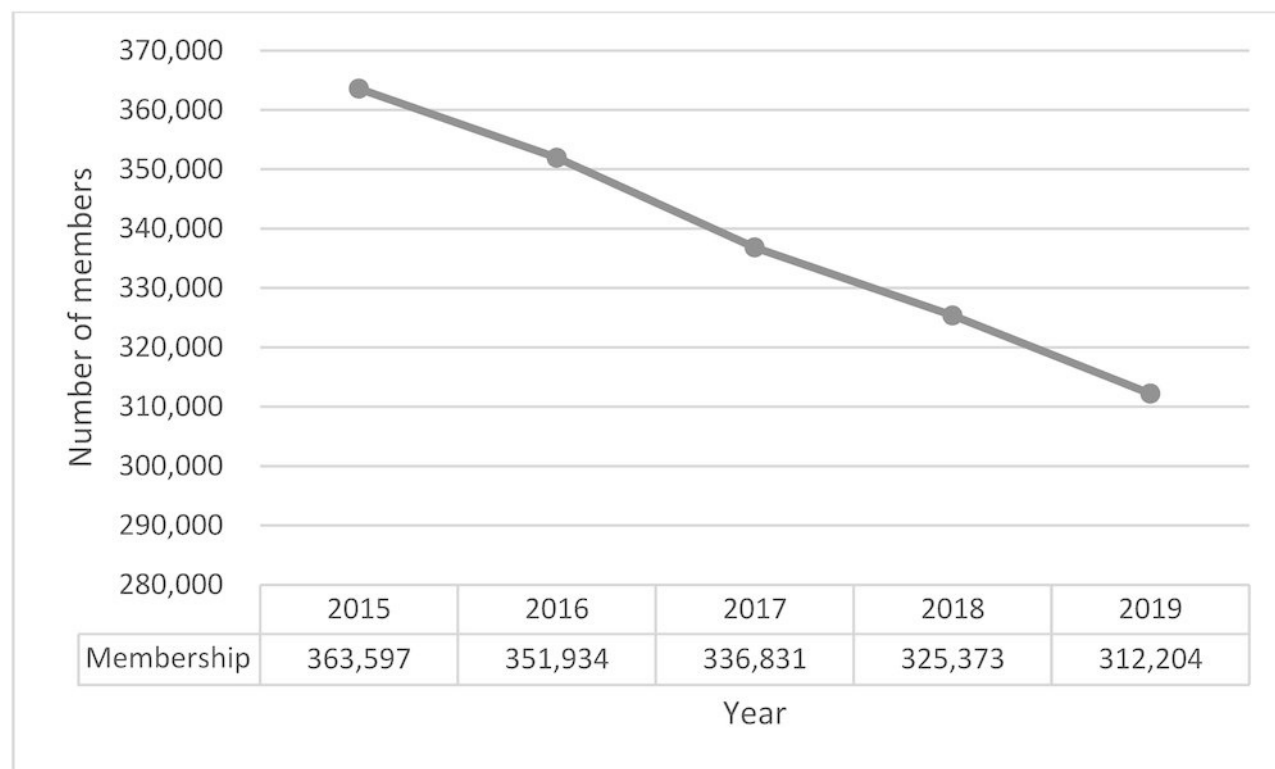


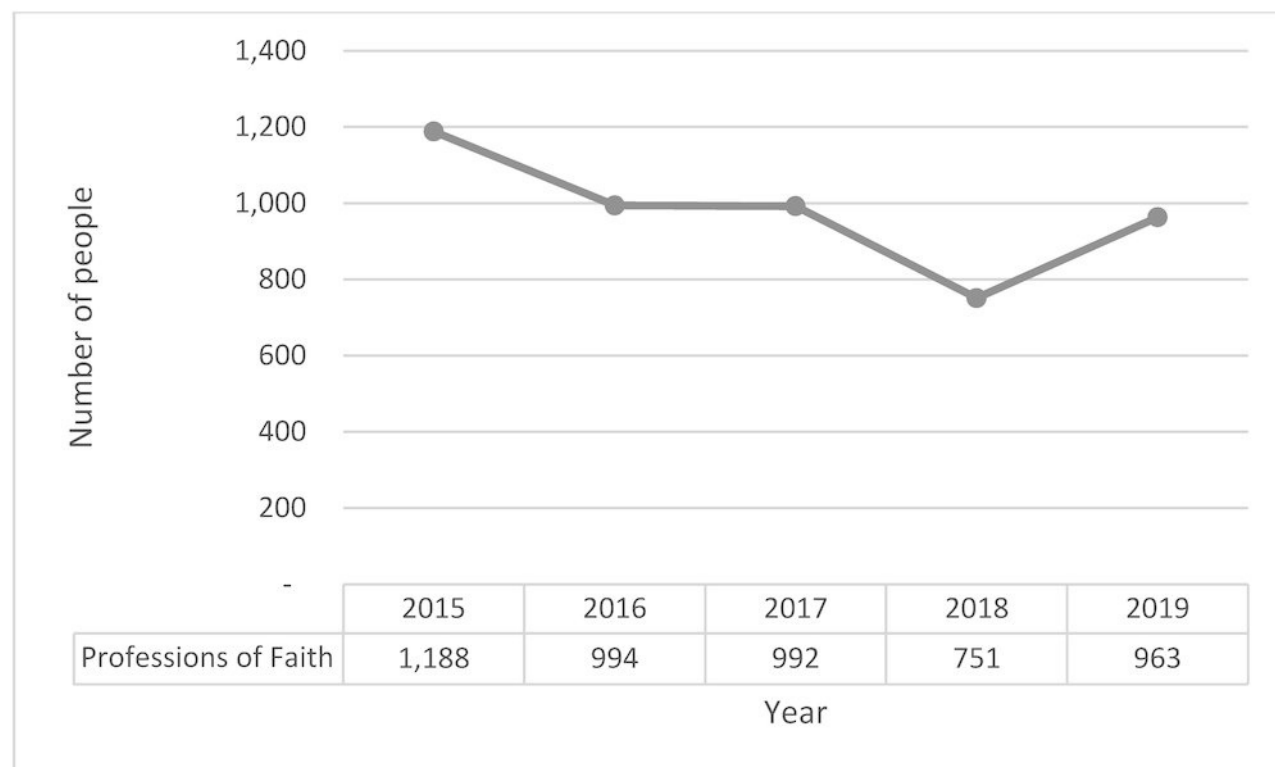
Figure 1 Leavers and Joiners in 2019

Comparative Graphs

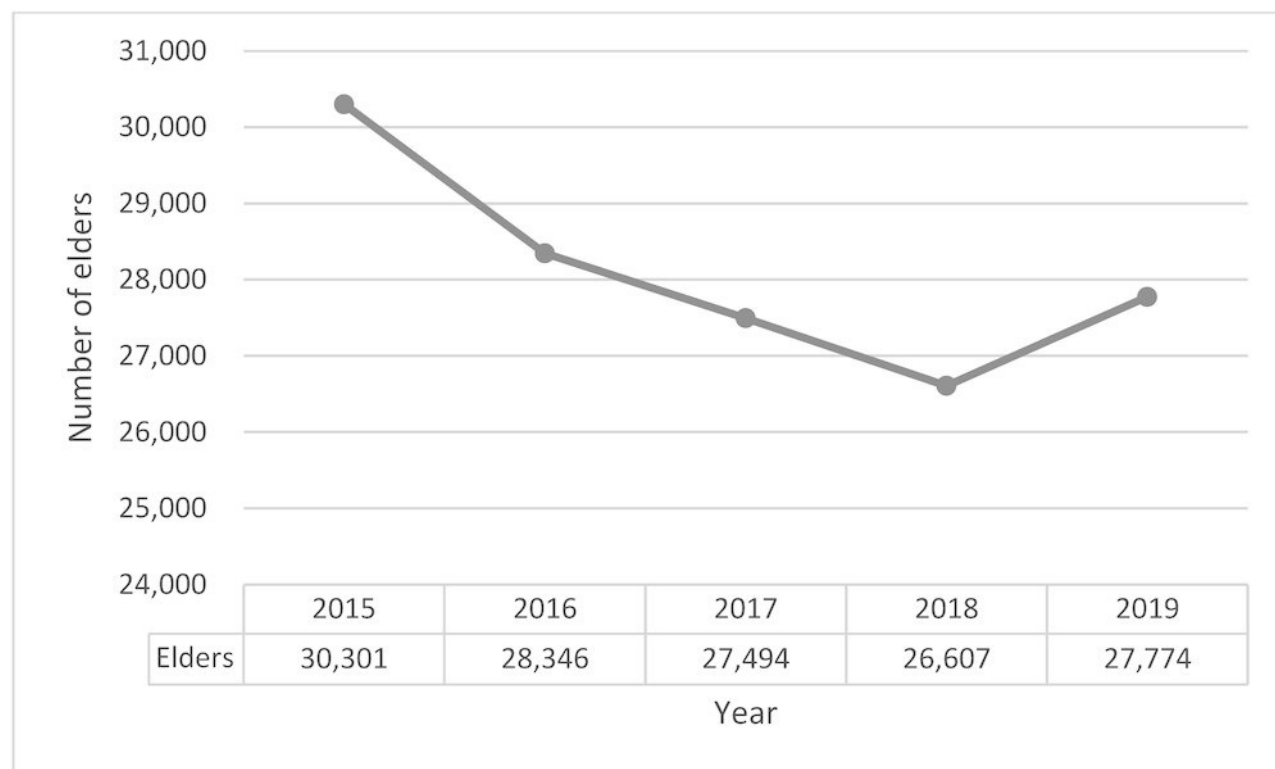
Membership



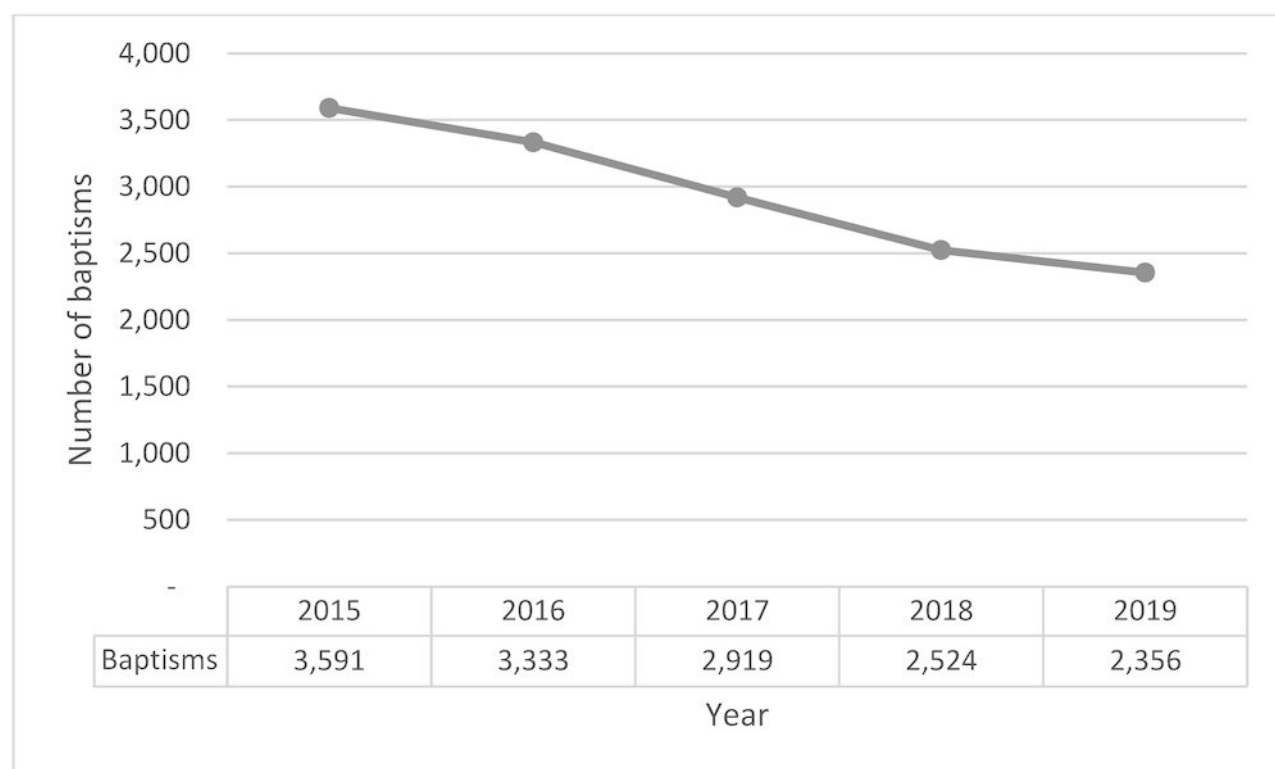
Professions of Faith



Elders



Baptisms



Presbytery Data*Reporting*

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31st Dec 2018 | Admissions | Removals | Membership as at 31st Dec 2019 | Notices of Removal | Supplementary Roll | Response Rate |
|-------------------------------|--|-------------------|-----------------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| EDINBURGH | 20,950 | 326 | 971 | 20,305 | 56 | 1,214 | 100% |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 7,593 | 62 | 456 | 7,199 | 7 | 1,321 | 100% |
| LOTHIAN | 11,386 | 141 | 698 | 10,829 | 18 | 1,333 | 100% |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 5,353 | 39 | 186 | 5,206 | 9 | 576 | 100% |
| DUNS | 2,384 | 23 | 108 | 2,299 | 0 | 255 | 93% |
| JEDBURGH | 4,814 | 38 | 196 | 4,656 | 4 | 117 | 100% |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 4,273 | 35 | 565 | 3,743 | 14 | 785 | 95% |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 7,685 | 67 | 399 | 7,353 | 8 | 1,172 | 100% |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 4,375 | 40 | 239 | 4,176 | 19 | 253 | 100% |
| AYR | 15,727 | 145 | 878 | 14,994 | 14 | 1,055 | 100% |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 8,009 | 56 | 166 | 7,899 | 2 | 850 | 38% |
| ARDROSSAN | 7,348 | 71 | 403 | 7,016 | 28 | 537 | 100% |
| LANARK | 5,195 | 52 | 235 | 5,012 | 35 | 1,248 | 100% |
| GREENOCK AND PAISLEY | 15,711 | 171 | 849 | 15,033 | 34 | 2,006 | 100% |
| GLASGOW | 27,376 | 481 | 1,544 | 26,313 | 33 | 2,855 | 98% |
| HAMILTON | 20,894 | 216 | 816 | 20,294 | 26 | 3,378 | 100% |
| DUMBARTON | 10,098 | 78 | 450 | 9,726 | 0 | 581 | 97% |
| ARGYLL | 6,161 | 41 | 260 | 5,942 | 36 | 544 | 93% |
| FALKIRK | 10,034 | 97 | 602 | 9,529 | 19 | 1,289 | 100% |
| STIRLING | 11,490 | 124 | 390 | 11,224 | 0 | 928 | 100% |
| DUNFERMLINE | 5,268 | 81 | 278 | 5,071 | 17 | 1,116 | 100% |
| KIRKCALDY | 6,741 | 54 | 669 | 6,126 | 6 | 554 | 100% |
| ST ANDREWS | 7,487 | 74 | 364 | 7,197 | 23 | 374 | 100% |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 4,156 | 34 | 146 | 4,044 | 6 | 452 | 100% |
| PERTH | 11,526 | 97 | 718 | 10,905 | 18 | 937 | 94% |
| DUNDEE | 9,709 | 107 | 531 | 9,285 | 13 | 477 | 100% |
| ANGUS | 10,766 | 110 | 564 | 10,312 | 19 | 1,482 | 100% |
| ABERDEEN | 11,474 | 109 | 622 | 10,961 | 193 | 1,094 | 97% |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 6,505 | 40 | 363 | 6,182 | 11 | 947 | 100% |
| GORDON | 10,886 | 67 | 437 | 10,516 | 12 | 729 | 100% |
| BUCHAN | 9,226 | 54 | 545 | 8,735 | 13 | 989 | 97% |
| MORAY | 6,548 | 53 | 298 | 6,303 | 26 | 534 | 93% |
| ABERNETHY | 986 | 27 | 58 | 955 | 5 | 68 | 100% |
| INVERNESS | 4,063 | 65 | 179 | 3,949 | 233 | 273 | 92% |
| LOCHABER | 940 | 8 | 44 | 904 | 0 | 0 | 100% |

Reporting (continued)

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2018 | Admissions | Removals | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2019 | Notices of Removal | Supplementary Roll | Response Rate |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| ROSS | 1,567 | 45 | 88 | 1,524 | 7 | 213 | 95% |
| SUTHERLAND | 609 | 6 | 73 | 542 | 11 | 255 | 100% |
| CAITHNESS | 905 | 53 | 37 | 921 | 0 | 115 | 100% |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 507 | 5 | 21 | 491 | 3 | 33 | 63% |
| UIST | 289 | 8 | 19 | 278 | 0 | 22 | 100% |
| LEWIS | 832 | 34 | 31 | 835 | 0 | 0 | 100% |
| ORKNEY | 2,326 | 17 | 81 | 2,262 | 0 | 188 | 90% |
| SHETLAND | 923 | 17 | 57 | 883 | 8 | 207 | 92% |
| ENGLAND | 1,925 | 12 | 72 | 1,865 | 6 | 629 | 100% |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 2,353 | 106 | 49 | 2,410 | 0 | 189 | 47% |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 325,373 | 3,586 | 16,755 | 312,204 | 992 | 34,174 | 96% |

Table 2: Presbytery reporting

Membership

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2019 | Admissions | | | Removals | | |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------|
| | | Profession of Faith | By Certificate | Restoration or Resolution | By Death | By Certificate | Otherwise |
| EDINBURGH | 20,305 | 85 | 142 | 99 | 615 | 180 | 176 |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 7,199 | 19 | 21 | 22 | 249 | 26 | 181 |
| LOTHIAN | 10,829 | 42 | 57 | 42 | 365 | 69 | 264 |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 5,206 | 12 | 23 | 4 | 140 | 22 | 24 |
| DUNS | 2,299 | 4 | 8 | 11 | 69 | 5 | 34 |
| JEDBURGH | 4,656 | 10 | 20 | 8 | 132 | 16 | 48 |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 3,743 | 6 | 15 | 14 | 172 | 29 | 364 |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 7,353 | 21 | 27 | 19 | 263 | 35 | 101 |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 4,176 | 4 | 19 | 17 | 111 | 23 | 105 |
| AYR | 14,994 | 27 | 75 | 43 | 456 | 81 | 341 |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 7,899 | 14 | 19 | 23 | 121 | 20 | 25 |
| ARDROSSAN | 7,016 | 12 | 19 | 40 | 253 | 31 | 119 |
| LANARK | 5,012 | 10 | 28 | 14 | 166 | 26 | 43 |
| GREENOCK AND PAISLEY | 15,033 | 51 | 81 | 39 | 513 | 99 | 237 |
| GLASGOW | 26,313 | 181 | 141 | 159 | 828 | 248 | 468 |
| HAMILTON | 20,294 | 63 | 93 | 60 | 581 | 108 | 127 |
| DUMBARTON | 9,726 | 29 | 37 | 12 | 263 | 46 | 141 |
| ARGYLL | 5,942 | 5 | 9 | 27 | 173 | 23 | 64 |
| FALKIRK | 9,529 | 32 | 28 | 37 | 312 | 43 | 247 |
| STIRLING | 11,224 | 44 | 44 | 36 | 298 | 51 | 41 |
| DUNFERMLINE | 5,071 | 26 | 29 | 26 | 186 | 52 | 40 |
| KIRKCALDY | 6,126 | 6 | 23 | 25 | 243 | 37 | 389 |
| ST ANDREWS | 7,197 | 6 | 35 | 33 | 249 | 43 | 72 |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 4,044 | 3 | 23 | 8 | 116 | 12 | 18 |
| PERTH | 10,905 | 23 | 58 | 16 | 319 | 73 | 326 |
| DUNDEE | 9,285 | 17 | 54 | 36 | 285 | 95 | 151 |
| ANGUS | 10,312 | 28 | 49 | 33 | 335 | 66 | 163 |
| ABERDEEN | 10,961 | 29 | 46 | 34 | 395 | 87 | 140 |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 6,182 | 7 | 15 | 18 | 172 | 23 | 168 |
| GORDON | 10,516 | 22 | 29 | 16 | 302 | 54 | 81 |
| BUCHAN | 8,735 | 13 | 27 | 14 | 276 | 45 | 224 |
| MORAY | 6,303 | 9 | 16 | 28 | 220 | 33 | 45 |
| ABERNETHY | 955 | 0 | 11 | 16 | 31 | 14 | 13 |
| INVERNESS | 3,949 | 21 | 28 | 16 | 127 | 24 | 28 |
| LOCHABER | 904 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 28 | 1 | 15 |

Membership (continued)

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2019 | Admissions | | | Removals | | |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | | Profession of Faith | By Certificate | Restoration or Resolution | By Death | By Certificate | Otherwise |
| ROSS | 1,524 | 14 | 25 | 6 | 45 | 6 | 37 |
| SUTHERLAND | 542 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 12 | 34 |
| CAITHNESS | 921 | 4 | 1 | 48 | 32 | 2 | 3 |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 491 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 0 | 14 |
| UIST | 278 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 13 | 3 | 3 |
| LEWIS | 835 | 24 | 10 | 0 | 17 | 11 | 3 |
| ORKNEY | 2,262 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 69 | 6 | 6 |
| SHETLAND | 883 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 34 | 7 | 16 |
| ENGLAND | 1,865 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 31 | 10 | 31 |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 2,410 | 15 | 4 | 87 | 16 | 9 | 24 |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 312,204 | 963 | 1,409 | 1,214 | 9,655 | 1,906 | 5,194 |

Table 3: Presbytery membership figures

Occasional Offices

| Presbyteries | Baptisms | | | Weddings | Funerals |
|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | All baptisms | Adult baptisms | Birth Thanksgiving Services | | |
| EDINBURGH | 186 | 21 | 12 | 138 | 930 |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 70 | 8 | 2 | 60 | 502 |
| LOTHIAN | 89 | 17 | 14 | 82 | 616 |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 34 | 5 | 4 | 28 | 185 |
| DUNS | 22 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 147 |
| JEDBURGH | 30 | 2 | 0 | 21 | 210 |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 26 | 0 | 2 | 46 | 186 |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 66 | 3 | 0 | 60 | 328 |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 18 | 1 | 3 | 22 | 192 |
| AYR | 76 | 18 | 1 | 75 | 834 |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 40 | 5 | 1 | 10 | 249 |
| ARDROSSAN | 55 | 8 | 1 | 41 | 465 |
| LANARK | 36 | 3 | 0 | 23 | 345 |
| GREENOCK AND PAISLEY | 121 | 5 | 2 | 57 | 810 |
| GLASGOW | 285 | 56 | 21 | 175 | 1826 |
| HAMILTON | 175 | 19 | 7 | 81 | 1170 |
| DUMBARTON | 76 | 4 | 10 | 64 | 428 |
| ARGYLL | 59 | 1 | 0 | 58 | 470 |
| FALKIRK | 64 | 10 | 3 | 39 | 611 |
| STIRLING | 68 | 8 | 2 | 53 | 533 |
| DUNFERMLINE | 35 | 6 | 9 | 41 | 376 |
| KIRKCALDY | 53 | 12 | 5 | 30 | 463 |
| ST ANDREWS | 54 | 2 | 0 | 61 | 286 |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 29 | 0 | 1 | 52 | 203 |
| PERTH | 68 | 6 | 2 | 62 | 357 |
| DUNDEE | 67 | 17 | 10 | 36 | 412 |
| ANGUS | 66 | 3 | 7 | 47 | 466 |
| ABERDEEN | 55 | 4 | 6 | 63 | 660 |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 38 | 1 | 3 | 33 | 216 |
| GORDON | 61 | 9 | 4 | 42 | 456 |
| BUCHAN | 29 | 4 | 0 | 15 | 280 |
| MORAY | 36 | 2 | 1 | 29 | 402 |
| ABERNETHY | 10 | 1 | 0 | 11 | 494 |
| INVERNESS | 24 | 2 | 1 | 41 | 274 |
| LOCHABER | 7 | 2 | 2 | 22 | 105 |

Occasional Offices (continued)

| Presbyteries | Baptisms | | | Weddings | Funerals |
|-------------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | All baptisms | Adult baptisms | Birth Thanksgiving Services | | |
| ROSS | 6 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 207 |
| SUTHERLAND | 11 | 0 | 0 | 21 | 86 |
| CAITHNESS | 3 | 2 | 1 | 13 | 149 |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 10 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 42 |
| UIST | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 43 |
| LEWIS | 7 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 75 |
| ORKNEY | 4 | 1 | 5 | 29 | 112 |
| SHETLAND | 5 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 84 |
| ENGLAND | 39 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 63 |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 40 | 7 | 7 | 13 | 10 |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 2,356 | 278 | 152 | 1,863 | 17,358 |
| % Scotland | 4.3% | | | 7.3% | 29.4% |

Table 4: Presbytery baptisms, weddings, funerals figures

Church of Scotland congregations conducted 7.3% of weddings celebrated in Scotland in 2019, and 29.4% of funerals. They baptised or gave thanks for 4.3% of births (excluding adult baptisms).

Leadership

| Presbyteries | Elders | | | Other leaders | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------|----------------------|---------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | All | Male | Female | All |
| EDINBURGH | 910 | 1,180 | 2,090 | 97 | 136 | 233 |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 308 | 356 | 664 | 85 | 135 | 220 |
| LOTHIAN | 390 | 516 | 906 | 31 | 81 | 112 |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 187 | 220 | 407 | 25 | 44 | 69 |
| DUNS | 77 | 89 | 166 | 30 | 51 | 81 |
| JEDBURGH | 118 | 192 | 310 | 16 | 43 | 59 |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 125 | 175 | 300 | 6 | 23 | 29 |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 251 | 262 | 513 | 80 | 138 | 218 |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 99 | 120 | 219 | 18 | 42 | 60 |
| AYR | 560 | 769 | 1329 | 48 | 98 | 146 |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 155 | 201 | 356 | 22 | 33 | 55 |
| ARDROSSAN | 286 | 423 | 709 | 25 | 66 | 91 |
| LANARK | 178 | 215 | 393 | 26 | 34 | 60 |
| GREENOCK AND PAISLEY | 706 | 913 | 1,619 | 145 | 196 | 341 |
| GLASGOW | 1,327 | 1,700 | 3,027 | 221 | 444 | 665 |
| HAMILTON | 1,017 | 1,294 | 2,311 | 155 | 259 | 414 |
| DUMBARTON | 361 | 498 | 859 | 34 | 75 | 109 |
| ARGYLL | 281 | 397 | 678 | 84 | 122 | 206 |
| FALKIRK | 366 | 531 | 897 | 76 | 167 | 243 |
| STIRLING | 430 | 539 | 969 | 77 | 125 | 202 |
| DUNFERMLINE | 208 | 313 | 521 | 17 | 27 | 44 |
| KIRKCALDY | 223 | 370 | 593 | 51 | 107 | 158 |
| ST ANDREWS | 264 | 361 | 625 | 12 | 20 | 32 |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 145 | 169 | 314 | 26 | 34 | 60 |
| PERTH | 335 | 416 | 751 | 19 | 33 | 52 |
| DUNDEE | 356 | 432 | 788 | 41 | 78 | 119 |
| ANGUS | 316 | 468 | 784 | 33 | 50 | 83 |
| ABERDEEN | 444 | 534 | 978 | 24 | 49 | 73 |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 150 | 193 | 343 | 4 | 13 | 17 |
| GORDON | 268 | 352 | 620 | 20 | 56 | 76 |
| BUCHAN | 243 | 296 | 539 | 49 | 138 | 187 |
| MORAY | 200 | 315 | 515 | 21 | 83 | 104 |
| ABERNETHY | 42 | 65 | 107 | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| INVERNESS | 200 | 166 | 366 | 61 | 95 | 156 |
| LOCHABER | 46 | 82 | 128 | 13 | 34 | 47 |

Leadership (continued)

| Presbyteries | Elders | | | Other leaders | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | All | Male | Female | All |
| ROSS | 111 | 92 | 203 | 28 | 61 | 89 |
| SUTHERLAND | 29 | 62 | 91 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| CAITHNESS | 64 | 54 | 118 | 29 | 47 | 76 |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 22 | 19 | 41 | 12 | 19 | 31 |
| UIST | 29 | 9 | 38 | 16 | 16 | 32 |
| LEWIS | 52 | 0 | 52 | 34 | 21 | 55 |
| ORKNEY | 58 | 97 | 155 | 9 | 10 | 19 |
| SHETLAND | 34 | 56 | 90 | 10 | 25 | 35 |
| ENGLAND | 82 | 80 | 162 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 67 | 63 | 130 | 29 | 18 | 47 |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 12,120 | 15,654 | 27,774 | 1,861 | 3,356 | 5,217 |

Table 5: Presbytery leadership figures

There are 27,774 elders in the Church of Scotland of whom 43.6% are male and 56.4% female, 8.9% of the membership.

Attendance at Worship

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2019 | Age ranges of worshippers | | | | | | Number of Worshippers | % membership attending worship |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | Under 16 | 16-24 | 25-44 | 45-64 | 65-84 | 85 and over | | |
| EDINBURGH | 20,305 | 10% | 4% | 12% | 23% | 39% | 9% | 6,649 | 33% |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 7,199 | 9% | 2% | 9% | 24% | 50% | 6% | 2,194 | 30% |
| LOTHIAN | 10,829 | 11% | 3% | 11% | 23% | 45% | 8% | 3,429 | 32% |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 5,206 | 9% | 2% | 9% | 19% | 52% | 8% | 1,065 | 20% |
| DUNS | 2,299 | 4% | 0% | 3% | 16% | 40% | 6% | 470 | 20% |
| JEDBURGH | 4,656 | 2% | 3% | 4% | 24% | 53% | 9% | 706 | 15% |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 3,743 | 7% | 3% | 8% | 27% | 48% | 7% | 998 | 27% |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 7,353 | 6% | 2% | 8% | 20% | 52% | 9% | 1,453 | 20% |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 4,176 | 10% | 2% | 6% | 22% | 53% | 8% | 793 | 19% |
| AYR | 14,994 | 8% | 2% | 7% | 23% | 48% | 10% | 3,565 | 24% |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 7,899 | 6% | 1% | 4% | 23% | 44% | 7% | 2,286 | 29% |
| ARDROSSAN | 7,016 | 9% | 2% | 6% | 19% | 46% | 9% | 1,919 | 27% |
| LANARK | 5,012 | 11% | 5% | 11% | 24% | 43% | 5% | 1,681 | 34% |
| GREENOCK AND PAISLEY | 15,033 | 7% | 3% | 9% | 21% | 41% | 8% | 4,189 | 28% |
| GLASGOW | 26,313 | 11% | 4% | 11% | 23% | 36% | 7% | 10,229 | 39% |
| HAMILTON | 20,294 | 11% | 3% | 11% | 24% | 44% | 7% | 6,865 | 34% |
| DUMBARTON | 9,726 | 10% | 2% | 9% | 20% | 44% | 9% | 2,781 | 29% |
| ARGYLL | 5,942 | 7% | 2% | 6% | 18% | 56% | 9% | 1,776 | 30% |
| FALKIRK | 9,529 | 9% | 2% | 8% | 23% | 49% | 9% | 2,664 | 28% |
| STIRLING | 11,224 | 11% | 3% | 8% | 23% | 47% | 9% | 3,212 | 29% |
| DUNFERMLINE | 5,071 | 12% | 2% | 9% | 20% | 47% | 9% | 1,969 | 39% |
| KIRKCALDY | 6,126 | 6% | 3% | 6% | 15% | 40% | 12% | 1,636 | 27% |
| ST ANDREWS | 7,197 | 6% | 3% | 8% | 22% | 55% | 7% | 1,711 | 24% |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 4,044 | 6% | 2% | 5% | 17% | 52% | 7% | 1,111 | 27% |
| PERTH | 10,905 | 9% | 3% | 8% | 23% | 45% | 10% | 2,547 | 23% |
| DUNDEE | 9,285 | 9% | 3% | 8% | 20% | 44% | 11% | 2,136 | 23% |
| ANGUS | 10,312 | 9% | 3% | 9% | 21% | 48% | 9% | 2,032 | 20% |
| ABERDEEN | 10,961 | 7% | 3% | 9% | 23% | 43% | 11% | 2,731 | 25% |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 6,182 | 10% | 2% | 8% | 20% | 37% | 10% | 1,423 | 23% |
| GORDON | 10,516 | 13% | 3% | 11% | 23% | 43% | 7% | 1,757 | 17% |
| BUCHAN | 8,735 | 5% | 2% | 6% | 24% | 53% | 9% | 1,405 | 16% |
| MORAY | 6,303 | 8% | 4% | 8% | 20% | 49% | 9% | 1,581 | 25% |
| ABERNETHY | 955 | 8% | 6% | 10% | 26% | 41% | 8% | 525 | 55% |
| INVERNESS | 3,949 | 13% | 3% | 10% | 22% | 48% | 5% | 1,914 | 48% |
| LOCHABER | 904 | 11% | 6% | 6% | 22% | 48% | 8% | 428 | 47% |

Attendance at Worship (continued)

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2019 | Age ranges of worshippers | | | | | | Number of Worshippers | % membership attending worship |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | Under 16 | 16-24 | 25-44 | 45-64 | 65-84 | 85 and over | | |
| ROSS | 1,524 | 10% | 2% | 4% | 15% | 40% | 10% | 1,047 | 69% |
| SUTHERLAND | 542 | 1% | 7% | 1% | 55% | 15% | 21% | 456 | 84% |
| CAITHNESS | 921 | 7% | 2% | 6% | 28% | 38% | 7% | 445 | 48% |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 491 | 5% | 2% | 8% | 33% | 46% | 6% | 484 | 99% |
| UIST | 278 | 15% | 4% | 9% | 28% | 38% | 6% | 299 | 108% |
| LEWIS | 835 | | | | | | | | |
| ORKNEY | 2,262 | 25% | 1% | 6% | 22% | 39% | 8% | 483 | 21% |
| SHETLAND | 883 | 7% | 0% | 4% | 22% | 42% | 3% | 243 | 28% |
| ENGLAND | 1,865 | 10% | 3% | 12% | 25% | 44% | 7% | 336 | 18% |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 2,410 | 9% | 9% | 25% | 27% | 26% | 3% | 792 | 33% |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 312,204 | 9% | 3% | 9% | 22% | 44% | 8% | 88,415 | 28% |

Table 6: Presbytery attendance figures

Congregational Activities

Congregations are asked whether they engage in activities relating to:

- School chaplaincy
- Youth work
- Community development
- International links
- Environmental issues
- Political issues
- Health issues
- Economic inequality
- Food Poverty

Data was received from all but two presbyteries, resulting in the following summary graph:

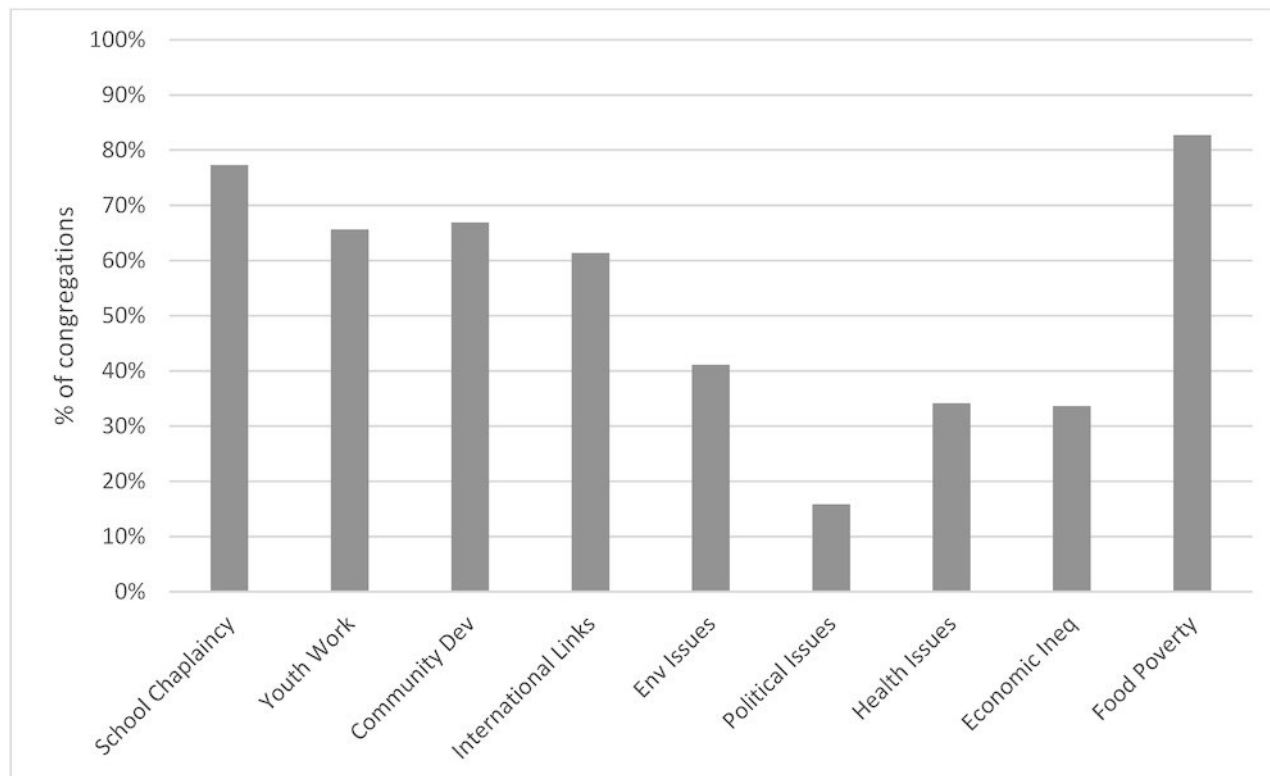


Figure 2: Congregational activities

Alleviating food poverty (83%) and School chaplaincy (77%) were the most common activities in congregations of the Church of Scotland. Engagement with Political issues was the least common with only 16% of congregations.

| Presbyteries | Schools | Youth work | Community development | International links | Environ-ment | Politics | Health | Economic inequality | Food p'rtly |
|----------------------------|---------|------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|--------|---------------------|-------------|
| EDINBURGH | 83% | 81% | 79% | 76% | 56% | 33% | 54% | 43% | 90% |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 96% | 88% | 69% | 73% | 58% | 15% | 54% | 54% | 92% |
| LOTHIAN | 79% | 70% | 77% | 64% | 64% | 23% | 36% | 32% | 91% |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 77% | 54% | 77% | 81% | 54% | 15% | 19% | 19% | 96% |
| DUNS | 79% | 57% | 43% | 36% | 21% | 7% | 21% | 14% | 64% |
| JEDBURGH | 75% | 75% | 50% | 31% | 38% | 13% | 25% | 13% | 56% |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 79% | 53% | 79% | 68% | 26% | 16% | 42% | 37% | 84% |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 75% | 41% | 44% | 56% | 31% | 9% | 16% | 34% | 75% |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 95% | 53% | 47% | 58% | 11% | 0% | 16% | 26% | 100% |
| AYR | 79% | 46% | 69% | 54% | 27% | 6% | 29% | 31% | 63% |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 88% | 73% | 65% | 62% | 46% | 12% | 46% | 31% | 96% |
| ARDROSSAN | 78% | 81% | 75% | 67% | 52% | 11% | 44% | 63% | 89% |
| LANARK | 86% | 81% | 71% | 81% | 24% | 19% | 29% | 52% | 90% |
| GREENOCK AND PAISLEY | 73% | 80% | 65% | 57% | 27% | 12% | 37% | 20% | 84% |
| GLASGOW | 80% | 70% | 80% | 66% | 56% | 28% | 47% | 44% | 72% |
| HAMILTON | 86% | 81% | 85% | 70% | 48% | 21% | 58% | 55% | 93% |
| DUMBARTON | 88% | 64% | 58% | 45% | 61% | 18% | 30% | 30% | 76% |
| ARGYLL | 59% | 47% | 55% | 45% | 36% | 5% | 24% | 28% | 60% |
| FALKIRK | 82% | 71% | 65% | 68% | 26% | 6% | 29% | 35% | 88% |
| STIRLING | 78% | 63% | 72% | 67% | 46% | 13% | 28% | 24% | 89% |
| DUNFERMLINE | 96% | 67% | 75% | 92% | 50% | 17% | 38% | 42% | 100% |
| KIRKCALDY | 87% | 74% | 78% | 74% | 52% | 9% | 39% | 43% | 91% |
| ST ANDREWS | 65% | 52% | 81% | 68% | 42% | 13% | 23% | 23% | 94% |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 86% | 57% | 52% | 48% | 43% | 10% | 29% | 38% | 81% |
| PERTH | 83% | 71% | 83% | 60% | 40% | 17% | 29% | 31% | 83% |
| DUNDEE | 69% | 77% | 71% | 57% | 51% | 14% | 57% | 49% | 89% |
| ANGUS | 74% | 51% | 57% | 54% | 43% | 17% | 31% | 40% | 69% |
| ABERDEEN | 88% | 74% | 68% | 59% | 62% | 26% | 44% | 38% | 97% |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 90% | 90% | 81% | 71% | 52% | 5% | 38% | 19% | 62% |
| GORDON | 89% | 68% | 61% | 61% | 46% | 18% | 21% | 21% | 86% |
| BUCHAN | 59% | 62% | 41% | 29% | 21% | 0% | 9% | 15% | 71% |
| MORAY | 67% | 63% | 56% | 44% | 26% | 22% | 33% | 22% | 81% |
| ABERNETHY | 83% | 50% | 67% | 83% | 50% | 8% | 33% | 25% | 100% |
| INVERNESS | | | | | | | | | |
| LOCHABER | 100% | 67% | 60% | 67% | 7% | 13% | 7% | 27% | 93% |

| Presbyteries | Schools | Youth work | Community development | International links | Environment | Politics | Health | Economic inequality | Food p'rtly |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|------------|------------|---------------------|-------------|
| ROSS | 81% | 57% | 62% | 67% | 24% | 10% | 38% | 19% | 86% |
| SUTHERLAND | 71% | 57% | 64% | 43% | 29% | 29% | 36% | 36% | 86% |
| CAITHNESS | 78% | 56% | 67% | 44% | 22% | 22% | 33% | 33% | 67% |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 63% | 88% | 38% | 63% | 13% | 0% | 38% | 13% | 88% |
| UIST | 83% | 100% | 67% | 67% | 17% | 33% | 33% | 33% | 33% |
| LEWIS | | | | | | | | | |
| ORKNEY | 55% | 35% | 55% | 60% | 45% | 15% | 10% | 25% | 65% |
| SHETLAND | 31% | 46% | 31% | 62% | 23% | 0% | 0% | 23% | 77% |
| ENGLAND | 13% | 13% | 75% | 38% | 50% | 25% | 50% | 50% | 75% |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 0% | 47% | 18% | 53% | 18% | 29% | 18% | 29% | 59% |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 77% | 66% | 67% | 61% | 41% | 16% | 34% | 34% | 83% |

Table 7: Congregational activities

Congregational Statistical Returns – Young People

(cf Appendix III of the Reports of the Council of Assembly, 2019)

Reports from the Presbyteries showed that as at 31 December 2019:

1. The number of children and young people aged 17 years and under who are involved in the life of the congregation is 47,393;
2. The number of people aged 18 years and over, whose names are not on the Communion Roll, but who are involved in the life of the congregations is 15,474 and;
3. The number of children who receive Holy Communion in terms of Act V, 2000, Section 15 is 3,272.

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31st Dec 2019 | Children under 17 | Children receiving Communion | Adults not on Communion roll |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|---|
| EDINBURGH | 20,305 | 4,026 | 543 | 1,216 |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 7,199 | 1,639 | 99 | 316 |
| LOTHIAN | 10,829 | 1,204 | 170 | 643 |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 5,206 | 301 | 28 | 240 |
| DUNS | 2,299 | 193 | 13 | 57 |
| JEDBURGH | 4,656 | 299 | 1 | 7 |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 3,743 | 227 | 10 | 105 |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 7,353 | 327 | 11 | 158 |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 4,176 | 471 | 18 | 43 |
| AYR | 14,994 | 1,754 | 40 | 223 |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 7,899 | 1,094 | 58 | 221 |
| ARDROSSAN | 7,016 | 1,038 | 29 | 188 |
| LANARK | 5,012 | 1,281 | 127 | 316 |
| GREENOCK AND PAISLEY | 15,033 | 3,759 | 163 | 502 |
| GLASGOW | 26,313 | 8,339 | 553 | 2,471 |
| HAMILTON | 20,294 | 4,979 | 154 | 841 |
| DUMBARTON | 9,726 | 1,175 | 85 | 326 |
| ARGYLL | 5,942 | 390 | 22 | 190 |
| FALKIRK | 9,529 | 1,786 | 126 | 227 |
| STIRLING | 11,224 | 1,071 | 111 | 289 |
| DUNFERMLINE | 5,071 | 717 | 111 | 202 |
| KIRKCALDY | 6,126 | 600 | 41 | 137 |
| ST ANDREWS | 7,197 | 306 | 6 | 176 |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 4,044 | 450 | 3 | 125 |
| PERTH | 10,905 | 1,036 | 77 | 417 |
| DUNDEE | 9,285 | 1,217 | 128 | 511 |
| ANGUS | 10,312 | 1,040 | 63 | 137 |
| ABERDEEN | 10,961 | 1,184 | 70 | 264 |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 6,182 | 727 | 84 | 236 |
| GORDON | 10,516 | 1,061 | 62 | 310 |
| BUCHAN | 8,735 | 1,070 | 14 | 129 |
| MORAY | 6,303 | 388 | 7 | 183 |

Congregational Statistical Returns – Young People (continued)

(cf Appendix III of the Reports of the Council of Assembly, 2019)

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31st Dec 2019 | Children under 17 | Children receiving Communion | Adults not on Communion roll |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------|---|---|
| ABERNETHY | 955 | 161 | 48 | 211 |
| INVERNESS | 3,949 | 551 | 95 | 419 |
| LOCHABER | 904 | 124 | 13 | 262 |
| ROSS | 1,524 | 172 | 5 | 1,005 |
| SUTHERLAND | 542 | 142 | 4 | 298 |
| CAITHNESS | 921 | 185 | 12 | 261 |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 491 | 45 | 5 | 278 |
| UIST | 278 | 55 | 10 | 351 |
| LEWIS | 835 | 368 | 21 | 830 |
| ORKNEY | 2,262 | 135 | 9 | 71 |
| SHETLAND | 883 | 62 | 0 | 27 |
| ENGLAND | 1,865 | 70 | 9 | 45 |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 2,410 | 174 | 14 | 10 |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 312,204 | 47,393 | 3,272 | 15,474 |

Table 8: Young People and Adherents

In the name of the Assembly Trustees

JOHN CHALMERS, Convener
 NORMA ROLLS, Vice-Convener
 JAMES McNEILL, Administrative Trustee

Appendix 1

Report of the Ministries and Mission Working Group

Introduction

One of the goals of the Radical Action Plan agreed at the General Assembly of 2019 was a desire to de-centralise the Church and move as much responsibility and accountability for the life, mission and ministry of the Church from the national Church to the local and regional Church.

With this in mind, the Assembly Trustees appointed a working group in October 2019 to *review the present Ministries and Mission (M & M) contribution scheme and, if appropriate, to bring forward recommendations for an alternative scheme.*

As part of its remit, the working group was also asked to consider methods by which the work of the proposed new Presbyteries might be financed and to think about what arrangements would need to be put in place as the Church transitions towards a new M&M system.

In its interim report to the General Assembly of October 2020, the working group gave details of the range of its consultation within the Church, and with partner churches at home and abroad, identified what were perceived to be the strengths and weaknesses of the present M&M contribution scheme, and concluded that although the present M&M scheme was successful in raising the total requested, and also shared the financial costs of ministry across the Church, it was *perceived to lack clarity, act as a disincentive to local mission initiatives, feel like a tax and penalise those congregations who take stewardship seriously.*

The working group also concluded there is an almost complete lack of understanding in the Church about what a full time Minister of Word and Sacrament actually costs, and the variety of purposes for which the Parish Ministries fund is being used under the present system.

As it considered these conclusions, and started to imagine what an alternative scheme might be like, the working group articulated the following of principles.

Based on the gospel imperative to *make disciples of all nations*, and given the Church's commitment to the poorest and most vulnerable people in our communities, any new contribution system to the ministry and mission of the Church should aspire to be;

*Fair
Transparent and easy to understand
Adaptable to changing circumstances
A driver of change
An incentive to mission
Effective*

And then the Covid-19 pandemic struck!

In an instant every aspect of the life of the Church was turned on its head, its worship, ministry, mission, and community engagement, as well as its financial health and well-being.

From a financial perspective, the closure of church buildings for worship services, and the closure of church halls for church and community activities, has resulted in a significant loss of income across the Church.

And it is the income generated by congregations which pays for ministry.

If the impact of the pandemic has still to be determined in terms of the worship, ministry and mission of the Church, it will be some time yet before the full financial implications of the pandemic on the Church can be properly assessed

Taking these two factors together, the direction of travel proposed by the Radical Action Plan, and the changed and changing economic context created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the need to create a new scheme to fund the

ministry and mission of the Church could hardly be more urgent.

Giving to Grow

Based on the actual cost of a Minister of Word and Sacrament, the proposed new contribution scheme - **Giving to Grow** - will make clear to members of congregations what their charge is contributing towards the cost of the ministry it is receiving.

As well as making clear what their charge is contributing towards the cost of the ministry it is receiving, the scheme will also make clear to members what, if anything, their charge is contributing to ministry elsewhere.

Finally, the proposed system will also make clear to members what their charge is contributing to support the wider work of the Church including the core work of their Presbytery.

And with the assessable income being based on the most recent year, as opposed to the three-year rolling average under the present scheme, as well as being simpler to understand, the proposed scheme will also be more responsive to changing circumstances.

How will it work?

Each year the Stewardship and Finance Department will calculate the cost of a Minister of Word and Sacrament. This amount will be the cost to the Parish Ministries Fund for the stipend, employer's national insurance, employer's pension and death in service contribution and employment protection insurance. This cost will vary over time as, for example, stipends increase, or changes are made by government to national insurance or employer's pension contributions. It is this cost which provides the base line calculation for the proposed contribution scheme and any such changes to the baseline cost will be spread across all charges, rather than just the minority of charges at present.

The contribution will be based on the income of a charge and not on an individual congregation. Each charge will have an annual "charge income" figure. The charge income is the aggregate income of all congregations in the charge for the year prior to the year in which the proposed contributions are calculated and issued. For example, the 2023 contributions would be based on the 2021 charge aggregate income.

The charge aggregate income will include all sums available to meet normal expenditure and there is no change in this element from the current system. The working group spent considerable time considering what the income of a charge available for assessment should be and, apart from a recommendation to reduce the threshold for assessment of hall lets (£10,000 rather than £20,000 as present), the working group confirms that legacies left to a charge for general or specific purposes should be excluded, if a legacy is invested, any investment income would be included in an assessment.

The group also considered some form of levy on what might be described as excessive general reserves and we suggest this is a matter to be kept under review by the Assembly Trustees and encouragement given for the use of such reserves in support of the local, regional and national Church as a way of encouraging changes in behavior.

Under the proposed scheme each congregation within a charge will pay a proportion of the contribution in proportion to their congregation's income. However, rather than allocating a single figure to each congregation as under the present scheme, under the proposed scheme the M&M contribution will be split into three separate components and the congregations in a charge will be notified of the amount of each component:

- i. Ministry Here

- ii. Ministry Elsewhere
- iii. Shared Activities including Presbytery

The “Ministry Here” component of the contribution will fund the cost of the parish minister/s in the charge. It will be calculated at 50% of the charge income up to a maximum of the cost of the parish ministry posts allocated in the Presbytery plan. All congregations within a charge which are allocated a post in the Presbytery Plan will be required to pay this amount even when vacant. Based on the actual cost of a parish minister, as well as providing clarity on what a charge is paying towards the ministry it is receiving, by making clear the actual cost of a Minister of Word and Sacrament, it is hoped the ‘Ministry Here’ component will act as an incentive to every charge to meet that cost.

In order to produce an assessment equal to the full cost of “Ministry Here” (the cost of a parish minister), charge income would need to exceed twice the cost of the parish ministry posts allocated in the Presbytery plan. Charge income in excess of this amount will be taken into account to calculate the “Ministry Elsewhere” component. This will be calculated at 35% of the excess income, and “Ministry Elsewhere” contributions will be capped for all charges at an amount equal to 1.5 times ministry posts.

The purpose of this cap is to meet one of the requirements of the Radical Action Plan, namely that greater financial resources will be left with local congregations to encourage their ministry and mission. One of the repeated concerns expressed about the present M&M scheme is that it acts as a disincentive to mission. Introducing a cap on the Ministry Elsewhere element of the calculation is intended to encourage congregations to raise funds for their own local purposes, a key factor in improving financial sustainability and enhancing the ministry and mission of the charge in their local community, as well as the ministry and mission of the wider church.

The salaries and related costs of Ministries Development Staff (MDS), whose posts are part of agreed Presbytery Plans will be funded from “Ministry Elsewhere”. As the Church adjusts to a new configuration of the number of charges and ministries that it can sustain this will be an area of the scheme which will be subject to annual review

The contribution towards “Shared Activities including Presbytery” will be 10% of the assessable income of a charge. Shared activities include many of the services provided by the national Church which benefit all charges, for example, Safeguarding, but this may be developed over time.

The Presbytery element will initially provide funding for the equivalent of a full time clerk and an administrator together with an element of funding towards running costs and Presbyteries will have the freedom to allocate this funding as they see fit, perhaps employing a full time person or creating a part time clerk’s post alongside a 50% parish ministry post.

Presbyteries will also be free to raise their own funds for whatever purposes they choose, whether through the allocation of Presbytery dues, or the use of investments, legacies and reserves, or in partnership with other denominations, third sector organizations or Local Authorities.

One of the intentions of setting the Shared Activities and Presbytery element of the allocation at a fixed percentage is to create a closer link between planning and budgeting meaning the regional and national Church will need to take account of what income is available when planning their work.

To take account of vacant congregations an amount will be allocated annually from the Faith Nurture Forum budget to be used to support such congregations. Initially, this amount will be based on the current level of vacancy allowance. Each Presbytery will then be allocated an amount proportionate

to the number of vacancies in that Presbytery to be used to provide appropriate cover for vacant charges.

Example Calculations

All assuming the cost of ministry is £44,000 per annum

1. Single congregation with assessable income of £100,000
 Ministry Here - £44,000 (50% x £100,000 up to max. of cost of ministry)
 Ministry Elsewhere - £4,200 (35% x £12,000 which is income in excess of £88k)
 Presbytery and Shared Activities - £10,000 (10% x £100,000)
 Total contribution by charge - £58,200
2. Charge comprises two congregations with assessable income of £30,000 and £20,000
 Ministry Here - £25,000 (50% x £50,000)
 Ministry Elsewhere - £0
 Presbytery and Shared Activities £5,000 (10% x £50,000)
 Total contribution by charge - £30,000
 Split by congregation:
 Congregation 1 £18,000
 Congregation 2 £12,000

Can we see and do things differently?

The working group is acutely aware that, taken on its own, a new M&M contribution scheme will not resolve the immediate financial pressures facing the church, and neither will it provide the church with a longer term sustainable financial future.

As our chief officer, Dave Kendall, made clear in his article in Life and Work in January 2021, to secure *financial stability* there is a need to be clear about our Church’s priorities, not least *what we can set aside (which) will enable us to plan for and invest in future growth*.

Critical to the financial stability and future growth of the Church will be the successful creation of a new Presbytery structure with each new Presbytery creating a robust and sustainable plan.

The initiative from the General Trustees to provide *well equipped spaces in the right places* will be one of the key drivers of any robust and sustainable plan as we can no longer afford to maintain the present number of church buildings.

Given the closure of church buildings for public worship during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the remarkable use of online resources for worship, Bible study, prayer groups and fellowship, the opportunity to create a mixed economy of physical and online worshipping communities is one which needs to be grasped, developed and incorporated into Presbytery planning.

And given that each of the Christian denominations in Scotland is facing the same challenges as the Church of Scotland, there is surely also an opportunity to engage in ecumenical partnerships to ensure a worshipping and serving Christian presence in every community. This ecumenical dimension also needs to become an integral part of Presbytery planning.

If these factors – renewed Presbytery structure, robust Presbytery planning, a mixed economy of physical and online worshipping and serving communities, and renewed ecumenical co-operation – are some of the factors critical to the financial stability and future growth of the Church of Scotland, the working group is also conscious of more immediate threats.

As was evident from the webinar we held with Priority Area congregations, in conversation with colleagues in the Highland and Island charges, and from the conversations Dave Kendall has had with many ministers and congregational treasurers, that many congregations are facing serious financial difficulties. Some have used up all their available reserves to meet their present M&M allocation and other necessary expenses while for many others, normal income is no longer meeting – or anywhere near meeting – normal expenditure.

Given the acute nature of the financial pressures facing many congregations, the working group proposes the creation of a Transition Fund.

Transition Fund

When the Radical Action plan was first discussed, it was hoped to create a Growth Fund but circumstances resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic rendered this impossible.

In order to mitigate some of the financial impact of the pandemic on the church, and to allow time for the new M&M system to become established alongside the other factors mentioned above, the proposed Transition Fund would be available to be applied for by any charge in financial difficulties. The regulations governing the Transition Fund will need to be robust and, for example, might include the charge being able to demonstrate it was an integral part of its Presbytery Plan, it was engaged in a stewardship project in partnership with the church's stewardship consultants, and satisfied the requirements of the General Trustees to provide 'a well-equipped space in the right place'.

Discount

Given the acute financial pressures facing many congregations, including many Priority Area and rural charges, the working group considered at length the option of including a discount in the 'Ministry Here' part of the calculation, making it voluntary, or including a variety of allowances for what might be described as 'essential' expenses (for example, heating, lighting, insurance costs).

After careful consideration, the working group decided not to recommend any form of discount to become part of its proposal, partly because of the enormous and ultimately unworkable administrative burden it would add to the scheme, partly because it would significantly reduce the principles of fairness and transparency inherent in its proposal, and also because any M&M scheme is intended to raise funds to support parish ministry and can only be one part of the Church's response to the challenge it is facing to maintain sustainable worshipping communities across the country.

Communication strategy

The working group was tasked with bringing to the Assembly Trustees a new system for Ministries and Mission contributions. The system we are recommending is straightforward, simple to understand and calculate, and is transparent in its application. However, from our research we are persuaded many people throughout the church do not understand the purpose of a Ministry and Mission contribution system – beyond sending money to '121'.

In order to address this concern, the working group proposes a communication strategy to accompany the introduction of the new scheme.

The purpose of the communication strategy would be to tell the story of the Church in creative and imaginative ways, celebrating and informing members of the remarkable work being done by the Church locally, regionally and nationally. There is much to celebrate in the life of our Church the length and breadth of the country, and with partner churches at home and abroad, and the working group is persuaded that a financial uplift will be one of the outcomes of an effective communication strategy.

Conclusion

The working group is glad to present its report and its proposed new contribution scheme – *Giving to Grow* – for the approval of the General Assembly.

It is a scheme designed to bring in money based upon charge income to support the ministry and mission of the whole Church, but it does not define the areas of spend in the Shared Activities section, that is, it is not an expenditure model.

It is designed to be more flexible than the current scheme and better able to respond to changing circumstances within the life of the Church or individual charges.

It encourages responsible budgetary discipline by making clear the connection between income and planning.

It is designed in such a way to be clear and transparent, it has been extensively tested and modeled, and it works.

Moreover, we believe that *Giving to Grow* should be subject to a process of annual review. Annual review will provide an important safeguard such that any problems or concerns which emerge, can be quickly addressed and resolved.

The financial challenges facing congregations and the wider Church have been evident for some time and the Radical Action plan was, in part, a response to these challenges.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the financial damage for the Church, and for every aspect of the wider economy, is all too apparent. From a financial perspective, the situation facing many of our congregations is acute, so we cannot continue as we are, and fresh thinking is needed more than ever.

As we have developed *Giving to Grow* the working group has come to the view that it is not just a new contribution scheme which is required but an integrated approach which seeks to embrace something of the values and priorities of the ministry and mission of the church.

The economist John Maynard Keynes said, '*The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones.*'

So, mindful of the challenges, what are the old ideas from which we need to escape?

And do we have the faith and the imagination to see and do things differently?

Appendix 2

From the report of the Forum Consultation - Special Task Group (D10)

Ecumenical Relations and the Theological Forum

Background

The report of the 2019 Special Commission on Structural Reform placed the Ecumenical Relations Committee and Theological Forum within the management and departmental structure of the Faith Nurture Forum and placed Interfaith work within the management and departmental structure of the Faith Impact Forum.

The Trustees' report to the General Assembly in October 2020 said (para 33) that they remained of the view expressed in their 2019 report that the work of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and of the Theological Forum should be subject to review, especially as to the way in which they relate to the new Forums and to the level of membership required to deliver the work in which they are engaged.

The Trustees asked our group to look at this as part of our work. We therefore met with the Principal Clerk; the Convener of the Theological Forum; and the Convener, Vice Convener and Officer of the Ecumenical Relations Committee during our Phase 1 consultation and invited their comments on our thinking during Phase 2.

Creating a stand-alone arrangement for the Theological Forum and Ecumenical Relations Committee within the Office of the Assembly Trustees is not feasible currently given work load pressures on the Chief Officer and his existing number of direct reports.

Ecumenical Relations

Nationally, the ecumenical relations scene has been transformed since March 2020 when the pandemic restrictions began, with collaborative working across the national base and with other denominations. Government doors have opened more readily when an ecumenical approach is made and there has been an increasing realisation of the importance of engagement with the Scottish Government. Much of this work has been undertaken by the Ecumenical Officer and the Principal Clerk.

We recognise that denomination to denomination relating at a national level, and the relationships developed at that level, often make local work possible. There will be a continuing need for attention to be given to ecumenism at a national level.

The work of the Ecumenical Relations Committee is positive, but its placement within the work of the Faith Nurture Forum, from a managerial and departmental perspective, has not been judged especially effective in terms of either integration or impact. We propose that until May 2022 Ecumenical Relations sits within the management and departmental structure of the Office of the General Assembly.

We believe that this temporary move is appropriate for a period when the work of ecumenical relations has a large national and civic focus, and there is a strong alignment with much of the representative work of the Principal Clerk. There is already significant collaboration in this area.

Theological Forum

The Theological Forum has effectively supported many areas of the current work. In theory the current reporting route is through the Faith Nurture Forum. However, this has not been meaningful in practice.

The current staffing arrangement means that it would make sense for the departmental oversight for the Theological Forum to be located in the Office of the General Assembly until General Assembly 2022.

Looking ahead

It may be appropriate, from 2022, for Ecumenical Relations to move back from the Office of the General Assembly within the ambit of the Faith Action sphere:

- To facilitate the essential local and national connections required by the Ecumenical Relations Committee
- Given the need for integration and collaboration in the church's work, to ensure that the ecumenical work of the Church is strongly integrated with the work of the Faith Action Plan. While the Committee envisage working closely with the new Head of Faith Action Programme, coming more specifically within the Faith Action sphere may be beneficial.
- In the context of any structural changes developed following on from the D10 Group's work concerning the Forums, and particularly of the importance of integrating the work of the Ecumenical Relations Committee with the life of congregations.
- With the appointment of the Head of Faith Action Programme, capacity issues may be different.

Going further, there may be a case for rethinking how Ecumenical Relations is best organised within the national base, given ongoing change within the church such as Presbytery development and the need for ecumenism increasingly to be a feature of local congregational life.

There are different considerations with the Theological Forum. Given that the General Assembly is responsible for matters of doctrine; there is an argument for keeping the Forum within the management and departmental structure of the Office of the General Assembly. This will be revisited by the Assembly Trustees during the course of the next year.

The D10 Group: Rev Professor David Fergusson, Rev Neil Glover, Rev Sheila Kirk, Rev Jan Mathieson, Rev Donald McCorkindale, Ann Nelson (chair)

Appendix 3

The remit of the legal Questions Committee 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;
- To assist in formulating responses to consultations opened by the Scottish and UK Governments and other bodies;
- To provide the legislative drafting service for agencies of the General Assembly;
- To advise on reform to Church law in terms of practice and procedure;
- To report to the General Assembly on proposed amendments to Standing Orders;
- To inspect annually records of Agencies of the General Assembly; and
- To inspect annually records of Presbyteries.

References

- [1] Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees, para 28
- [2] Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees, paras 5 and 6
- [3] Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees, para 44
- [4] Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees, para 47
- [5] Constitution and Remit of the Assembly Trustees, para 18a and 18b
- [6] This number will include Full Time Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Ministries Development Staff and part time ministries
- [7] The Church recorded a 96.3% response rate when surveyed, higher than in recent years.
- [8] Due to timings of the 2020 General Assembly, 2019 results were delayed for publication.

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct Kirk Sessions to study the Report, especially Section 2, and consider the questions raised as they apply to their own mission strategies, or as part of their process of developing mission strategies.
3. Instruct Presbyteries to study the Report, especially Section 3, and consider the questions raised alongside their plans for reshaping the newly formed Presbyteries and developing mission strategies.
4. Instruct the agencies of the General Assembly to study the Report, and consider the questions raised, particularly around how these will impact the shaping and functioning of the General Assembly and the agencies of the General Assembly and their developing mission strategies, and also the relationship these bodies will have with each other, Presbyteries and the local Church, and in particular instruct (1) the Legal Questions Committee to consider these matters when framing the new Church Courts Act, (2) the Assembly Business Committee to consider these matters when looking at questions of General Assembly reform, and (3) the Assembly Trustees to consider including appropriate reporting on these matters in their report to the General Assembly of 2022.
5. Thank all those who have engaged with the Special Commission.
6. Thank and discharge the Special Commission.

Report

1. SETTING THE SCENE AND REFLECTION

1.1 After the far-reaching decisions made by the 2019 General Assembly, to which we can add further decisions made at the online October General Assembly of 2020, the growing sense that the Church of Scotland is going through one of those periodic times of change cannot, and should not, be denied. The effects of Covid-19 and the lockdown have also brought into sharp relief issues that have been pressing on the conscience of the Church for many years. Some will argue that the Church has broadly been living in denial about how things really are, and it was well said that the report of the Special Commission in 2019 simply told us, but more pointedly, what many already knew but had not acknowledged about what needed to be addressed within the Church of Scotland at every level.

1.2 There is nothing new in this. Every generation in the Church has faced, or failed to face, the realities that the world around it is changing and will continue to change. The structures with which the Church of Scotland has lived for many years, when the denomination was numerically larger and closer to the heart of society, no longer fit our times. Changes have been attempted in previous generations, but the underlying structure was built on a mindset that presumed that, if we did the old things better and 'louder', the people of Scotland would return. What is different now, and in truth has been for several generations, is that numerical decline and secularisation mean that the system itself has become increasingly unsuited for a smaller, marginalised Church. It does not fit mission for the twenty-first century, and there is an increasing lack of financial resource and, more importantly, human resource to make it work. The Church is at a tipping point. This can be seen at every level of the Church's governance. Recent General Assemblies have moved towards a major restructuring of the central administration of the Church, but the process of restructuring is only just beginning to happen in Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions.

1.3 We may be called to be faithful rather than successful but, underlying our contemporary challenge, is something of a more existential nature. We are being challenged to address, in our time, questions that simply put are: "What is the Church for? What is our purpose? What is our function? What is our relevance?" If, to borrow a phrase from the speech given by the Very Revd Dr John Chalmers in his report to the October 2020 General Assembly on behalf of the Assembly Trustees, we are to prepare to be, "A very different shape of Church... We have to be ready, lean and fit for purpose", we need to continue to ask what that shape is to be, and how is it to be achieved, and where should we begin.

1.4 The remit given to this Special Commission by the 2019 General Assembly was:

"To prepare a report on the effectiveness of the Presbyterian form of Church government...particularly in promoting and supporting the mission of local congregations and developing leadership in the Church."

The report we present is not a blueprint for action. That rightly sits with other bodies who hold executive and budgetary responsibilities granted by the General Assembly and with Presbyteries and congregations.

1.5 Early on in its existence, the Special Commission came to the view that no system of Church government is inherently more effective in promoting and supporting mission and developing leadership than any other. All systems of Church government have strengths and weaknesses, but honesty forces us to conclude that the greatest strength of any system is the way in which people

work within it, and equally, the greatest weakness is also the same – in other words, its implementation. The experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that there is nothing inherent to Presbyterianism which inhibits innovation and creativity. The Special Commission is not persuaded that any other system of Church government would have made the Church of Scotland any more innovative, creative and responsive, or led to it responding more quickly to the challenges faced over the last year. Insofar as the interpretation and implementation of the Presbyterian system of governance sometimes inhibits local mission, this may be due to the method and mindset of engagement within the Church, rather than Presbyterianism itself.

1.6 The Special Commission has seen its role as raising questions for the wider Church to consider. There are many questions and few answers. The Commission believes that it is for the local Church, the Presbyteries, the General Assembly and the Assembly-appointed bodies to wrestle with the different questions raised within their context. This work has begun in several areas, but there needs to be a wider engagement of the whole Church (not just its Courts) in these discussions.

1.7 What the Special Commission seeks to set out are principles that might be applied to every expression of governance of the Church: local, regional and national. We also pose questions that need answers, again, in every area of the Church's life. Other bodies associated with the Church are already addressing the '*how to*' practicalities and providing 'tool kits'. The Special Commission notes that, even in the last two years, the goalposts have already shifted, and will continue to shift.

1.8 What this Special Commission offers is the **image of a mirror**. '*This is what we are like; this is what we do and how we do it.*' Looking at a mirror requires courage and discernment. Sometimes we see what is looking back at us; other times we become preoccupied by what is behind us; and sometimes we fail to see what is really there.

1.9 The mirror we offer not only helps us see to ourselves as we are, but perhaps helps us glimpse what God sees in our past, present and, dare we say, future. As we look into this mirror, are we happy with the image that we see? Do we diagnose in that reflection the things that ail the Church and, if we do, are we able to identify the treatment needed to create wellness and wholeness? More importantly, do we have a vision of what wellness and wholeness will look like for the Church after the treatment, in the short, medium and long terms?

1.10 If the Church of Scotland is currently (or is it continuously?) in a state of flux, *ecclesia reformata et semper reformanda*, (the reformed Church must always be reforming), then might we be brave enough to say that our Church is not dying – it is simply reforming? It is perhaps in that concept of 'simply reforming' that we might anchor ourselves. Is this what our mirror reflects back to us – a Church that needs to reform? Or do we need to go further and wrestle with God's call to our Church to transform, and be prepared to lay down the things that no longer work, and take up the things that will help us, with God, create a Church fit for God's purposes today and tomorrow? Do we give enough time for vision? Structural change is not an end in itself. As we look into the mirror and beyond it, do the structures we plan for and shape at every level of the Church's life meet the criteria that set out to develop faith and accompany people along the road of discipleship? We are not reforming, or transforming, to stay the same. Nor will this process ever be completed. It will evolve as the Church, and the context within which the Church operates, continue to evolve.

1.11 In this difficult, painful, and unsettling time we must take a long, hard look at ourselves: who we are, what we are doing, and why we are doing it. We need to be aware of our past, but not necessarily bound by it, particularly in a

time of crisis when we may have to take up new ways, and lay old ways down. One of the hard realities is that we do not always get rid of the things in Church life that no longer work towards God's purposes of mission and transformation. The challenge will be to discern what *is not working*, and needs to be let go, and what *might yet work* and be transformed and invigorated. The Stanford economist Paul Romer said that, 'A crisis is a terrible thing to waste.' We live in a time of crisis, but it has been so for some considerable time. For many people, the Covid-19 pandemic has focussed minds and challenged us to realise that there is no going back. Covid-19 has forced us to look at things we did not want to see in our Church, and in ourselves. In this time of danger, there is still a time of opportunity, and work needs to be done. As we are being called to be visionary, we are also called to be courageous, but we would like to add another vital description of what the Church must be in every expression of its existence: we must be *kind*. Any effective form of Presbyterianism must have at its core vision and courage, but also the value of kindness.

1.12 The work of self-examination, transformation and invigoration has already begun through the actions of the Assembly Trustees, the Assembly Business Committee, the Office of the General Assembly, the General Trustees, the Ministries and Mission Review Group and the Legal Questions Committee. The Faith Nurture Forum and the Faith Impact Forum have also been involved in processes shaping their plans. Presbyteries across the land have already begun uniting, or talking about uniting. The field for change is a crowded one and there is a need for these bodies to consult and to work together. In the drafting stages of this report, the Special Commission shared its thoughts and questions with a number of these bodies.

1.13 Since the 16th century Reformation of the Church of Scotland, a Church structure that started basically as a local house Church, and then a congregational gathering, developed comparatively quickly into parallel regional and national manifestations. History does not permit us to turn back time, but it enables us to see where we have been and note why we went there. It also helps us to imagine and then decide where we might go next, and why that path, to the best of our understanding, is the correct one for this time. To that extent, it is maybe helpful to remember that the first description of the early Christian Church was "The Way", (Acts 9:2). Christians, and their Churches, are meant to maintain within their purpose and practice a sense of dynamism. The story of Jesus' life was one of constant peregrination, Bethlehem to Egypt to Nazareth, to Galilee and to Jerusalem, with forays into the uncomfortable territory of Samaria. The same was also true for Paul. To be a Christian involves us in movement. This may be physically from place to place, or within our communities, parishes, nation and world. It may also be in our minds and hearts as our thoughts and feelings move us onwards and about. The image of the Holy Spirit as a bird (the word in Hebrew can sometimes mean either a pigeon or a dove, an emblem of message carrier, or peace bringer, or love), is well captured in the Scottish context by the wild goose of the Iona Community, always on the move. This reminds us of some of the earliest missionary endeavours in Scotland by Irish missionaries, who brought Christianity to that island and who, in later years, as the emissaries of the Abbey of Columba, the *peregrinati*, wandered from their monastery across the country and across much of Western Europe, bringing with them the Good News of Jesus. The World Council of Churches has, for some years, been using the "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace" to frame much of its witness and work. Across Scotland there has been a rediscovered interest in the practice pilgrimage with several routes developed. Might this be a time to embrace the necessity of movement and exploration in the way our Church works at every level, and what would this look like?

1.14 Is there something in this dynamic of our faith, this peregrination with the Good News, that might inform what

our reforming Church needs to embody and effect in its local, regional and national expressions? This is not to say that this has not been part of our work. But it may be, after what has felt like a time of necessary introspection brought about by the radical review of recent years, that the time to look outwards and to speak outwards is on our horizon again.

1.15 The Special Commission reflects, with its mirror image, that this is precisely the opportunity presented by the Five Marks of Mission, first formulated by the Anglican Consultative Council and now widely referred to throughout the world-wide Church. Do we, as a local, regional and national Church, see in the image reflecting back those marks of mission in our being, and in our doing?

1.16 The Assembly Trustees, in their May 2020 update, drew attention to those Five Marks of Mission, and the Five Marks were welcomed by the General Assembly in the report of the Assembly Trustees in October 2020. They are:

- i. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- ii. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- iii. To respond to human need by loving service
- iv. To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- v. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

For the Church of Scotland to continue to be fit for purpose in the 21st Century, these Five Marks must be evidenced at local, regional and national levels. No one size will fit each level, nor will there be conformity of expression across the country. It is how the Church at all levels and in all parts of our country interprets and incarnates the Five Marks that will begin to demonstrate the purpose of the Church and, borrowing the Guild's motto, 'Whose we are and Whom we serve.'

1.17 Another way of looking at this would be to ask:

- a. What is God's mission in the world, and how are we to join in the mission of God, informed by our understanding and response to the Five Marks of Mission?
- b. How does each individual Christian in the Church see their role participating in this mission, recognising that this is not an abstract Church plan, it is God's plan, and that each individual carries a responsibility for their part within God's plan for God's world and God's Church today? Joined with that mission, together, we become the Church: enabled to love and to care as individuals, as a denomination, and as part of the Universal Church.

1.18 The Special Commission was also drawn to a reformulation of the Five Marks drawn up by the Anglican Board of Mission in Australia in 2013, which sets them out in more direct language, such that our responsibility as Christians is clear:

1. Witness to Christ's saving, forgiving, reconciling love for all people
2. Build welcoming, transforming communities of faith
3. Stand in solidarity with the poor and needy
4. Challenge violence, injustice and oppression, and work for peace and reconciliation
5. Protect, care for and renew life on our planet.

Whichever way of expressing these essential ideas is preferred by the local, regional or national Church, the call to Christ's people to do and to be something in the image of Christ, and serve within the world, remains clear.

1.19 The Special Commission would note that, whilst mission was given as part of our remit, mission is an essential but not exhaustive action of the Church today. Worship is the other essential element, being the fuel for all aspects of the Christian life, including mission and this needs to find a place in all levels of Church life. How can worship better inspire members to consider mission as an essential, and readily accessible, aspect of the Christian life, linked intrinsically to their participation in worship? What can we do to balance Church life for members so that mission does not become exhausting and squeeze out the refreshment of life found through participation in worship?

1.20 An area that affects each level of the Church of Scotland is how each court of the Church relates to the others. If the aim of the process of review is to empower, equip and resource the local Church, some fundamental attitudes need to be addressed and re-formed.

1.21 There is often a strong sense that our culture has failed to produce defined leaders. At General Assembly, the question is sometimes asked, 'Where are the *big* names?' It is difficult to disentangle this vocalised desire for strong leadership in the Church of Scotland from the equally strongly vocalised desire for autonomy at all governance levels of our polity. Presbytery has sometimes resented what is perceived as 'interference' from the General Assembly, and particularly from the Church Offices at 121 George Street, Edinburgh. Kirk Sessions often resent what is perceived as 'interference' from Presbytery. In previous years, councils and committees have brought to the General Assembly plans, programmes and policies, often excellent in substance, but not always striking a chord with regional or local concerns.

1.22 Trust is near the centre of our expressed Christian faith, but trust is often a casualty in our Church life at every level. It has often been said that Presbyterianism is a form of institutionalised mistrust. But mistrust is not our sole prerogative. It exists in other Church polities, within our communities, and within national and international contexts. In the world of politics, the late Tony Benn posed five questions for politicians:

1. *What power have you got?*
2. *Where did you get it from?*
3. *In whose interest do you exercise it?*
4. *To whom are you accountable.*
5. *How can we get rid of you?*

It does not require a significant exercise of imagination to apply those questions to our attitudes towards Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, the General Assembly, '121', Ordained Ministers, Deacons, Readers and Elders.

1.23 The Articles Declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland set out our structure of governance in Article 2:

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, [Provincial Synods deleted by Act V, 1992], 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 Presbyterian 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.

The effectiveness of Presbyterianism as manifested in the Church of Scotland has, for many years, been compromised by a lack of connection between and among local, regional and national that is both robust and responsive. Decisions enthusiastically endorsed by General Assemblies often do

not transfer to the other bodies within our structure. Equally, local and regional initiatives infrequently find a national platform. Our lines of communication are at best intermittent. We do not tend to learn from each other, share best practice, or learn from painful mistakes.

1.24 From the beginning of our discussion, the Special Commission was of the opinion that the problem is not simply a structural issue. Presbyterianism is no better and no worse than any other form of Church government. Presbyterianism can provide structure, though it needs to work on its flexibility. There are times when Presbyterianism (or any form of Church governance) can be restrictive and slow. It is not for nothing that our chief piece of legislation is called the Barrier Act enacted by the 1697 General Assembly. That being said, the purpose of the Barrier Act is not, ironically, to prevent change, but rather to ensure proper consultation across the Church about change. Presbyterianism can be affirming and enabling. The purpose of Church Law is the proper regulation of the life of the church and to ensure justice and fairness in the conduct of business. It both enables and restricts, and when it is felt to restrict too much, it can be changed by the General Assembly. How might we get this to be better perceived and understood? Presbyterianism is about process, not perfection, though the latter may be our aspiration. Our structure, like any structure, may sometimes make us feel as if we are walking backwards into the future. There can be times when all levels of Church governance become lost in the miasma of nostalgia. Many still long for the Church of fifty years ago and beyond, thirled to the concept of being a mass membership organisation which was as much a social gathering as it was an evangelical or worshipping one. Decline and concern about non-attendance predates the heyday of the 1950s.

1.25 During World War One, army chaplains came into contact with huge numbers of the unchurched. Chaplains believed that the attitude of those in the Army was fairly indicative of those on the Home Front. Lamentable ignorance and misconceptions about God and faith were seen as a blistering comment on the Church's inability and ineptitude in reaching out to people and teaching them even the basics of the Christian gospel. Soldiers at the Front during the Great War were rarely hostile to the Christian religion, but rather indifferent to what seemed to them to be largely impractical, inefficient and irrelevant. "To them the Church was simply the dullest institution they knew."^[i]

1.26 Going back even further, prior to the Disruption of 1843, in the 1820s and 1830s, Church leaders like Thomas Chalmers, particularly through his work in two Glasgow parishes, became increasingly aware of the massive societal changes wrought in Scotland by the transformation from a largely agrarian to a predominantly urban population.

"By the end of the eighteen-thirties, Scotland has ceased to be an integrated, Christian community in any meaningful sense... the old alliance of sacred and secular had broken down... the decay of Christian fellowship was manifest in the increasing alienation of the 'lower orders' from every kind of religious faith and practice. With a few exceptions, the clergy were now religious specialists detached by their single-minded Evangelical enthusiasm from the ideal of omniscience so dear to their Moderate predecessors. The faith had ceased to be the dominating, unifying force in the life of the people; and, in the eyes of many, religion was little more than a matter of personal predilection, a solace or a challenge to the individual rather than a rallying-point for all... Christian living had come to be seen as almost a part time occupation, little related to the world..."^[ii]

1.27 This commentary of nearly two hundred years ago has a distressingly contemporary ring. The Church of Scotland is no stranger to dancing on the fringes of relevance, often through its own actions and decisions. Yet still the Church, with a governance framework largely unchanged from the late sixteenth century, remains. It has

endured religious upheaval, Civil War, industrialisation, two World Wars, previous pandemics, economic depression, the end of the British Empire, and the emergence of the ages of mass communication and the computer.

1.28 The twenty-first century brings similar problems, and the questions faced by the General Assemblies of 2018, 2019 and 2020 point to the conclusion that the Church of Scotland is once again at a crossroads. Are our priorities in a faith lived out loud? Are our governance structures, and our buildings, fit for purpose? What, where, why and how must change be effected? The Assembly Trustees, in their report to the October 2020 General Assembly, pointed to a structure and style of governance and practice more suited to a larger denomination of yesteryear, with all the duplication and difficulty that entailed. The Trustees were not the first to do so. Imaginative thinking on reforming our systems and practice has been done before. The 'Blue Book' reports of the General Assembly from the 1970s onwards contain a number of forward-thinking, dynamic and missional reports which have been approved by the General Assembly but never implemented fully; for example, the Committee of Forty report in the 1970s, and the Church Without Walls report in 2001.

1.29 Nevertheless, living through the rigours and challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic has revealed that our Presbyterian structure has been, in a number of instances, remarkably flexible at local, regional and national levels. Using the existing structures, some Presbyteries have already merged. Using existing structures, many Kirk Sessions and congregations from different contexts have adapted beyond recognition in their delivery of worship, pastoral care, community engagement, and mission.

1.30 When it comes to the effectiveness of Presbyterianism, and the promotion and supporting of mission at a local level, the real issue is arguably more often about our **attitude**: the way we behave and choose not to behave. Some might also add that there is an issue about **mindset**. The mission in which we are involved is not simply about 'Church-filling' (though that cannot be overlooked); it is also about giving expression to the Gospel in a culture that grows apace outside the Church. Yes, more could be done with reordered priorities and redirected resources. But the fact that things are being done suggests that, where there was a will, there was often a way.

1.31 If, as may be the case, there is nothing especially flawed in the *theory* of Presbyterianism and its effectiveness, what is it that we misunderstand about the *practice* of Presbyterianism, and what do we need to understand about it if we are to rediscover and reinterpret what it can do and be in our own time?

1.32 *Any system of Church governance will rise or fall depending on the competence and the attitude of the people living within it and working through it. At this point in our Church's story, changes to our structure must be illuminated by the Gospel imperative to live out our faith within the context of our community, to show what we believe and why we believe, through how we live our lives in our community, in our country, and in the wider world.*

1.33 For this reason, the Special Commission made a conscious decision not to undertake a detailed comparison of other ecclesial governance models. Contact with and experience of other forms of church government has shown that what is true of Presbyterianism is true of other ecclesiologies. All systems have strengths and weaknesses. Depending on the actions, attitudes and competencies of the people who work within them, all can foster innovation and creativity, and all can equally be prey to inertia and caution. Our task is not to reshape the Church of Scotland into the likeness of another denomination.

1.34 There are existential issues affecting every expression of the Christian Church, including

Presbyterianism. When it comes to effectiveness and the pursuit of active change, it seemed to the Special Commission that there is an uncanny parallel with Sir David Attenborough's view on the climate crisis and the responses which would address it: the world often knows what to do but does not do it. The world knows what the cost will be to address climate change, but is not willing to pay it. Is that an analogy that is being repeated across the Church of Scotland? We know the practices, methodologies and attitudes that we need to change, but we do not move intentionally or decisively towards changing them.

1.35 What good are the Five Marks of Mission if they are not applied imaginatively, intentionally and decisively across the life and witness of our Church?

1.36 Addressing issues relating to the central Church organisation, amongst other things, the 2019 Special Commission convened by the Very Revd Professor David Fergusson described the 'silo mentality' found there.

1.37 If we hold a mirror up so that the whole Church can look at its reflection, is it not the case that 'silo mentality', or cliques at a more local level, are just as prevalent in our congregations and our presbyteries? During the pandemic there have been signs of hope as some congregations have shared technology to continue worship. That being said, our borders tend to be small, and, with few exceptions, our interests and concerns are intensely parochial, and not always helpfully so.

1.38 The Special Commission wonders if a continuing preoccupation with fixing structures will detract from the work of mission and of being the Church in our communities, nation and world. Whether we tinker with our structures or take much more radical action, the ultimate proof of our effectiveness is not in the machinery of our governance (though to ignore that machinery entirely would be a mistake; we need structures that work). The ultimate proof of our effectiveness is the depth of our personal and corporate devotion to God, the provision of regular opportunity for meaningful worship and the promotion and supporting of mission, provided by local congregations, regional bodies, and the national Church. Our focus has to take into account the 'what' of our governance; but this must not take away from the 'why' and 'how' of what it means for us to be people of 'The Way' in the twenty-first century.

1.39 Each of the following sections deal with the purpose of the Local Church, the Regional Church (Presbytery) and the National Church (General Assembly and central organisation).

2. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH?

2.1 The congregation is the local expression of the Church. The gathering of the community to live and work with faith and doubt. It is to be the incarnation, through words and action, of Jesus in the everyday. It is to provide pastoral care in a direct way, not only for its members, but for its community. A congregation that has little or no impact upon its community and the wider world has moved away from the ideal of a parish Church. One of the unique selling points of the parish Church is that it resources its membership spiritually, emotionally, and pastorally so that it can reach out to its surrounding community. The effectiveness of a congregation is marked by its faithfulness and its love in action.

2.2 This ideal is increasingly coming under strain. The age of the time-rich church volunteer has largely come to an end due to changes in work patterns, the increase of the retirement age, and the pressures of regulatory compliance which, though understandably necessary, has often led to a draining of the energy and enthusiasm in volunteers. The local Church is also not immune to the prevailing culture of critical observation rather than sacrificial engagement. We

live in a world that is often more adept at saying what it does *not* want rather than coming up with ideas of what it *does* want. It goes without saying that the Five Marks of Mission would be a useful mirror to hold up to every congregation's life.

2.3 Arguments are consistently advanced concerning the central role of the eldership and its purposes, and whether this needs to be reviewed and revised to achieve a more missional focus. The General Assembly has periodically debated this important matter, and approved reports in recent years by the Eldership Working Group, but there appears to be little wholesale advance. Indeed, if many elders were to be released from the property, finance and regulatory work that takes up so much time at Kirk Session, would they feel equipped to carry out 'missional work' or sense a call to do so. Again, the Eldership Working Group pointed in this direction a few years ago, but the work required in training and reimagining Eldership for missional purposes has still to be fully embraced. Until that happens, the Commission wonders if elders (along with many ministers and others) never feel quite up to the missional mark we set as an aspiration.

2.4 Many elders are already working at full capacity, with a variety of interests and responsibilities in their work and personal lives, alongside their involvement in the life of the Church. Many are tired and many are in their retirement years. Reorienting their work towards mission would be a mammoth task, and the definition of that work, already outlined in the work of the Eldership Working Group, remains critical. Specific tasks, with achievable and sustainable goals and results, would need to be identified. We can only train people for things that are trainable and sustainable within existing busy lives. This is not simply about what we say and agree at General Assemblies, nor is it about missional boxes we tick; it is about shaping the actions of the Church around thinking and living missionally. Like so many aspirations around mission, this needs greater and more detailed definition.

2.5 The day of long-term, open-ended commitment is coming to an end. The Special Commission wonders if the time has come again to consider the period of service elders offer. What would be the impact on congregations where the available human resource is limited? What significance do we continue to place on the importance of local connection and knowledge at parish level? It is worth remembering that a provision for fixed term eldership has been provided for in Act X 1932 section 6, (as amended by Acts XXVIII 1996, II 1998, VII 2000 and I and II 2019) of the General Assembly:

Notwithstanding the fact that an elder is ordained for life, a Kirk Session may determine, in advance, that the admission of any particular elder to membership of the Kirk Session should be for a prescribed fixed term period. Such fixed term membership may subsequently be extended by agreement of the Kirk Session and with the concurrence of the individual elder concerned. In the absence of such agreed extension, on the expiry of the fixed term period any such elder shall cease to be a member of the Kirk Session, but shall remain eligible for readmission, if so invited by the Kirk Session, at a future date.

Few, if any, Kirk Sessions who have ordained elders since 2019 will be aware of this provision, and we suspect fewer still will be enacting it. The legislation, of course, cannot be applied retrospectively.

2.6 Equally, it needs to be considered, if not the elders, then who will be the people who carry out the necessary work of the Church? How is the wider congregation to be engaged? How will ministers, ordained local ministers, chaplains, deacons and readers, as part of their formation and part of their calling, be enabled to play their part? There also remains a considerable amount of talent and skill within the wider membership of our congregations and with those who associate with our Churches but have not become

members. How might the local Church call on the expertise of those who are not elders and office-bearers?

2.7 Some thought needs to be given to the place and role of the parish. There is no straightforward answer. Communities in Scotland, in both urban and rural settings, have become fluid, geographically mobile, and racially and socially diverse in ways not envisaged when the parish system was established. Many congregations have become more 'gathered' in nature and, in some instances, the connection to the local community in which their parish is situated has become tenuous. Non-churchgoers will have little concept of the 'parish' they live in, though some will identify with a local Church at certain times of the liturgical year like Remembrance Sunday, Christmas and, less frequently, Easter, and maybe also at other times of pastoral need, like bereavement, though many are increasingly turning to civil celebrants instead of their parish Church. Non-churchgoers do not display any desire to associate with their local Church for the majority of the year, which severely limits the extent to which local Churches can engage with those living around them. Many, who could be described as 'spiritual, not religious' or 'believing, not belonging', may have no conception that the Church might provide a space to consider life's great questions or be a place to attend. With aging Church populations, this important work of connection to the local is becoming more challenging.

2.8 Current reflection about the Church working, not from the centre but from the margins, is interesting, but the Commission wonders what is meant by concepts like 'centre' and 'margin' today. The Church, in reality, is already marginal at best to many in contemporary society. How can the Church more fully accept and embrace that marginality, learning to speak with a prophetic voice from the edge, and to listen those who have been historically marginalised themselves? The Church may have a role to be a listening as well as a speaking and doing body within the community (and nation and world), but the Church needs to be realistic when thinking about what incentive there is for those at the margins, or at the centre, to speak to the Church today. This is more complex than simplistic sloganeering admits and the Church, at its best, has something to offer to both margin and centre and the people who inhabit those spaces. Effective Presbyterianism, listening to the margin and the centre and speaking to both, gains authenticity in these contexts and through these practices. In whichever community the local, regional or national Church operates, we become indigenous by listening to and speaking with the people around us. The Church must therefore continue to respond to what it hears from the margin and the centre.

2.9 It is worth noting here the commendable work of the General Trustees in pushing congregations to tackle the need for 'well-equipped spaces in the right places' for the twenty-first century. With fewer local authority 'spaces' available to communities, what role should Church buildings play? Is this a form of mission, providing welcome and accommodation, or is it what has been described as 'death-by-letting', with little realised evangelical opportunity? It is clear that the finance raised becomes a significant factor for many congregational budgets and is deployed to sustain the work of the Church. The Special Commission believes that spaces in our communities, where sometimes the Church building is one of the few remaining community spaces, will remain important to both active and passive mission. The phrase, 'ministry of presence' is often used. This has a place within the broader consideration of our effectiveness and our mission. Everything we do about the use of our buildings should be about mission in its broadest sense.

2.10 Churches with active memberships and an imaginative response to 'parish', played a role in community support during the Covid-19 pandemic, and links were affirmed, or created, with individuals and areas of our community that previously had little to do with Churches. Is this mission? Yes it is: it is the third mark – 'loving service'.

2.11 The response to 'what is the purpose of the Local Church?' becomes critical when there is unavoidable talk about the creation of larger parish units whereby congregations are united and merged. The Special Commission highlights the following issues that need to be addressed.

2.12 Training: for ministers, elders and others involved in the leadership life of the local Church, training will be a significant issue. If there are general calls to 'change' and 'transform', then those skilled in this work will not be found in every congregation. Even for congregations with good human resource, help in clarifying purpose, priority and practice will become vitally important. In instances where there is experience of this work within the broader Church, where and how will opportunities be provided for this knowledge to be shared? We need to realise that, in many instances, the people we are expecting to make changes may be unskilled in this work, or happy with the way things are, or tired because keeping the existing structures afloat has become exhausting. The Church of Scotland has many wonderful people within its membership, but they are rarely the 'magical people' who will have the time, ability or experience to rush forward to volunteer for extra work on top of what they are already doing. General Assemblies may call for radical action, transformative change and fresh expressions, but without resourced, equipped and willing individuals to take the dream forward, little is going to be achieved or realised.

2.13 Mission: Perhaps the most painful realisation, which needs saying out loud, is that tongue-tied congregations and their leaders often do not know how to articulate what mission is for them. There are many good news stories, but the Special Commission believes that unless congregations, and particularly their ministers and elders, learn to be specific in their vision-forming, intentional in what they mean about mission in their parish, and realistic in how to put into practice this vision and intention, then mission will often be well down the list behind finance and property.

2.14 There is help needing to be given, and work needing to be done, to equip congregations in identifying what mission might look like for them, in their area, and amongst the people who live, work, or simply exist within a parish area. Much work currently done by congregations, maybe at an every-day level, will be a form of mission. Mission has societal context – and is shaped by our perception of the Church and the world in which we operate, and will be affected by our attitudes, experience and theology. Is it helpful to define mission not simply as evangelical outreach, but also caring for and serving in fairly mundane ways the people of the parish? All those coffee mornings, baby and toddler groups, music afternoons for people with dementia and their carers, and provision of space to rent or use by groups and organisations may not fill our Churches on Sunday morning or bring people to a personal commitment to Jesus Christ. But mission, in its more accessible incarnation, is as much to be found in the caring for the sad, the lonely, the hungry, the thirsty, the naked and the sick as it is in the most eloquent of sermons and the most inspiring of sung praise. The two are not mutually exclusive, but is there something to be found in the engaging of people to do what they can do rather than to shame them about things they have never been expected or equipped to do? How do we recognise that there is a need to create bridges of exploration and opportunity from the living out of faith into the talking about faith? Mission is fundamentally about relationship and friendship. Mission must speak to the head, the heart, and the spirit; it must remember that before preaching Jesus, it must practise Jesus, and that means being a good neighbour.

2.15 Worship: During the pandemic many found, through the loss of face-to-face worship and the sense of a community gathering together for worship and for fellowship, that this was more important than they had

realised. Its absence has been a bigger miss than many anticipated. Is there something in this realisation that might help us reach out to those who have not yet stumbled across the possibility of their parish Church and the many things it has to offer or make possible? This is not to dismiss the considerable leaps forward made in using technology, which did much to connect people during the time of isolation and will continue to do so, now that so many have invested in equipment and learned its benefits. Whilst there was much that is good about the use of IT, offering possibilities for inclusion when church attendance is impossible for a variety of reasons, not everyone has access to computer technology and the internet. Thought must be given about how meaningful and sustainable connection and relationship can be maintained with the 'internet diaspora' who watch online worship and on how commitment to the faith and the Church can be fostered and deepened. Clicking on a weblink is not the same as attending a Church in person. The pandemic has shown that there are gains and losses for both real and virtual expressions of the Church.

2.16 Resourcing: if the aim and intention of the national and regional Church structure is to resource the local congregation in its general work, then this needs to be demonstrated in the priorities and personnel of regional and national structures. In the new structuring of Presbyteries, are we in danger of simply continuing existing patterns of care and maintenance on a larger geographical scale? It has already been mentioned that there are many fine reports in the Assembly's Blue Books, with wonderful ideas and stirring calls to action. How have these been made accessible to the local Church, and if this has not been the case, then who will be the talented, inspired and focussed people who will get alongside local congregations and turn into reality some of the good work that generations of Blue Books have pointed towards? If the call of faith is something we cherish, then how will it be articulated, where will it be articulated, when will it be articulated, and by whom will it be articulated?

2.17 Ecumenical relations: the local level is, of course, where the day to day work of the Church takes place, be that worship, pastoral care, or any number of valuable social projects which seek to address real needs in society. Hundreds of congregations can testify to the spiritual enrichment of sharing worship and to the benefits of working together with Christians of other Churches as they shape the expression of Church life and witness within their communities in a variety of ways. As we encourage consideration of purpose, worship and mission at parish level, how are we to find ways of sharing that conversation and the action which will flow from it with those of other Churches who live, work and worship alongside us?

3. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE REGIONAL CHURCH?

3.1 The regional structure of the Church of Scotland is the Presbytery. The Radical Action Plan approved by the General Assembly of 2019 states that:

The Presbytery is the gathered life of the Church of Scotland in a particular area. It brings together, in a mutually accountable way and supportive relationship, the recognised ministries and elders representing local Christian communities in parish, education, chaplaincy and national Church administration.

In Presbytery, the leaders of the local Church come together to:

- *Discern the Holy Spirit's leading of the Church in their context*
- *Respond appropriately to Christ's call to follow*
- *Oversee the work of the work of the local Church; and*
- *Be responsible for discipline and good order*

At the very least, a quizzical eyebrow might be raised at these statements: not because the aspiration and theory are untrue but because, for many, the experience of Presbytery is

somewhat different. If these statements from the Radical Action Plan were to be realised, alongside the Five Marks of Mission, the Church of Scotland would go some considerable way to be the incarnation of the change it seeks to be.

3.2 A feature of the Reformed Church in the 16th Century in Continental cities, particularly Geneva, was the weekly meeting of ministers for the interpretation and discussion of the Bible. The 'Exercise', as well as encouraging orthodoxy in Biblical interpretation and theology, also existed to support those who attended. In the decades following the Scottish Reformation in 1560, the 'Exercise' melded with other bodies and became, in time, more akin to the Presbyteries familiar to us, and to undertake executive and administration functions. It is worth noting that, in the two decades after the Reformation, there were already apparent problems in maintaining the existence of the 'Exercise' across the country, based primarily in and around the larger towns.

3.3 In the 21st Century, is there a need for Presbyteries, as they are re-formed in smaller numbers, to look again at ways by which the care of their members, spiritually, pastorally and educationally, is to be carried out? Presbyteries will also need to identify what it means to be missional in theory and in practice, particularly as they will play a significant role in enabling congregations to identify what 'mission' will mean to them. Presbyteries need to conduct business, but the concentration on minutiae where business is often routine and uninteresting, and an approach which is often perceived to be heavily legal, seems to be at odds with a more flexible, mobile society. There is a clear need for good practice and good law, but there is a perception by some that we hide behind our legal tradition to avoid effecting the changes we might wish to make. Special Commission acknowledges a balance needs to be struck between imaginative and speedy decision making when a need presents, and good governance which ensures things are thought-out and done decently and in order. This needs addressing, as much in perception as in reality. Again it is worth pointing out that the Covid-19 pandemic has shown that some Presbyteries were perfectly able to effect significant change with the structures we currently have. In discussions during the life of the Special Commission, and from an awareness of discussions ongoing in the newly forming larger Presbyteries, it has become clear that issues around ethos, culture, atmosphere and purpose are being seen as central to this pivotal court of the Church.

3.4 Another issue that has no easy solution is that Presbyteries, like other parts of the Church government, are largely dependent on volunteers. How do we balance the need for professionalism in an organisation that is largely run and influenced by those who are often serving in an amateur capacity? In our business, we ought to remember that professional business practice must also be balanced by an awareness of our theology and the purposes of the Church. This applies to the local, regional and national levels of the Church.

3.5 Since the trend is to have fewer but larger Presbyteries, a number of issues need to be addressed. The number of new Presbyteries has not been finalised at the time of writing the report, but the Office of the General Assembly has advised that it is hoped this number will be known by the General Assembly of 2022, and that the new Presbyteries will all be in place by the General Assembly of 2023.

3.6 There needs to be an imaginative approach to participation. Currently perception of Presbyteries (echoed by the General Assembly) is that they are distant and remote to the majority of elders and congregational members at the local level. This will only increase if Presbytery is simply a larger geographical body (even if there may be fewer congregations).

3.7 At this early stage, with, so far, three new Presbyteries formed (Aberdeen and Shetland, Fife, and Clyde) thoughts about what is to be devolved from the centre to the Presbyteries are still forming. Unnecessary duplication should be avoided, but areas which need a 'national standard' or for the Church to speak with a national voice should be marked out (such as ministerial assessment and training, ecumenical relations, speaking prophetically in the public forum, Safeguarding, Church Law, and central budgeting).

3.8 Leadership within the Presbytery remains crucial. What might be the role of the Moderator of the new Presbyteries, given the greater areas needing to be covered, and the greater possibility of providing pastoral and organisational cohesion during their term of office? Should the role of full-time Clerks in the newly created larger Presbyteries be about enabling and resourcing, and, alongside others, should they be involved in planning and delivering future strategy? Should they have an overview of how all aspects of the Presbytery's life and work are being developed, time-lined and supported? Should other officials within Presbytery hold remits for Congregational Development and Education, Mission, Property and Finance? Issues around the accountability of leaders and the decision-making process need proper scrutiny and robust processes to ensure accountability to the Presbytery. The new Presbyteries, with input from the Office of the General Assembly and the Legal Questions Committee, should consider what is practicable and flexible and also consistent across all Presbyteries. A system of dispute resolution must be in place should trust break down between officials and the Presbytery. Proper appraisal systems will also be essential.

3.9 Would it be important for the structure of new Presbyteries to have a broad consistency with that of the national Church, and also be similarly structured to each other? An effective means of relating work to Kirk Sessions would need consideration. Kirk Sessions will vary in areas and levels of competence. It seems to be good governance that Presbyteries, even in different parts of the country, should function in the same way in their governance. Is there therefore a need for a Presbytery Trustees body, accountable to the wider Presbytery, but carrying out much of the work at Presbytery level similar to that of the Assembly Trustees at national level? Should there be Presbytery bodies mirroring national bodies enabling the regional level of the Church to engage with and support ministries and eldership; to engage with the regional issues as well as international ones; and to address the critical importance of good communication within the workings of the Church and its different structures and levels and also with the world outside the Church in the Presbytery area. The Commission is wary of further levels of committee structure, but acknowledges that a balance must be struck between ensuring work is done and initiatives followed up appropriately, with the imaginative involvement of Presbyters, and consensus around decision making. All of this will become more important as more new Presbyteries are established and as they learn how to work with and learn from each other. It goes without saying that a good relationship between the Presbyteries and the central Church will also be crucial.

3.10 The October 2020 General Assembly passed a deliverance which stated: "The Church should by default operate with an ecumenical mindset." This is true in all expressions of the Church, across local congregations, Presbyteries and the General Assembly, as all members of the Church, in whatever area they serve, seek to participate in the mission of God. As we ask, 'What is the purpose of the Church?' at the local, regional and national spheres, recognising that these are all simply parts and expressions of the universal Church, we suggest that an openness to working with, helping and being helped by, and learning from other denominations must be evident in every part of

the Church. The regional level is the appropriate level for the planning and delivery of mission, and the Special Commission believes that, as the new Presbyteries come into being, opportunities will open up to coordinate better the expression of mission, ministry and opportunities around the use of buildings across Scotland. More will be said about ecumenical matters in the section about the national Church, but it would be worth noting that the Lund gathering of the World Council of Churches Faith and Order group in 1952 applied a simple question to ecumenical cooperation which has much deeper consequences: "Should not our Churches ask themselves whether they are showing sufficient eagerness to enter into conversation with other Churches and whether they should not *act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately*?" This was a probing interrogative to be asked repeatedly and "to be applied to the ongoing, day-to-day life of the Churches."

3.11 In the short-term, Presbytery planning in relation to the number of congregations and ministries there should be within a Presbytery appears haphazard, and demonstrates what most of us know: Presbyteries in the past and today nearly always struggle to make hard decisions or think strategically, with a few notable exceptions. The need for strategic thinking and planning is never going to go away. Populations inside and outside Churches will continue to shift. How will Presbyteries consistently address this significant challenge and opportunity?

3.12 At the moment, the Presbytery level in Church of Scotland governance structure appears largely to be unaccountable to anyone other than itself. We believe that a system of accountability, which is as much about sharing good examples and stories as it is about dealing with matters of compliance and good governance, should be devised. Should Presbyteries report annually to the General Assembly? The Special Commission is aware that the Office of the General Assembly, through the Principal Clerk, is involved with this work, particularly with the new Presbytery Clerks. Local Church Review at congregational level has been a fitful reality across the Church, but there are examples of good practice that show it can be supportive, commendatory, rigorous and firm. Presbyteries, particularly as they emerge in their new format, need similar levels of accountability. The Special Commission is aware that two cycles of pilot Presbytery Review have taken place in 2018 and 2019 (and further reference to this is to be found in the Legal Questions Committee report of 2019, section 5). Within this process of Presbytery Review, how will Presbyteries be encouraged to set goals and priorities, and measure them against what benchmarks, and, finally, supported by others, review how progress has been achieved? The Legal Questions Committee retains a commitment to developing legislation for Presbytery Review, and this will be focussing on the new Presbytery structure as it emerges.

3.13 How will the new Presbyteries be resourced by the central Church in order to resource local allocations? How will the distribution of funding be calculated given the variations in population and geography? Will Presbyteries be free to allocate their resources as they choose, or will there be parameters within which all Presbyteries must function, and similar criteria against which all Presbyteries will be measured? Is it the case that no devolved system will cost less than a centralised one?

3.14 Good communication strategies will be essential at every level of Church life. Mention has already been made of 'silo mentality' in recent debates about Church reform. The reasons for this are complex, but the effect is often to leave the wider Church membership isolated from any meaningful understanding of and engagement with decision formulation and decision making. The danger of system overload with communication is a real one, but careful thought needs to be given to how Presbyteries communicate with local

congregations, and with national Church agencies. At the heart of Christianity is the desire to share Good News.

3.15 In terms of enabling mission at regional and local levels, what lessons can be learned from the work of the different chaplaincies, Interim Ministry, Pioneer Ministry, Transition Ministry, Ministries Development Staff (MDS) and the Diaconate? Many of these recognised and valued ministries often work with groups of people who are either loosely associated with the Church or have no association at all. Over the years, the General Assembly and some Presbyteries have considered possibilities around 'fresh expressions of Church', and there has been movement in some areas to enable local mission by way of pioneer ministries. The Special Commission is aware that the Pioneer Ministries project was launched in 2016 with funding for five full-time posts currently working with farming communities, Stirling University students, the arts community in Glasgow, and new and existing housing estates in the east and west of the country. The Commission believes that ordained and lay pioneer ministries merits further application across the Church of Scotland in its new Presbyteries and should be incorporated in forward-thinking Presbytery planning. In all of these matters, whilst efficiency is the value we should be applying, reorganising is often easier than getting on with the work it is supposed to enable.

4. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE NATIONAL CHURCH?

4.1 We conclude at National Church level, which is the General Assembly, General Assembly agencies, and the national offices of the Church, and this level should also be guided and informed in its work by the Five Marks of Mission. Other bodies – the Assembly Trustees, the Assembly Business Committee, the Faith Nurture Forum and the Faith Impact Forum – will have, rightly, much to say about the purpose and workings of the national Church. The Special Commission offers these comments.

4.2 The General Assembly should remain the supreme court of the Church of Scotland. We have not seen a model whereby reducing the frequency of Assemblies has proven helpful. Biennial meetings, practised by some sister Churches, have apparently made the supreme body even more remote from other levels of Church governance. That being said, has the time come to reduce the size of our General Assembly, to reflect the size of the Church of Scotland, and also to consider the purposes for our meeting and the format in which we meet? The week-long General Assembly format makes it difficult for working elders to attend, skewing the demographic to the more 'mature' congregational member. This is not particularly new. A former Moderator, Archie Craig, noted in 1962 the description of Presbyterianism as 'government of the old by the old for the old', though the Assembly also had the potential to be a wonderfully representative gathering.^[iii] The Special Commission wonders if there could be a pattern of shorter, more frequent General Assemblies in the year, something that the General Synod of the Church of England does with its meetings. This is a matter for the Assembly Business Committee.

4.3 Technology made the October 2020 General Assembly a possibility which, by and large, worked well. Anecdotal feedback suggested that meeting face-to-face and the sense of 'gathering for worship and business' were a sore miss. Though we were 'connected' online, the sense of physical remoteness was palpable. The Commission acknowledges that there remain issues around those disenfranchised because they have no access to the internet. Is this an area where Presbyteries could find a solution? An example from outside the Church can be found in doctors' surgeries, which increasingly are carrying out consultations remotely. There is no reason why some local Churches could not become technology hubs, where people without internet

access can take part in Presbytery and General Assembly meetings.

4.4 The style of Assembly needs to be addressed, whether it meets in person or online. Some find the Parliamentary style of debate difficult, though we note that engagement at the General Assembly often appears greater than it does at Presbytery level. We also note that, without formalising the process, a form of consensus agreement is already in operation when it comes to the greater part of decision making, and that votes are only taken when it is deemed necessary. The Special Commission wonders if there are ways in which people could share views and participate without the occasional perception of confrontation.

4.5 How helpful would it be for imaginative, comprehensive and mandatory preparation and training to be put in place for commissioners to the General Assembly by Presbyteries in co-operation with national bodies? Could ways be found to help people, especially those who are attending for the first time, to engage more fully with the processes of the Assembly and thereby increase its effectiveness as a decision-making body for the whole Church?

4.6 In the process of radical restructuring which the Church is engaged upon, with the establishment of new bodies, it is unclear how these bodies relate to the General Assembly. There are fundamental issues relating to accountability and authority which do not seem to have been addressed. How is an appropriate balance to be struck, for example, between the sovereign authority of the General Assembly and the executive responsibilities of those appointed to be Trustees? A decision-making process that only happens annually can be cumbersome and slow. It is also arguable that, if the Assembly has appointed Trustees and others, shouldn't those individuals be entrusted to get on with their job? However, who then sets the limits of executive responsibility, and the need to practise proper accountability to the sovereign body? The anomaly of wanting to resource, empower and engage the local and regional levels of the Church, yet also establishing necessary Trustee and other central bodies and giving them significant powers, has, at best, birthed a creative tension. At worst, it has distanced the local and regional Church where the Church has said it wants true power to lie, and can be seen by some as a source of friction. At the October 2020 General Assembly, the Special Commission noted calls for central bodies to tell the regional and local Church what the 'targets' were for future planning, and for a potentially creative way forward in the relationship between the central and the regional courts of the Church to be developed. We were aware of questions asked about who should agree such targets, and were also conscious of the long-standing antipathy towards and suspicion of the General Assembly, or '121', or Presbytery evidenced at all levels of our Church's structure. This is an important part of the 'mirror telling us who we are and what we are like'. How do we resolve the fact that there is often a lack of *engaged* will at the General Assembly and Presbytery, where lack of engagement often leads to governance and decision making by default. Many do not engage proactively with decision making unless the proposed decisions affect them.

4.7 In relation to the role and function of the Assembly Trustees and the other national agencies of the Church, the Special Commission poses the question about how members of these bodies are to be selected in the future. It will remain important that people of the highest quality, with appropriate skills and talents, and a demonstrable commitment to the Church should be selected. But is there some way by which representation from the new Presbyteries can be incorporated when individuals are selected to serve? This is a more complex idea than it looks. If the ongoing issue of relationship between the national and regional levels of the Church is to be addressed, this might be one way in which connection and relationship,

accountability and 'ownership' might be tackled. With the Assembly Trustees, for example, what if, along with Trustees selected for specific skill sets, one Trustee was to be nominated from each of the new Presbyteries? With fewer Presbyteries, would there be some possibility of ensuring representation from all of them on all of the national agencies of the Church?

4.8 Communication at national and international levels needs further thought and clarification. What is our message, how is it shared, how do we resource those charged with this, and who, in the emerging new structures, are the ones to speak authoritatively? The Special Commission acknowledges this is an area that remains complex within a Presbyterian structure, with spokespeople speaking on what the General Assembly has decided. The Commission is aware of the perennial questions about appointing permanent spokespeople or a figurehead with more executive authority.

4.9 Set against this is the broad respect and appreciation that other denominations have for the Church of Scotland's conciliar structure which encourages broad participation and debate, as well as decision making. What clarity is needing to be given to empower those holders of office within our existing structures to speak appropriately and timeously as situations emerge nationally and internationally, and to ensure consistency and swiftness of response? The Commission notes that whoever speaks out will invariably not speak for everyone. This is a reality in whatever form of Church governance and ecclesiology is in place.

4.10 The Commission has already mentioned the importance of communication strategies within Presbyteries. The same applies to the national agencies of the Church and careful thought needs to be given to how communication is to be effected between national, regional and local bodies.

4.11 The Special Commission firmly believes that decisions taken by the General Assembly, once enacted, should be carried out by Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions. We observe that this is not consistently the case. We wonder how this might be managed better.

4.12 All levels of the Church's life, local, regional and national, contribute to and benefit from a default ecumenical mindset. Ecumenical relationships exist across the United Kingdom and across the wider world. Discussions with other denominations are best conducted at a national level, as these discussions are often intended to lead to changes in Church law and practice which makes things like sharing buildings, resources and ministry easier and more widely accepted. The national level is also the appropriate level at which to maintain the Church of Scotland's relationships with the ecumenical bodies which provide worship resources and are a locus for shared projects, the fostering of international relationships, advocacy for justice and peace and interaction with governments.

4.13 The Church of Scotland's interfaith work is currently located within the Faith Impact Forum. The challenges presented by interfaith work are complex and quite different from ecumenical work. For instance, we are not seeking convergence or shared worship with other faiths, but rather a deepening of mutual understanding, friendship and respect. The former placing of interfaith work within the Mission and Discipleship Council understandably raised suspicions among people of other faiths as to the intentions of the Church of Scotland. The Special Commission believes that interfaith work, insofar as it aims to deepen trust, understanding and co-operation, should be a priority for the Church of Scotland. We recommend that some way be found to explore this issue at a national level in order that the local and regional expressions of the Church can be properly resourced to develop work on an interfaith basis appropriately and sensitively.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The future effectiveness of Presbyterianism is bound up in the mixture of vision, accountability and decision making. A growing number of people across the Church see this, but there are still many who will bury their heads in the sand and hope for a return to a Golden Age that almost certainly did not exist for the Church. We also need to be aware that, when it comes to the introduction and management of change in any organisation, even well-intentioned interventions can evoke responses from the organisation, or individuals within it, that offset the intended benefits. Sometimes, the harder the push is made, the harder the organisation pushes back.

5.2 If the transformation many hope, work and pray for within the Church of Scotland is to take place, and be sustained and continue to develop and grow, then the 'buy-in' of all involved will be crucial. In this current time of crisis, headlined by the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen, uncomfortably, many shortcomings of our Church brought to light. The reality is that many of these shortcomings were not caused by the pandemic but existed all along. We have been living on borrowed time. What seems clear is that there is a time and a will to address some of the issues that we have long known exist.

5.3 We need to be clear that we will not resolve everything, but we could transform something, as we continue the process of becoming the Church for this time. It is important that we acknowledge the perceived and real gulf between local, regional and national expressions of the Church of Scotland, caused by a feeling of distance and disengagement leading to cynicism and mistrust in decision making.

5.4 The questions we raise, and the answers the Church needs to find, are not simply about transforming structures, but about refocussing on attitudes and priorities. These must have, near their heart, the commitment to imaginative and sustainable mission in every place where the Church exists and has contact. Our story is not one of unrelenting gloom and attrition. Our mission in Christ's name to the world is based on what we have to offer, how we reach out, and how we care. There remains a humble greatness in our Church, not because of the glories of the past, but because of the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ and his message of faith to be lived out, hope to be given, and love to be put into practice. Good work, even in this time of crisis, has continued, but we do need to **CHEER UP** and seek today's possibilities. These will encourage us to focus, not on what we can no longer do, but rather on what we *can* do, *continue* to do, and the new things we will *learn to be able* to do.

We need to rediscover, and live out again, the joy of the Gospel.

In the name of the Commission

DEREK BROWNING, *Convener*
ALEXANDER FORSYTH
FRANCES HENDERSON
ALEXANDER HORSBURGH
MOIRA MCDONALD

References

- [i] D S Cairns, 'The Army and Religion', p228
- [ii] A C Cheyne, 'The Transforming of the Kirk', pps 110-111
- [iii] Elizabeth Templeton, 'God's February: A life of Archie Craig 1888-1985', p106

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Amend Standing Orders as detailed in section 4 and Appendix B of the Report of the Assembly Business Committee. (*Section 1 – Amendments to Standing Orders*).
3. Note the intention of the Committee to bring a Church Courts Overture to the General Assembly of 2022 and encourage Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and others to engage with the Committee in the preceding consultation process. (*Section 2 – New Church Courts Act*).
4. Note the work done by the Committee in relation to the solemnisation of same sex marriages including the draft Overture set out in Appendix A and the Procurator's Supplementary Opinion at Appendix B. (*Section 3 – Preparation of legislation for Same Sex Marriage and Appendices A & B*).
5. Instruct the Committee, in consultation with others, to continue to develop a process of Presbytery Review and report to the General Assembly of 2024. (*Section 4 – Presbytery Review*).
6. In relation to appeals:
(*Sections of deliverance to be moved if the Presbytery Mission Plan Act and Local Mission Church Regulations are **not** agreed to by the General Assembly*)
 - (a) instruct the Committee to consider introducing a bespoke process for Presbytery Planning appeals and to report to a future General Assembly;
 - (b) instruct the Faith Nurture Forum, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee and the Presbytery Clerks' Forum, (i) to prepare a manual of good practice for Presbyteries to follow in terms of Presbytery Planning procedures; and (ii) to consider good procedural practice in the process of PPTG deciding on concurrence with a Presbytery Plan and to introduce such changes as it may think appropriate and to bring a report to the General Assembly of 2022 on progress; and
 - (c) instruct the Committee to consider bringing proposed amendments to the Appeals Act to allow early consideration of the competency and relevancy of any Grounds of Appeal and to bring any proposals to the General Assembly of 2022.

OR (*Sections of deliverance to be moved if the Presbytery Mission Plan Act and Local Mission Church Regulations are agreed to by the General Assembly*)

 - (a) instruct the Faith Nurture Forum, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee and the Presbytery Clerks' Forum, to prepare a manual of good practice for Presbyteries to follow in terms of Mission Plan procedures; and
 - (b) instruct the Committee to consider bringing proposed amendments to the Appeals Act to allow early consideration of the competency and relevancy of any Grounds of Appeal and to bring any proposals to the General Assembly of 2022. (*Section 6 – ADR and Presbytery Planning Appeals*).
7. Note that (1) the Vacancy Protocol and the arrangements for Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to meet and vote by video-conferencing or audio-conferencing or a combination of the two, agreed by the Commission of Assembly on 7 July 2020, (2) the three Protocols agreed by the General Assembly of October 2020 (the Congregational Meetings on Bases of Adjustment Protocol, the Congregational Meetings for Adopting the Unitary Constitution Protocol and the Congregational Meetings on Sale or Disposal of Church Buildings Protocol) and (3) the arrangements for Financial Boards to meet and vote by video-conferencing or audio-conferencing or a combination of the two, have all proved useful and continue these arrangements until the General Assembly of 2022. (*Section 8 – Online meetings*).
8. Instruct that while the Covid-19 pandemic regulations prevent an in person congregational meeting taking place:
 - (a) Kirk Session shall have power to appoint to the Congregational Board members of the congregation who are not members of the Kirk Session to fill vacancies which have arisen, which appointments shall last only until such time as the Stated Annual Meeting is next held in person; and
 - (b) if in the Committee's view, at any time before the next General Assembly, alternative arrangements become necessary to enable elections to take place to Congregational Boards, the Committee shall have power to produce a Protocol to enable elections to Congregational Boards. (*Section 9 – Stated Annual Meetings and Elections to Congregational Boards*).
9. Pass an Act amending the Discipline Act (Act I 2019) as set out in Appendix C. (*Section 10 – Amendment to the Discipline Act*).

Report

1. AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

1.1 The Report of the Assembly Business Committee contains various proposals to amend Standing Orders in light of the General Assembly of 2021 being held online. The details, including the proposed amended text of the Orders, are set out in full in there, in section 4 and Appendix B to the 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. NEW CHURCH COURTS ACT

2.1.1 At the General Assembly of 2017 the Committee reported that “there is sufficient interest for a wider review to be undertaken of the Church Courts Act.” In the following year there was consultation with Presbytery and Session Clerks which was reported to the General Assembly of 2018.

2.1.2 Since then the Committee has been seeking to set out a refreshed and expanded framework which provides for each Church Court clear statements on membership, functions and responsibilities, meetings and the relationship to the other Courts of the Church. We also hope to ensure that the new Act reflects the changes in civil law which have occurred since the current Act was drafted in the late 1990s.

2.1.3 In the next stage of our work we will again be consulting with those who will make the most frequent reference to the Church Courts Act as they seek to order the business of Kirk Session, Presbytery and General Assembly.

2.1.4 We will also be working with our colleagues in the Faith Nurture Forum with their particular interest in the development of the eldership.

2.1.5 We regret that we are not in a position to bring an Overture to this General Assembly but given the changes being brought through the Presbytery reforms instructed in 2019 and the pressures imposed and the lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic the Committee hopes that the General Assembly will agree that a slight delay may enable a more appropriate and longer-lasting legal framework for the Church.

2.2 The Committee also has a remit “to explore reducing the minimum age of eldership to 16”. We will ensure that this is part of our consultation and, if we feel it is appropriate, it will be included in the Overture which we will bring to the General Assembly of 2022.

2.3 The Committee additionally has a remit “Encourage the Committee, as part of its review of the Church Courts Act, and in the light of changes in the membership of Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries, to consider whether an Elder in Presbytery might be a bona fide member of a congregation within the bounds rather than of a Kirk Session.” This will also be part of our consultation and drafting work in the coming months.

3. PREPARATION OF LEGISLATION FOR SAME SEX MARRIAGE

3.1 When the Committee reported to the General Assembly of 2018 this section of deliverance was passed: “*Instruct the Committee to prepare legislation enabling those Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons who wish to do so to be nominated to solemnise same sex marriage ceremonies in accordance with Section 9(1A) of the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977, while also providing safeguards to address issues identified both in section 9 of the Report and in the Opinion of the Procurator annexed at Appendix I but only if the Committee finds that the said safeguards, in their opinion, sufficiently protect against the risks they identify; and report to the General Assembly of 2020*”.

3.2 This instruction arose from a motion and an amendment by commissioners rather than on the initiative

of the Committee. This was given to us as a “technical” task to prepare and bring to the General Assembly a piece of work which, if the Church were to adopt it as law, would fulfil the brief set out in the deliverance.

3.3 In preparing the legislation, the Committee offers the text of an Overture which it believes, if adopted and approved through the Barrier Act procedure, would “*enable Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons who wish to do so to be nominated to solemnise same sex marriage ceremonies in accordance with Section 9(1A) of the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977*”. The draft Overture is annexed at Appendix A.

3.4 The Committee has also given close attention to the concerns and fears of those who may not wish to follow this new path and who may be concerned about the civil law risks of operating within this “mixed economy”. The Supplementary Opinion from the Procurator at Appendix B offers further insights on these matters.

3.5 If this General Assembly should receive a motion as to sending the Overture down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act and should decide to do this, the Committee will continue to work on a Guidance document to help ministers, deacons and others to understand how practical arrangements would work.

4. PRESBYTERY REVIEW

4.1 The General Assembly of 2019 instructed the Committee to “prepare legislation to ensure that Presbytery Review engages all Presbyteries on a regular basis and to report to the General Assembly of 2020”. At that point two cycles of pilot Presbytery Review process had already been completed, involving around twenty Presbyteries.

4.2 However, the same General Assembly also said that the number of Presbyteries should be reduced to around twelve by 2024 and set ambitious targets for these “new” Presbyteries in the context of the Radical Action Plan and the Report of the Special Commission on Structural Reform.

4.3 In light of these major policy changes it seemed to the Committee that there would be little point in developing a Presbytery Review process for the current pattern of forty two Presbyteries when in a fairly short period of time the shape, nature and purpose of Presbytery life would be greatly changed. We are, therefore, asking the General Assembly to confirm this view and instruct the Committee to bring forward a scheme of Presbytery Review which will work in the setting the Church is seeking to create.

5. LEGAL COSTS IN DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

5.1 The Committee was instructed by the General Assembly of 2019 “to consider the question of whether in principle a person who is subject to proceedings brought under the Discipline Act which result in no censure being imposed by the Discipline Tribunal should be entitled to recover from the Church’s central funds some or all of the legal expenses they have paid out in respect of their defence....”.

5.2 The starting point for the Committee’s consideration of this issue was, as instructed by the General Assembly, the possibility of Legal Expenses insurance. Discussions with the Church of Scotland Insurance Company concluded that putting such insurance in place was not a realistic option for two reasons. Firstly, an approach to the insurance market received no positive responses. Secondly, such policies contain a standard condition that a claim must have a greater than 50% chance of success before the insurance cover will come into play: in other words, the lawyer appointed by the insurer must believe that the insured person will be more likely than not to succeed in their defence/appeal. Examination of the cases which have reached the stage of formal disciplinary proceedings before the Presbyterial Commission in the period from 2001 to 2019

(the period of operation of Act III 2001) shows that in the vast majority of cases, any Legal Expenses policy would effectively provide no cover. Twenty-five cases were heard by the Commission. In only one case was no censure imposed. In all other cases a disciplinary sanction was imposed, ranging from a reprimand with instruction as to future conduct, to suspension of status for a fixed period and removal of status. The three cases in which a reprimand was imposed came to the Commission via the Accelerated Procedure provided for in Act III 2001 under which the respondent pled guilty to the charges against him/her. The Committee recognises that assessment of success may look different at an earlier stage in the proceedings but even so, based on the case-law to date, only one of the twenty-five respondents was likely to have been able to claim under any Legal Expenses insurance policy which may have been in place.

5.3 The Committee believes that these statistics indicate the effectiveness of the initial “sift” procedure which was contained in Act III 2001 and which also now appears in the Discipline Act 2019) for testing any complaint coming to the Presbytery Clerk to ensure that it is not vexatious, and that it provides firm grounds for disciplinary action, before transmitting it for further procedure. A complaint will not be dealt with under the Discipline Act at all unless it is a serious matter of alleged misconduct and is supported by prima facie evidence of fault; lesser matters will be handled by the Presbytery under the Church’s Complaints Procedure. This is one of the hurdles which a complaint must clear if it is to proceed in terms of the Discipline Act. Other circumstances in which the complaint would not proceed as a disciplinary matter are where the complaint is an abuse of process; it is frivolous or vexatious; it has no reasonable prospect of providing grounds for disciplinary action; or it is suitable for Alternative Dispute Resolution (“ADR”). The Committee also wishes to take this opportunity to highlight that the Church is extremely fortunate to have the services of senior members of the Scottish judiciary as Conveners of the Discipline Tribunal and considers this to be a further factor which engenders confidence in the discipline process. The Committee accordingly believes that no amendment to the present legislation is needed to provide further protection for respondents.

5.4 The Committee is mindful of the fact that other professional bodies require their members to meet the legal costs of representation in formal disciplinary proceedings, and of the option of union membership as an avenue for the payment of such costs, membership being open to ministers as well as to other professionals at a relatively small monthly cost. It is also acutely conscious that all sums paid to respondents under the Discipline Act come from the faithful giving of congregations and of the duty of the Church to exercise good stewardship of these monies. It recognises, however, that concerns about the financial impact of the Legal Aid in Disciplinary Proceedings Regulations (Regs I 2018) on respondents are genuinely held. The Committee will therefore undertake a review of the Regulations over the coming year and will report to the Assembly of 2022 as to any amendments which might be made, so as to ensure fairness and accessibility for respondents in the operation of the Regulations.

6. ADR AND PRESBYTERY PLANNING APPEALS

6.1 In response to an Overture from the Presbytery of Inverness, the General Assembly of 2019 instructed the Legal Questions Committee:

- i. To review and consider proposing amendments to the Appeals Act (Act I 2014) to specifically draw to the attention of Parties to a dispute the possibility of resolving their dispute by means of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Processes Act (Act VI 2014) and so bring the Appeals Act into line with the new Discipline Act;
- ii. To draft a set of Guidelines to assist Parties to a dispute who wish to pursue ADR in setting up such a process;
- iii. In consultation with the Ministries Council** [now part of the Faith Nurture Forum] to consider the development of a bespoke process for Presbytery planning appeals under the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003) which also includes provision for ADR; and
- iv. To report to the General Assembly of 2020.”

6.2 Following discussions with the Presbytery of Inverness it became clear that the Overture arose from an initiative to seek a different way of resolving Presbytery Planning appeals. Within the Presbytery Planning process, the Appeal which can currently be taken in terms of the Appeals Act is more akin to judicial review. It is about how the decision was taken. In the main, the outcome has been either to uphold the Presbytery’s decision, or to send the matter back to the Presbytery for the process to be rerun. These are not always satisfactory outcomes for the parties.

6.3 In carrying out Presbytery Planning, the Presbytery is exercising a power to make a decision rather than deciding on a dispute. For that reason, the Committee’s view is that ADR, which is aimed at resolving a dispute between two parties before a hard and fast decision is made is not appropriate in the situation where a decision has already been taken by one of the parties. The question then is whether that decision was properly made.

6.4 The Committee does, however, recognise that there are ongoing concerns and frustrations among Presbyteries and others about the existing appeal process. With that in mind, the new Presbytery Mission Plan Act being proposed by the Faith Nurture Forum sets up a new and different “appeal” process for Presbytery Planning matters, involving a quick review by a small group of experienced individuals. The Committee therefore thinks it is appropriate to offer two different sets of deliverances depending upon whether or not the Presbytery Mission Plan Act is agreed to by the Assembly. If that Act is passed, then the Committee thinks that work should be done to ensure good practice in the running of the new Mission Plan procedure and invites an instruction to the Faith Nurture Forum, in consultation with the Committee and the Presbytery Clerks’ Forum, to create a manual of good practice for Presbyteries to follow. Work has already begun on creating such a resource.

6.5 On the other hand, if the Presbytery Mission Plan Act is not passed, the Committee thinks that consideration should be given to removing the Presbytery Planning appeal process from the Appeals Act and instead to creating a different means of reviewing the method by which the Presbytery made its Plan decisions. This might involve having the “Appeal” heard by a smaller body in a process akin to the Ministries Appeal Panel where a small group with appropriate experience and knowledge would have power to quash the planning decision and send it back to be done again if the appropriate process has not been followed. In this scenario, the Committee also suggests that a manual of good procedural practice should be created for Presbyteries to follow covering such things as consultation with

congregations. It would also be good to have the Presbytery Planning Task Group do more to check, when asked for concurrence with a Plan, that there has been sound Presbytery practice in reaching their Planning decisions.

6.6 A more general point which has come to the Committee's attention in its consideration of the Overture is that there is no clear mechanism in the Appeals Act for "filtering" the Grounds of Appeal before the Appeal Hearing takes place, no matter how incompetent or irrelevant the Grounds may be. This applies both to appeals currently heard by the Appeals Committee, such as Presbytery Planning appeals, and also to personal/discipline case appeals heard by the Judicial Commission. The Committee on Overtures and Cases no longer has a role and in practice Conveners and Vice-Conveners have not used Rule 5.8 (which provides an opportunity at the Appeal Management Hearing to make an order which is "just and reasonable") to dismiss any Grounds of Appeal. This means that all Grounds need to be heard and decided upon by the full Appeals Committee/Judicial Commission at the final Appeal Hearing.

6.7 The Committee, therefore, invites an instruction from the General Assembly to carry out a review of appeals processes, to consider adding to Rule 5.8 an express statement that the Convener and Vice-Convener at an Appeal Management Hearing may make decisions as to the competency and relevancy of any Ground of Appeal, which may include dismissal of a Ground which in their view is irrelevant and/or incompetent.

7. CHURCH LAW RESOURCES

7.1 The Church law textbook, *The Constitution and Laws of the Church of Scotland*, edited by James L Weatherhead, was published in 1997. Some work had been undertaken to create a second edition, with the intention of making this available on the Church's website. The task was complicated by the inevitably changing nature of Church law.

7.2 The Committee has since reviewed its position on this matter and has decided that rather than attempt to update a resource which is more than 20 years out of date, the Committee should depart from work on updating Weatherhead. Instead it believes that efforts would be better directed at producing specific resources for those who need them, and to embrace new technology. This might mean learning from other denominations, and also looking at other areas where resources could be produced e.g. on Presbytery planning. Work to develop suitable resources is ongoing.

8. ON-LINE MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERIES, KIRK SESSIONS AND FINANCIAL BOARDS AND PROTOCOLS AS TO VARIOUS MEETINGS

8.1 At both the Commission of Assembly held on 7 July 2020, and the General Assembly of 2-3 October 2020, it was agreed that in the ongoing circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic, Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and the Financial Board of a congregation (as that expression is used in the General Trustees (Delegated Powers) Act (Act VII 1995) might meet and vote by video-conferencing or audio-conferencing or a combination of the two, provided that the principles set out in the Protocol agreed by the Commission of Assembly on 7 July 2020 are adhered to by all involved.

8.2 Further at the same Commission of Assembly and General Assembly, protocols were agreed to enable vacancy process and congregational meetings in various situations to take place.

8.3 The Committee understands that these arrangements have proved useful and proposes that with the pandemic still affecting daily life to a very significant degree at the time of writing, they should continue.

9. STATED ANNUAL MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS TO CONGREGATIONAL BOARDS

9.1 Stated Annual Meetings have not been able to take place since the spring of 2019, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. So far, the advice given has been to comply with the spirit of the Stated Annual Meeting, that is, let members of the congregation see the accounts (perhaps online) and then give them a means of asking questions - an email address or telephone number that they can use. It is also the case that OSCR know that "AGMs" are difficult/impossible to organise during a pandemic, although note that they still expect good governance to be adhered to: <https://www.oscr.org.uk/guidance-and-forms/covid-19-guidance-for-charities/3-charity-meetings-and-governance/>.

9.2 In congregations operating under the Model Deed, the inability to hold the Stated Annual Meeting has had the knock-on effect that elections to congregational boards have not been able to take place. The Committee has considered whether there might be a need for a further Protocol, along the lines of those already agreed for Vacancy process and for various types of congregational meetings, to enable elections to congregational boards to take place if Stated Annual Meetings cannot be held in person. The relevant provision of the Model Deed allows for the Stated Annual Meetings to be held no later than 30 June (this was changed some years ago from 31 March) so the Committee is hopeful that, if necessary, such meetings might still be held in 2021. However, should that prove impossible, the Committee proposes two fall-back measures: (1) that in the short term and until an in-person Stated Annual meeting can be held, Kirk Sessions be empowered to make appointments to congregational boards to fill vacancies, and (2) should it become apparent that a further Protocol is required, the Committee asks that it be entrusted with this task. Any Protocol produced by the Committee in these circumstances would follow as much as possible the terms of those already in place, for example, the Protocol which allows for the election of a Nominating Committee.

9.3 The Committee has also considered whether there is a need for a further Protocol about other types of congregational meeting. Those Protocols which are already in place for congregational meetings relate to specific meetings required under Church law and seek to put in place arrangements other than online meetings which are appropriate to the specific circumstances involved, i.e. each Protocol is bespoke. Given this approach, the Committee does not think that it is necessary nor would it be appropriate to prepare a further general Protocol relating to congregational meetings.

10. AMENDMENT TO THE DISCIPLINE ACT (ACT I 2019)

10.1 Some difficulties have arisen with timescales under the new Discipline Act where an Assessor has to make a decision or carry out certain investigations and this spans the Christmas/New Year period. Minor extensions to the relevant timescales are proposed. The draft amending Act can be found in Appendix C.

11. COMMITTEE REMIT

11.1 The Committee has spent some time considering its remit and has drafted a new one. The Assembly Trustees will bring this to the General Assembly for approval.

12. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS

12.1 In accordance with the arrangements set in place by the General Assembly of 2000, the Legal Questions Committee is asked to examine the relevant records of Assembly Forums, Council and Committees on an annual basis. In the circumstances of the current pandemic, such inspection has not proved possible and the Committee will

keep under review the question of when it may be possible to catch up with this work.

In the name of the Committee

S GRANT BARCLAY, *Convener*
BARBARA R FINLAYSON, *Vice-Convener*
GEORGE J WHYTE, *Secretary*

Appendix A

SOLEMNISATION OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE OVERTURE

The General Assembly adopt the Overture the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.

The General Assembly, with consent of a majority of Presbyteries, hereby enact and ordain as follows:

Definitions and Interpretation

1. (a) "Parish Minister" shall have the meaning ascribed to it in the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018);
- (b) "Minister of Word and Sacrament" shall have the meaning ascribed to it in the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018);
- (c) "same sex marriage" shall mean the process described in the MSA;
- (d) "the MSA" shall mean the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 as it exists at [] May 2021 [if Overture is sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, that date];
- (e) "Deacon" shall mean a person holding the office of Deacon in terms of the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010);
- (f) "Authorised Celebrant" for the purposes of this Act means a Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon who is empowered to solemnise same sex marriage in terms of the MSA;
- (g) "Principal Clerk" includes a person deputising for the Principal Clerk.

General provisions

2. A Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon may apply in terms of this Act to become an Authorised Celebrant for same sex marriage.
3. No person shall be required by this Act to participate in the solemnisation of, or be involved in the arrangements for, a same sex marriage.
4. In all matters referred to in this Act, including but not limited to making application to become an Authorised Celebrant, permitting or granting consent for use of buildings, arranging for the participation of others in the solemnisation of a same sex marriage, and making practical arrangements for same sex weddings, a Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon, as the case may be, shall take account of the peace and unity and pastoral needs of the congregation and of any parish or other grouping of which it is a part.

Becoming an Authorised Celebrant for same sex marriage

5. The process for becoming an Authorised Celebrant shall be:
 - (i) Application shall be made initially to the Principal Clerk's Office on a form prescribed by the Principal Clerk.
 - (ii) The Principal Clerk will make application to the Registrar General for Scotland on behalf of the

Minister of Word and Sacrament or Deacon, as the case may be, in terms of section 9(1A) of the MSA.

- (iii) The Principal Clerk will liaise with and advise the Minister of Word and Sacrament or Deacon, as the case may be, of the outcome of the application.

6. The Principal Clerk shall maintain an up to date record of Authorised Celebrants.
7. Authorised Celebrants shall be responsible for initiating their own three yearly renewal of their status in terms of the MSA, although the actual process will be administered through the Principal Clerk's Office.

Use of buildings

8. Only a Parish Minister who has become an Authorised Celebrant in terms of sections 5 to 7 above may, in accordance with and subject to the terms of sections 12 to 15 of the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018):
 - (i) permit the use of a Church building in their charge for the solemnisation of same sex marriage, and
 - (ii) grant consent for other Authorised Celebrants to use such a building for the solemnisation of same sex marriage.

For the avoidance of doubt, any specific permission or consent for an individual same sex marriage granted by a Parish Minister in terms of this section 8 shall endure notwithstanding that such Parish Minister subsequently departs from the charge in respect of which such permission or consent was granted.

9. An Interim Moderator who is a Minister of Word and Sacrament shall, for the purposes of this Act, have the same rights and obligations as a Parish Minister under section 8 of this Act in relation to use of buildings.

Minister's or Deacon's discretion

10. Nothing in this Act shall contravene the general principle of Church law that any Minister of Word and Sacrament or Deacon has the right to determine at any time whether or not to conduct the marriage of any persons.

Territorial extent

11. This Act makes provision for same sex marriage conducted in accordance with the MSA.

Consequential amendments

12. The Recognition of Marriage Services Act (Act I 1977) shall be amended as follows:
 - (i) Section 2 shall be deleted and the following shall be substituted:

"Solemnisation of marriage in the Church of Scotland is effected by an ordained minister or deacon in a religious ceremony wherein, before God, and in the presence of the minister or deacon and at least two competent witnesses, the parties covenant together to take each other in marriage as long as they both shall live, and the minister or deacon declares the parties to be married."
 - (ii) In section 3, the words "or deacon" shall be inserted after the word "minister".
 - (iii) Section 4 shall be deleted.
13. The Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018) shall be amended as follows:

Add a new sub-paragraph (5) as follows to section 4:

- (5) “where a Minister of Word and Sacrament who is an Authorised Celebrant in terms of the Solemnisation of Same Sex Marriage Act (Act []), enters the bounds of the Charge of an existing Parish Minister who is not such an Authorised Celebrant, to solemnise a same sex marriage.”

Guidance

14. The Legal Questions Committee shall produce Guidance to accompany this Act, which Guidance shall be reviewed by it from time to time. Such Guidance shall be taken into account by all those using or affected by this Act.

Appendix B

SUPPLEMENTARY OPINION OF THE PROCURATOR REGARDING SOLEMNISATION OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Background

1. The General Assembly of 2017 passed a Deliverance instructing the Legal Questions Committee to undertake a study of the matters which would require to be addressed in any legislation permitting Ministers and Deacons to officiate at same-sex marriage ceremonies. Following the Debate on this work at the 2018 Assembly, the Legal Questions Committee was instructed to prepare enabling legislation, whilst also including safeguards to protect those who did not wish to be involved in such ceremonies.
2. After the 2017 Assembly, Legal Questions formed a subcommittee on same sex marriage. The subcommittee has met regularly since August 2017, and reported to the main committee throughout its existence. In 2018, to accompany the Report of the study undertaken by Legal Questions, I provided an Opinion for the Assembly on the issue of same sex marriage.
3. This Supplementary Opinion also considers issues concerning same sex marriage, but in the context of the finalisation by both the sub-committee and the full committee of the text of a draft Overture to fulfil the instruction of the Assembly in 2018. The discussions which have taken place at meetings over the period referred to above (especially around the drafting process) have enabled detailed identification and thorough examination of the legal and practical aspects of creating a legislative scheme for same sex marriages. This Supplementary Opinion considers these points under headings which deal with celebrants, use of church premises, and involvement of participants other than Ministers and Deacons. In each case, the protections available under the Overture and under civil law are considered at the same time.

Celebrants

4. In the civil legislation, the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977, the Church of Scotland is the only denomination specifically named in section 8 as having statutory authority for its Ministers and Deacons to solemnise marriage between persons of different sexes ('DSM'). Prescription of other denominations may take place in regulations made under s 8. In relation to marriage between persons of the same sex ('SSM'), prescription of a denomination under s 8 may also occur.
5. Since 2017, it has been understood that any authorisation of SSM celebrants within the Church of Scotland would not utilise the s 8 route, but would proceed under s 9 of the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977. In relation to SSM, s 9(1A) of the 1977 Act allows nomination by a Church of individuals to be registered as empowered to solemnise SSM. In practice, this will

not occur unless an individual Minister or Deacon wishes it.

6. The civil legislation is permissive, thus s 8(1D) specifically provides that there is no duty on any religious body to nominate any members under s 9, nor is there any duty on any person to apply for temporary authorisation under s 12 to solemnise SSM. There is also provision stipulating that there is no duty on a person who is an approved celebrant in relation to SSM to solemnise such marriages.
7. Sections 5 to 7 of the draft Overture therefore set out the practical steps of an application process. Co-ordination will lie with the Office of the Principal Clerk, both in relation to application and renewal, although responsibility for initiating renewal will rest with individual celebrants.
8. The question of protection for individuals who do not wish to solemnise SSM is dealt with in the Overture at s 3. This provides:

No person shall be required by this Act to participate in the solemnisation of, or be involved in the arrangements for, a same sex marriage.
9. Section 3 is derived from the provisions of paragraph 25B of Schedule 3 to the Equality Act 2010, which provides:
 - (1) An approved celebrant does not contravene section 29 only by refusing to solemnise a relevant Scottish marriage for the reason that the marriage is the marriage of two persons of the same sex.
 - ...
 - (3) A person does not contravene section 29 only by refusing to participate in a religious or belief ceremony forming part of, or connected with, the solemnising of a relevant Scottish marriage for the reason that the marriage is the marriage of two persons of the same sex.
10. It will be noted that this provision is not qualified in any way: if the reason why an approved celebrant will not solemnise a SSM, or a person will not participate in a SSM, is that it is a marriage of persons of the same sex, that suffices. The protection concerned is from claims alleging breach of s 29 of the Equality Act 2010; it is s 29 which governs alleged discrimination in the provision of services and the exercise of public functions. The extent of protection so far as concerning other people who might be involved is dealt with below.

Premises

11. It has only been through the detailed discussions in the SSM sub-committee that the complexities of devising provisions about premises have fully emerged.
12. The position which is taken in the Overture is to link use of premises for solemnisation of SSM to the authorisation as a celebrant of the serving Minister of the charge. By s 8 of the Overture, only a Parish Minister who is an authorised celebrant for SSM may permit the use of Church buildings in their charge for solemnisation of SSM. This extends to allowing other authorised celebrants to use the building. Provision is also made to preserve the effect of a grant of permission even if the celebrant who made the grant is no longer in post. Similarly, an Interim Moderator who is an authorised celebrant may conduct, or grant permission for, a SSM ceremony in a building in the charge for which he or she is responsible. In such a

situation, however, the provisions of s 4, quoted below, may be particularly important.

13. The protection which is provided in the Equality Act is found in Schedule 23, paragraph 2. In like manner to Schedule 3, discussed above, there is an unqualified protection in relation to the use of premises for solemnisation of SSM. Subparagraph (9A) of paragraph 2 protects an organisation from claims alleging breach of s 29 of the Equality Act in circumstances where the organisation refuses to allow premises to be used for the solemnisation of SSM, and subparagraph (9B) protects an individual who issues such a refusal.
14. In the lead-up to the passage of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014, the Scottish Government released a Joint Note agreed between the UK and Scottish governments. The Note made clear the intent that, if SSMs were introduced in Scotland, no religious or belief body would have to carry them out. It outlines the approach taken to the provision of further legislative protection in relation to discrimination. In relation to premises, the Note states
 28. [T]he current protection may not be available where a Minister of religion (or other person or body controlling the use of religious or belief premises) who is a member of a religious or belief body which has opted in advises a same sex couple that they cannot have their marriage ceremony or civil partnership in the premises because the ceremony would be a same sex marriage or a civil partnership.
 29. Therefore, the Government intends that the amendment of the 2010 Act for Scotland will provide that a person controlling the use of religious or belief premises does not contravene section 29 of the 2010 Act by refusing to allow the premises to be used for a same sex marriage or a civil partnership.
15. It is my view that these passages demonstrate a legislative intent to protect those individuals within a religious denomination where SSM is carried out who, themselves, do not wish to authorise the use of premises over which they have control for SSM ceremonies.

Other participants

16. Carrying out the solemnisation of a SSM in any church will involve individuals in addition to the celebrant. Dealing firstly with those who participate in the ceremony, there is, as already mentioned, a protection from claims based on s 29 for all who refuse to participate in a ceremony for the reason that it is SSM.
17. I dealt with the concept of 'participating' in my 2018 Opinion: in summary, 'participation' is taking part in a hands-on capacity. It is my view that this covers organists. Whether involvement of other individuals meets this test is harder to answer on a generalised basis. Balance is required between conscience-based objection and the rights of those who wish to marry. At some point, a line is crossed. The Joint Note gives as an example chauffeurs who do not wish to drive people to the venue where a SSM is to take place; there is no intent to protect such individuals against claims under the Equality Act based on discrimination.

18. It is possible that there will be individuals within the Church who, although they do not participate in a marriage ceremony in a 'hands-on' capacity, do not wish to provide their usual practical assistance, for the reason that this is SSM. The Overture provides protection for those individuals, who cannot be required to be involved in the arrangements for a SSM (section 3). The Equality Act requires that the service (in the overall sense) provided to a couple getting married cannot be a reduced offering. In other words, someone within the organisation which is providing the service cannot legitimately stymie the wedding.
19. It will, therefore, be necessary for provision to be made for understudies to fill the parts normally played in a DSM. This will be developed more fully in the Guidance, but overall responsibility for such practical forward planning will rest with the Minister or Deacon who intends to seek authorisation as a celebrant.

Concluding remarks

20. The Overture also addresses the territorial reach of the legislative scheme – it applies wherever the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 applies.
21. Finally, it is, I think, relevant to highlight section 4 of the Overture. As an overarching provision, it states

In all matters referred to in this Act, including but not limited to making application to become an Authorised Celebrant, permitting or granting consent for use of buildings, arranging for the participation of others in the solemnisation of a same sex marriage, and making practical arrangements for same sex weddings, a Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon, as the case may be, shall take account of the peace and unity and pastoral needs of the congregation and of any parish or other grouping of which it is a part.

LAURA J DUNLOP
20 February 2020
Advocates Library
Parliament House
Edinburgh

Appendix C

[] ACT AMENDING THE DISCIPLINE ACT (ACT I 2019) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2021, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Discipline Act (Act I 2019), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *In section 19(1) delete "twenty eight (28)" and substitute "thirty five (35)".*
2. *In section 22(1) delete "fourteen (14)" and substitute "twenty eight (28)", and on the first occasion it appears, delete "twenty eight (28)" and substitute "thirty five (35)".*
3. *In section 24(1) delete "twenty eight (28)" and substitute "thirty five (35)".*

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the Committee to engage with the reformed Presbyteries of the Church and report to a future General Assembly. (*Section 1*)
3. Instruct the Committee to facilitate a conference to explore the establishing of a cooperative partnership to enable Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland. (*Section 1.6-1.9*)
4. Note the establishing of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and welcome the development of an effective ecumenical forum during the Covid-19 pandemic. (*Section 2*)
5.
 - a) Approve the Saint Andrew Declaration, consisting of mutual Acknowledgements and Commitments between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church.
 - b) Instruct the Committee, in partnership with the Inter-church Relations Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, to oversee the implementation of the Commitments in the Saint Andrew Declaration and to set up the Working Group proposed by it. (*Section 3.6*)
6. Agree to 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. (*Section 5*)
7. Welcome the appointment of the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr as Co-Chair of the Columba Declaration Contact Group on behalf of the Church of Scotland and the Rt Rev James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle as Co-Chair on behalf of the Church of England. (*Section 6.1*)

Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is now two years since the Ecumenical Relations Committee reported to the General Assembly. The Report, therefore, covers work which has taken place since May 2019. Like every part of the Church, the Committee has had to contend with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, and this has impacted its ability to work as efficiently as usual. The Committee would like to record its gratitude to the Ecumenical Officer who has done an enormous amount to facilitate effective ecumenical responses to the challenges we have all faced. The fact that the leadership of so many of the churches in Scotland have worked so well and so supportively together is testament to his skills and dedication, as well as to the benefit of building up ecumenical relations over many years.

The Report covers the following topics:

1. The centenary of the Church of Scotland Act 1921, formulated in the context of preparation for union between the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland; the commitment to seeking further union which is at the centre of the Church of Scotland's identity; the call to respond, and continue to respond, to the challenges faced by the Church as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the opportunities presented by doing this in collaboration with other churches. The General Assembly will be asked to note the opportunities for developing ecumenical co-operation offered by reform of Presbyteries and support the delivery of a conference of all the Scottish Churches to explore the establishing of a cooperative partnership to enable Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland;
2. The initiation and development of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum;
3. The Saint Andrew Declaration between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church. The Declaration sets out the basis of our recognition of one another and lays the foundation for closer co-operation in the future. The General Assembly will be asked to adopt the Declaration, as will the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church, whereupon the Moderator and the Primus will sign the Declaration on behalf of our two churches;
4. An examination of the concept of ecumenical Mission Communities, as developed within the Covenant Partnership in Cumbria, with a view to learning what may be applicable to the Church in Scotland;
5. A report on progress made towards transitioning from Action of Churches Together in Scotland to the Scottish Christian Forum as Scotland's ecumenical instrument. The General Assembly will be asked to recognise the Scottish Christian Forum as the national ecumenical body in Scotland; to agree to the participation of the Church of Scotland in the Scottish Christian Forum; to grant powers to the Committee on Ecumenical Relations to give final approval to the creation of the Scottish Christian Forum on the basis of such constitutional arrangements as shall be agreed by all members; and to note the proposal, in due course, to dissolve Action of Churches Together in Scotland.
6. A report on the continuing co-operation with the Church of England, including the *Thy Kingdom Come* Global Prayer Initiative;
7. A report on the Church of Scotland's membership of Ecumenical bodies.

1. THE CALL TO RESPOND: LIVING OUT OUR RESPONSE

1.1 In the Gospel of John, Jesus prays for all who those who have come to believe in him “that they may all be one... so that the world may believe” that he has been sent by the Father. (John 17: 20-21) The times in which we have lived through during the past year and more are ones that will shape our society for decades to come and in ways that we cannot yet fully comprehend. In the midst of such times, the Church of Christ is called to reflect on how it should live out its response to the prayer of Jesus.

1.2 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the Church of Scotland Act 1921^[i]. It established the constitution under which the Church of Scotland currently operates. The purpose of the Act is to “declare the lawfulness of certain Articles declaratory of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland in matters spiritual prepared with the authority of the General Assembly of the Church”, specifically “to facilitate the union of other Churches with the Church of Scotland.” The *Articles Declaratory of the Church of Scotland*^[ii] are set out as a Schedule to the Act. Much has changed over the last century, but the Committee believes that this is a good moment in the life of our Church to recall the core principles of our calling to be a church of Christ in Scotland.

1.3 Living out our response in the light of our calling is integral to the self-understanding of the Church of Scotland. This is expressed, in part, in the following terms:

As a national Church representative of the Christian Faith of the Scottish people it acknowledges its distinctive call and duty to bring the ordinances of religion to the people in every parish of Scotland through a territorial ministry. (Article III)

1.4 This is the first of three elements in the identity of the Church of Scotland which are integral to our self-understanding, namely the call to a territorial ministry to the whole of Scotland. In 2010, the Church of Scotland reaffirmed “its commitment to be a national church with a distinctive evangelical and pastoral concern for the people and nation of Scotland” in terms of Article III.^[iii]

1.5 The second element integral to the identity of the Church of Scotland is that:

This Church [has] 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. (Article IV)

With respect to the government of the Church, we affirm that it is Presbyterian (Article II) and the governance of the Church is integral to the living out of our response at this present time. The significance of this is seen in the ongoing task of Presbytery Reform and engagement with the process of Presbytery Reform is a crucial element in the Local Ecumenical Strategy of the Church of Scotland (GA 2019). On the basis of that Strategy the Committee affirmed that it would “make engagement with the renewed presbyteries of the Church an integral part of its ongoing work”.

1.6 The commitment to engage with the emerging Presbyteries and to explore the ecumenical dimension of their future work points to the third element in the identity of the Church, which is:

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. (Article VII)

The Articles Declaratory were prepared in the context of discussions which led to the union of the Church of Scotland with the United Free Church of Scotland. It is therefore no surprise that the imperative of unity is so prominent within them and it should be remembered that the ‘union’ of which the Church of Scotland Act 1921 speaks was by no means intended to be limited just to the union which occurred in 1929. The legacy of that work a century and more ago is one we should continue to celebrate, namely that the prayer of Jesus that all his disciples “should be one in the Father and in him that the world may believe” remains integral to our self-understanding and identity as a church.

1.7 When, in 2010, the General Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to Article III, it also affirmed that:

[T]he 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.

That is, the 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.

1.8 In more recent times, the General Assembly of 2019 acknowledged that, with respect to our self-understanding in terms of Article III:

[We] need to question seriously whether the Church of Scotland has the ability or resources to fulfil this in the ways that we have historically. Coming to terms with this reality is fundamental to shaping the future of the Church.^[iv]

1.9 If that was held to be true in 2019, it is even more so in 2021 as we consider how to live out our response in the face of the challenges of these times. As this report will demonstrate, there are encouraging signs that the church in Scotland is coming to terms with the reality of the situation that it now faces and that it is embracing some of the opportunities that, in the providence of God, have emerged. In accepting the Radical Action Plan in 2019, the General Assembly proposed initiating a conference of all the Scottish Churches to explore the establishing of a cooperative partnership to enable Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland. The Committee is ready to take a lead on organising this conference when it becomes safe and possible to do so.

1.10 The vision embedded in the Articles Declaratory opens our horizons to the ever-present opportunity of sharing “in Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland”. In the times in which we live, the commitment to living out our response in cooperative partnership is an indispensable element in our response to the prayer of Jesus and to the challenges we face. There is no future for the Church of Scotland that does not embed cooperative partnership as an integral element of its ongoing identity. The Committee has engaged with and will continue to engage with other churches in Scotland and beyond, with the emerging Presbyteries and with local congregations in order to enable this.

2. THE CALL TO RESPOND: SCOTTISH CHURCH LEADERS' FORUM

2.1 On 23rd March 2020, the United Kingdom entered into a lockdown as a result of the increasing threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The church across Scotland found itself having to respond to the greatest challenge we have faced as a society since the end of the Second World War. The nature of the challenge faced is virtually unprecedented in living memory.

2.2 The response of the Church of Scotland to the pandemic will be a recurring theme of the Reports to the General Assembly of 2021. The purpose of this section of the report is to focus on part of the collective response of the churches in Scotland, principally through the initiation and development of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum (SCLF).

2.3 The concept of a SCLF is one that had previously been considered in the context of discussions on the potential development of a Scottish Christian Forum. (5.2) The catalyst for its initiation and development, and the transformation of the theoretical into the practical, was the onset of the pandemic. On the initiative of the Ecumenical Officer of the Church of Scotland, and in anticipation of the Lockdown, an invitation was extended to senior representatives of the Church of Scotland, the Catholic Church in Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church, the United Free Church of Scotland, the United Reformed Church, the Methodist Church, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Salvation Army, the Congregational Federation and the Baptist Union of Scotland to form the SCLF, with the Moderator of the General Assembly representing the Church of Scotland. Since March 2020, the SCLF has become one of the principal expressions of cooperative partnership between the churches in Scotland.

2.4 Initially, the invitation was to join a WhatsApp group in order that Church leaders might communicate and share information as the Churches collectively responded to the pandemic. As a result, Church leaders began to interact in a way that had not previously been a feature of Scottish church life. From this simple beginning, the SCLF began to meet online and has continued to do so approximately every 4-6 weeks since. The SCLF has been convened by the Rev Mark Slaney, District Chair of the Methodist Church in Scotland, and we are indebted to him for his leadership throughout this period, with the Rev Dr John L McPake serving as Secretary.

2.5 Significantly, the first public act of the SCLF was to offer a Call to Prayer on Sunday 22nd March 2020, as part of a Call across the United Kingdom to light a candle and offer prayer:

For all that is good in life, thank you,
For the love of family and friends, thank you,
For the kindness of good neighbour and Samaritan stranger,
thank you.

May those who are vulnerable, hungry or homeless,
experience support,
May those who are sick, know healing,
May those who are anxious or bereaved, sense comfort.

Bless and guide political leaders and decision-makers, with wisdom,
Bless and guide health workers and key workers, with strength and well-being,
Bless and guide each one of us, as we adapt to a new way of living.

And may the light shining from our windows,
across road and wynd, glen and ben, kyle and isle,
be reflected in our hearts and hands and hopes.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Thereafter, the Call to Prayer has been sustained Sunday by Sunday and a Gaelic translation has been provided. The collective offering of a weekly prayer, actively endorsed by the members of the Forum, along with the Evangelical

Alliance (Scotland), the Church of the Nazarene, the Redeemed Christian Church of God, and Minority Ethnic Churches Together in Scotland (MECTIS), has been at the heart of the Forum and has been widely appreciated by members and congregations across Scotland.

2.6 The SCLF has engaged across a range of issues, with the initial focus of its work being on the immediate response of the churches to Lockdown and the sharing of resources with respect to this. The Forum, either as a full Forum or through representatives of the Forum, has engaged in discussions with the Scottish Government, principally senior representatives of the Civil Service in the Local Government and Communities Directorate, and with Professor Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director of Healthcare Quality and Strategy; with Steve Carson, Director, BBC Scotland, and other senior BBC Scotland staff, as well as making representation to the United Kingdom Government in respect of the Internal Market Bill.

2.7 While the catalyst for the initiation and development of the SCLF has been the Covid-19 pandemic, nevertheless the Committee is of the view that the Forum, as it now stands, has the potential to continue as one of the principal expressions of cooperative engagement between the churches in Scotland.

2.8 The SCLF requested and supported research on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the life of the Church in Scotland and the research has been undertaken by Brendan Research and funded by Action of Churches Together in Scotland. The Report, "Adapt and be Flexible – the Mission Doesn't Stop: The Scottish Church and the COVID-19 Pandemic" was published in March 2021 and is based on a data gathered, through an online questionnaire, between October and December 2020. The invitation to participate in the research produced some 369 responses from ministers, clergy and congregational leaders of 27 Christian denominations in Scotland.^[v]

2.9 The Report offers the first detailed snapshot of the response of the Churches to the pandemic. It includes findings on how congregations have continued ministry and mission during the pandemic, often developing new patterns; on the growth in online worship and social media activity; on the challenges of continuing some previous mission initiatives and new opportunities developed; and on the strength of faith of ministers and clergy during the pandemic.

2.10 With respect to the recommendations of the Report, we see, in summary, some of the challenges and opportunities that face the Church in Scotland as we move through but continue still to be shaped by the pandemic. It seems clear that online worship is here to stay and so needs to be reflected upon theologically as it develops further. As the Scottish Churches move forward from the pandemic, it will be important not simply try to revert to pre-lockdown ministry and mission practices but to learn from the experience of these times and build on developments made. Cross-denominational partnership in mission will be key to this, as will further research into the social capital generated by the Churches. Our response to these challenges and opportunities will undoubtedly shape the Church for decades to come and we shall better face them if they are addressed through cooperative partnership.

2.11 In the response to the pandemic, it should be noted that the SCLF, and the churches represented, essentially became part of a network of resource sharing across the United Kingdom. A significant factor in this extended network is the Roundtable initiated by Churches Together in England (CTE) (of which the Church of Scotland is a member). At the onset of the pandemic, this became a major point of exchange of resources and information. In particular, the resources generated by the United Reformed Church provided models that became the template for the dissemination of information to the Church of Scotland in

the early stages of the pandemic. The Committee wishes the General Assembly to place on record our indebtedness to the United Reformed Church and to CTE. That wider network also enabled insight into the work of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and the Irish Inter-Church Meeting as well as with Churches Together in Wales (Cytûn). Woven into this network has been the contribution of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), which has played an important role in enabling the churches across Britain and Ireland to speak collectively and to share collaboratively. At CTBI's behest, a number of meetings of senior British and Irish Church leaders took place and those proved to be significant opportunities to exchange views and insights. The Committee wishes to thank Rev Dr Paul Goodliff, CTE General Secretary, Mr Bob Fyffe, CTBI General Secretary, Dr Nicola Brady, ICC General Secretary, Rev Aled Edwards OBE, Chief Executive of Cytûn, and especially Jenny Bond, CTE Principal Officer, for all their support at this time.

3. THE CALL TO RESPOND: *OUR COMMON CALLING* WITH THE SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH

3.1 Over the course of 2019 and 2020, the Committee has continued to engage constructively with the Scottish Episcopal Church through the Our Common Calling process. The process is predicated on the conviction that both denominations share a distinctive calling to minister to the whole of Scotland. That conviction provides a powerful imperative to minister together.

3.2 The task of the Our Common Calling Working Group has been guided, in part, by an approach to developing unity used by the Anglican Communion. It understands the development of unity as a process, beginning with regional or national churches recognising each other as sharing the same faith and hence being a "true Church[es] of the Gospel". It would seem self-evident that this first step has long since been realised by the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church and, in practice, this is true. However, our two churches have never formally adopted a statement to this effect so, to that end, the Committee is offering the Saint Andrew Declaration, prepared by the Our Common Calling Working Group, for adoption by the General Assembly. It will also be offered for adoption at the forthcoming General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

3.3 Having achieved and declared mutual recognition, the participating churches can then develop ways of expressing the degree of unity so far achieved and of promoting further growth. This can include eucharistic sharing; regular meetings of church leaders; invitations to speak at each other's synods and assemblies; creating common agencies; joint theological education and mission programmes; limited interchange of ministers; and the twinning of congregations. Evidence that the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church have been doing these things is not hard to find. Eucharistic sharing is at the heart of the work of the Our Common Calling process, and communicants of both denominations have long been welcomed at the celebrations within one another's congregations. Equally, our respective church leaders meet regularly in a variety of contexts, not least in the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum. The Working Group has learned of innovative sharing of ministry and congregational life, particularly in rural areas of Scotland, and is convinced that there is potential for greater development of this, with the active support of dioceses and presbyteries.

3.4 As and when it is felt appropriate, participating churches can then explore changing particular practices with respect to ecclesial oversight (episkope) and the full recognition of ministries. The Our Common Calling Working Group has learned that considerable work is being undertaken on the nature of episkope within the Anglican Communion, and this has informed its reflections. There is a

recognition that authority in the church is exercised in different ways: in the Scottish Episcopal Church by bishops in synod, and in the Church of Scotland by presbyteries. There is an acknowledgement by both churches that the expression of communal oversight within each church is consonant with the tradition which they each represent.

3.5 The Saint Andrew Declaration acknowledges and commits our two churches to one another within the terms of reference expressed in 3.2 and 3.3 above, whilst anticipating further reflection on matters raised in

3.6 The Saint Andrew Declaration reads:

SAINT ANDREW DECLARATION

Preamble

The Church of Jesus Christ has been present in Scotland for over 1,600 years. For over a century following the Reformation, the church in Scotland, and Scotland's monarch, wrestled over the order of the church: was it to be Presbyterian or Episcopalian? Presbyterianism was suppressed after the restoration during the reigns of Charles II and James VII, but the Presbyterian ordering of the Church of Scotland was confirmed under William and Mary in 1690. Episcopalianism was suppressed, particularly after the Jacobite uprisings in 1715 and 1745; a small Episcopalian church survived in Scotland, and English immigration saw the establishment of Qualified Chapels which used the English liturgy. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Church of Scotland was racked by division, focused on questions of patronage and the relationship between church and state, while the nineteenth century saw a gradual consolidation of the small Episcopal Church in Scotland.

Whilst the ecclesiastical, social and political landscape has been shaped and reshaped on innumerable occasions, the calling of the Church to serve the people of Scotland in ministry and mission has remained a constant. The Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church have now established a bilateral conversation expressed in the Our Common Calling Working Group. In the course of our discussions we have acknowledged our shared history and have named past conflicts, divisions and hurts. In so doing, we have learned from one another and have asked forgiveness of each other where we have caused pain by our words and actions. Within the context of these discussions, we have acknowledged that the theological, sacramental and liturgical emphases within our respective churches are consonant with the tradition which each represents. Alongside this, we have sought to acknowledge that our churches belong together as part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. In so acknowledging, we seek to explore ways in which we may better work together as partners in ministry and mission, to serve Christ by serving the people of Scotland.

Declaration

In the light of our common calling within the life of the Church of Jesus Christ in Scotland, shaped by our understanding of the mission of God, our agreement in faith and the opportunities to share in ministry and mission, we make the following Declaration:

We, the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church, make the following acknowledgements and commitments, which are interrelated.

A) Acknowledgements:

i. We acknowledge one another's churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God.

ii. We acknowledge that our churches share in the common confession of the Apostolic Faith.

iii. We acknowledge that in our churches the Word of God is authentically preached, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion are faithfully administered.

iv. *We acknowledge one another's ordained ministries as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit but also Christ's commission through the Church and are given by God as instruments of grace for the mission and unity of the Church.*

v. *We acknowledge that personal, collegial and communal oversight (episkope) is embodied and exercised in our churches in a variety of forms, as a visible sign expressing and serving the Church's unity and continuity in apostolic life, ministry and mission.*

vi. *We acknowledge that our unity is as yet imperfect and look forward to the time when the fuller visible unity of our churches may be realised.*

B) Commitments:

We commit ourselves to respond together to our common calling to proclaim the reign of God to all the people of Scotland by strengthening our partnership in ministry and mission. Through this commitment, we hope to enrich our continuing relationships locally, nationally and internationally with the churches of Scotland and throughout the world, that we may deepen our individual faith and serve God's whole creation. We will welcome opportunities to draw other churches into the activities and initiatives that we share.

As part of that commitment to seek appropriate ways to respond to our common calling within the life of the Church of Jesus Christ, we will continue:

i. *To pray for and with one another; to work towards the fuller sharing of ministry, and of spiritual, human, financial and physical resources;*

ii. *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;*

iii. *To welcome one another's members to worship and participate in the congregational life of each other's churches;*

iv. *To stimulate theological discussions between our churches, including on the outstanding issues hindering fuller communion;*

v. *To work together in practical and prophetic ways on the social, political and ethical issues arising from our shared participation in public life;*

vi. *To ensure that these commitments are followed through at every level of our church life; to allocate resources to joint initiatives, and to hold one another to account on what we have agreed to do.*

In order to assist our churches in living out the Acknowledgements and Commitments of the Saint Andrew Declaration, we will appoint Co-Chairs and members of a Church of Scotland – Scottish Episcopal Church Working Group, whose purpose will be to encourage the development of our common calling within the Church of Jesus Christ in Scotland. The Working Group will report annually to the Committee on Ecumenical Relations of the Church of Scotland and to the Inter-church Relations Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church. Joint meetings of church leaders will be held regularly, and we will welcome opportunities to draw other churches into the activities and initiatives that we share.

We see this as living out our response to the prayer of Jesus that we "may all be one . . . so that the world may believe" (John 17: 21). In faithfulness, we commit to remain open to wherever the Holy Spirit may be leading our churches.

4. THE CALL TO RESPOND: COVENANT PARTNERSHIP

4.1 The Local Ecumenical Strategy agreed by the General Assembly in 2019 envisages that the Committee will engage with the emerging presbyteries of the Church as they work towards reform and that it will make such engagement

an integral part of its ongoing work. The Committee has done so, through the Ecumenical Officer, who presented to the Presbytery Clerks' Forum a model founded on the concept of the local Mission Community set within the context of a regional Covenant Partnership, as developed within the context of Cumbria.

4.2 The Cumbria model is one that has proven to be of considerable interest. It offers a vision for the renewal of the Church through mission; integral to that model is the affirmation that concern for mission is an ecumenical concern and effective mission can only be achieved in partnership. Early indications are that the model has proved resilient during the Covid-19 pandemic.

4.3 The Church of Scotland actively participates in this through the Border Kirk being part of a Mission Community in Carlisle. Further, it is of interest because Cumbria has witnessed the growth and development of a significant number of Fresh Expressions of church within the context of the Covenant Partnership, and that growth and development have been the subject of significant statistical research. For all of these reasons, the Committee believes that the model, evolving and developing in a context akin to many parts of Scotland, is one that ought to be given active consideration.

4.4 To that end, it is helpful to sketch something of the background to the development of the Covenant Partnership in Cumbria and the Mission Community model. The Covenant Partnership was initially adopted in 2011 and extended in 2016 and embraces the Church of England, Methodist Church, Salvation Army and United Reformed Church as full Covenant members. The Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church, the Baptist Union and the Religious Society of Friends signed a Letter of Companionship in November 2016 and this has enabled active participation within the arrangements at an appropriate level.

4.5 The basis for the Covenant Partnership is found in the concept of Covenant Partnerships in Extended Areas (CPEA). The concept grew out of the ongoing Anglican-Methodist dialogue.^[vi] The intention of the CPEA is to support initiatives, such as the formation of Mission Communities, that allow local partnerships to flourish in ways that serve the wider mission of the Church. Further, it is intended to enable Covenant partners to share ministry across the whole area of the Covenant Partnership and to develop joint strategies for the deployment of ministry for the sake of mission. The CPEA concept was intended initially to enable Anglican and Methodist cooperation but has been extended to embrace churches of other traditions including the Church of Scotland.

4.6 Within the Cumbria Covenant Partnership, a coherent vision had been developed under the heading *God for All* and it is instructive to note the content of that vision:

By 2020, every person in Cumbria of all ages and backgrounds will have had an opportunity to discover more of God and God's purpose for their lives, so that they will discover more of Jesus and the Good News and become followers of Jesus within a Christian community.

4.7 The vision is complemented by a strategy through which that vision can be realised. Integral to that strategy is the Mission Community:

A Mission Community is a cluster of ecumenical churches who commit to working together to make *God for All* a reality in their community. This includes how to use their combined resources (buildings, people, established connections) for mission and outreach. Each mission community has mission at its heart. That is reflected in the role of the mission community leader, local church leaders and everyone in the church.^[vii]

4.8 The vision expressed in *God for All* is embodied in the local Mission Community, with this in turn being

complemented by appropriate resources for mission. A generic template, “Archways”, for the establishing of a Mission Community has been developed. This offers a comprehensive description of the basis upon which a Mission Community can be realised in terms of a 4-stage model: Explore – Launch – Transition – Commission. Integral to the process of establishing a Community is the provision of support and accompaniment through Strategic Development Officers and the offer of what is termed a “Constructive Coach and Friend”. Equally, there is a significant stress on the need for Mission Community leadership and an exploration of appropriate models of leadership within particular contexts and community settings. The exploration of the context and of the particular nature of the community in which the mission of the Community is to be lived out is an integral feature of planning towards its establishment. In terms of undergirding the establishment of a Mission Community, there is a focus on establishing a sustainable budget and an appropriate buildings strategy. That is, the approach to the establishment of a Mission Community is intentional, leadership-focused and contextualised. In summary, a shared vision, complemented by a strategy that, in turn, is realised through a Mission Community which is enabled through appropriate leadership and resourcing, has enabled a network to develop within specific geographical areas through an overarching Covenant Partnership.

4.9 The Convener of the Committee and the Ecumenical Officer, along with representatives of other traditions of the church within Scotland, have actively engaged with the experience of the church in Cumbria and met with representatives of those involved in a Mission Community in their local context. At the time of writing, there were thirty-five Mission Communities across Cumbria covering the entire county, albeit that they are not uniform in nature and are at different stages of development. The consensus is that there is, as yet, no discernible pattern as to the factors that enable the success, or otherwise, of a particular Mission Community. However, the key themes to emerge from this initial engagement were that:

- a) a focus on a unifying strategy (*God for All*);
- b) initiated by and delivered through the Covenant Partnership; and
- c) enabled through intentional leadership at a regional level

have been integral to the renewal of the life of the Church to the extent that this has been evident. The group which visited Cumbria recognises that it saw a snapshot of what was happening. Mission Communities have the potential to be dynamic and change and develop rapidly.

4.10 A reading of this section of the Report might give the impression that the Covenant Partnership is primarily about the renewal and sustaining of traditional patterns of church life. However, this is not so. Rather, it is of particular significance that, within the context of the Covenant Partnership, the growth of Fresh Expressions of the life of the Church has been a highly significant feature. In this regard, *An Audit of Fresh Expressions of Church: Diocese of Carlisle*, carried out by the Church Army Research Unit in 2019, presents a review of the growth of Fresh Expressions within the Diocese of Carlisle and its findings are worthy of note. In particular, it is demonstrated that a quarter of church attendance in the diocesan area is associated with attendance at Fresh Expressions. The significance of these findings should not be overstated. Neither should their significance be understated. In summary, an approach to the life of the Church that enables the renewal of traditional patterns of church life and the growth of Fresh Expressions of the life of the Church is one that we ought not to ignore and should actively embrace.^[viii]

4.11 The Covenant Partnership is essentially a vehicle through which churches are enabled to create a shared

approach to their life within an extended area in a way that has created a synergy and generated a vision and a strategy. The *God for All* vision and strategy have, in turn, been resourced in order to equip the whole people of God for the task of mission. That vision and strategy have enabled a re-imagining of the life of the Church that has proven itself capable of embracing traditional and fresh expressions of what it is to be the Church of Jesus Christ. An integral element of the Covenant Partnership has been the role of shared senior leadership in initiating the vision and developing the strategy. It is the contention of the Committee that we ought to consider more fully what particular lessons can be derived from the Cumbrian experience and to engage in a potentially fruitful exercise in cross-border exchange.

4.12 The Covenant Partnership within Cumbria is, in one sense, unique to that particular locality. Nevertheless, the experience of the Cumbrian churches in facing the challenges of mission is, in a very real sense, identical to that faced by the churches in Scotland. Equally, the physical proximity of Cumbria to Scotland, as well as many shared similarities in context, suggests that certain parts of the experience would be potentially applicable. Whatever the case, it is clear that a highly significant feature of the shared life of the church in Cumbria is expressed in the life of the Mission Community network initiated and developed on the basis of a Covenant Partnership.

5. THE CALL TO RESPOND: SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN FORUM

5.1 The Committee reported to the General Assembly in 2018 that the Trustees of Action Together in Scotland (ACTS) had commissioned an external review: *Action of Churches Together in Scotland: A Review*.^[ix] In 2018, The Committee placed on record its appreciation of that which ACTS had accomplished up until that point and stated:

We note and conditionally concur with the relative consensus that ACTS ought to be retained, albeit that it ought to be comprehensively reformed, restructured and renewed.

5.2 Thereafter, the Committee reported to GA 2019 that, in November 2018, the ACTS Members’ Meeting had agreed to explore the establishing of a Scottish Christian Forum (SCF) as the successor to ACTS, and set out the basis upon which this was being considered.^[x] The vision for the new body is that it will create a space for participation of a much broader range of churches in Scotland. The SCF will be an umbrella organisation with a lighter structure than ACTS, supporting a wide variety of projects on which the Scottish Churches choose to work together. A new Ecumenical Officers’ Forum is already active and meets on a regular basis. It was noted that the SCF is intended to be in continuity with the charitable purposes of ACTS and to include the establishing of “a Scottish Church Leaders’ Forum within the framework of a prospective SCF”.^[xi]

5.3 Since then, the Committee has sought with other churches to work towards that goal. The member churches of ACTS have come to the view that the best way to achieve it is to establish the SCF as a new charity. The intention is that the funds currently held by ACTS would then be transferred to the SCF as a body with the same charitable aims and objectives and that ACTS would subsequently be dissolved. Therefore, in October 2020 the ACTS Members’ Meeting unanimously appointed an Implementation Group to take forward the establishing of the SCF and granted it powers to call a Members’ Meeting in due course to implement the dissolution of ACTS.

5.4 The Church of Scotland formally agreed to participate in ACTS, as the national ecumenical body in Scotland, at the General Assembly of 1989 and thereafter we have remained in full membership of, and financially supported, ACTS.^[xii] Alongside this, it should be noted that

no financial payments have been made to ACTS since 31st December 2019. The Committee invites the General Assembly to note the proposal to dissolve ACTS. Further, the Committee invites the General Assembly to agree to the participation of the Church of Scotland in the SCF and to recognise it as the national ecumenical body in Scotland, in continuity with the charitable purposes of ACTS.

6. OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

6.1 The partnership between the Church of England and the Church of Scotland is expressed in the terms of the *Columba Declaration* contained within *Growth in Communion, Partnership in Mission*, as agreed by the General Synod of the Church of England and the General Assembly in 2016.^[xiii] In the *Declaration*, we acknowledge “one another’s churches as churches belonging to the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and truly participating in the apostolic ministry and mission of the whole people of God”. Equally, we “commit ourselves to grow together in communion and to strengthen our partnership in mission”. The partnership is expressed on an ongoing basis through the work of the *Columba Declaration* Contact Group; the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr was appointed Co-Chair of the Contact Group on behalf of the Church of Scotland early in 2020 along with the Rt Rev James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle, on behalf of the Church of England. The remit of the Contact Group includes facilitating the agenda for the annual meeting between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator and enabling a biennial meeting of the senior leadership of our two churches.

6.2 Discussions within the Contact Group cover a wide range of topics, including:

- the *Our Common Calling* process between the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of Scotland;
- the Covenant Partnership in Cumbria;
- the Radical Action Plan and the reform of presbyteries within the Church of Scotland;
- the Renewal and Reform process within the Church of England;
- the Church of Scotland’s participation in *Thy Kingdom Come*;
- the work of ecumenical bodies (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) and Churches Together in England (CTE));
- the “Living in Love and Faith” project within the Church of England;^[xiv]
- the mutual recognition and reconciliation of ministries process between the Church of England and the Methodist Church;
- The Bishop of Truro’s *Independent Review for the Foreign Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Office Support for Persecuted Christians*;
- the report: *Doing Mission Together: How Partnership Promotes Gospel Growth* (2019) from the Church of England.

6.3 The Co-Chairs were united in commending the Bishop of Truro’s report to our respective churches and in seeking a means to engage with the United Kingdom Government with respect to the complex and challenging issues which it raises.^[xv]

6.4 The report *Doing Mission Together* seems to the Contact Group to be of particular interest insofar as it offers an analysis of the impact of ‘missional ecumenism’ in urban centres within England, with ‘missional ecumenism’ being defined in the following terms:

Missional ecumenism takes many forms. For the purposes of this study the Five Marks of Mission helped provide a working definition of what we mean by missional ecumenism: it is when churches from different denominations cooperate in activities relating to any of the Five Marks.^[xvi]

6.5 The Five Marks of Mission offer a framework for understanding mission that was developed by the Anglican Consultative Council. They are as follows:

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 seek 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.^[xvii]

6.6 In taking the Five Marks of Mission as the working definition for missional ecumenism, the authors note a movement away from “institutional” ecumenism towards a shared approach to cooperative partnership that is “changing the Christian landscape in this country”.^[xviii] The Five Marks of Mission were integral to the theological basis of the Ecumenical Policy of the Church of Scotland^[xix] and have become an important guide to the Assembly Trustees and others in setting priorities and strategy for the Church of Scotland. In stating their conclusion, the authors suggest that:

[T]he scale of missional ecumenism indicated by the research evidence assembled here strongly suggests that this is a mainstream dimension of contemporary urban mission that must be taken into account by those with responsibility for supporting it – through initial ministerial education, diocesan mission planning and national church policy, including the distribution of project funding.^[xx]

The lessons identified in relation to ‘missional ecumenism’ are one that will bear reflection upon in the context of the Church of Scotland.

6.7 The participation of the Church of Scotland in the *Thy Kingdom Come* Global Prayer Initiative has been of particular value in the strengthening of the relationship between our two churches. *Thy Kingdom Come* was initiated within the Church of England in 2016 and thereafter developed ecumenically and internationally as an expression of the unity we share through the power of collective prayer, and the Church of Scotland entered into partnership with *Thy Kingdom Come* from 2018 onwards. In 2020, *Thy Kingdom Come* took place in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resources were adapted to enable churches, families and individuals to pray and worship in their homes in line with social distancing guidelines. In 2021, *Thy Kingdom Come* takes place from Thursday 12th May (Ascension Day) until 23rd May (Pentecost Sunday) and it is anticipated that the Church of Scotland will actively participate once more. In our engagement with *Thy Kingdom Come*, we are indebted to Emma Buchan, the *Thy Kingdom Come* Project Director, and her team.

6.8 The range of matters referenced above indicates something of the range of issues in which our two churches have a mutual interest. In this regard, we recall the words of *Growth in Communion, Partnership in Mission* (l. b), 3):

What unites us as churches immeasurably transcends the boundaries of our two particular nations and reminds us of the imperative of responding to the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ that we ‘may all be one’ (John 17:21).

7. THE CALL TO RESPOND: OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH ECUMENICAL BODIES

7.1 The Committee on Ecumenical Relations is responsible for nurturing the Church of Scotland's membership of the following ecumenical bodies:

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI)
Churches Together in England (CTE)
Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE)
Conference of European Churches (CEC)
World Council of Churches (WCC)
World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

7.2 The Church of Scotland has a long and productive history of engagement with other denominations through membership of Ecumenical bodies and is, in many cases, counted as a founder member. We contribute in many ways, not least through the involvement of many members of the Church of Scotland over many years who have been valued for the gifts of organisation and leadership they bring, not least our finely-honed skills in moderating everything from committees to large assemblies. The Church of Scotland is sometimes deemed to be punching above its weight in ecumenical bodies, particularly the international ones. We have a reputation for sound theology and are trusted, partly because of our productive working relationships with churches in former colonial areas. The Church of Scotland is by no means a lightweight or undervalued member of these bodies.

7.3 Membership and participation in these bodies allows the Church of Scotland to share in the mission of God around the world in ways it could never do on its own. The life of the whole Church of Scotland is enriched by our membership of these bodies and God's work in our own country and the wider world is supported, encouraged and facilitated by our close working with so many of our sisters and brothers in the Church Universal.

7.4 The overall benefits of active membership of ecumenical bodies can be summarised as:

- support for our contribution to God's mission in the world, and our purpose including delivery on our commitment to the five marks of mission;
- access to resources and expertise that we are too small to manage entirely on our own (e.g. work with refugees, human rights, inter-religious dialogue, peace and justice);
- learning from others, particularly from churches in the Global South who are experiencing growth;
- a stronger voice in Government and the public sphere;
- discipleship opportunities for members, particularly for young people.

Membership of the ecumenical bodies contributes to the delivery of the Church's Faith Action Plan in the following ways:

- The Church of Scotland's membership of such bodies has a positive impact on the lives of churches and Christians, and non-Christians, worldwide;
- We are respected and valued, and our contribution is notable for a relatively small church.

- The Church of Scotland is favourably impacted by our membership:
 - we gain from the experience and expertise of other churches in theology, mission and ecclesiology;
 - our horizons are widened by this exposure to world affairs;
 - we can make a contribution to political dialogue in Europe;
 - we are enriched by fellowship with the world church, including in areas where the Church of Scotland has not traditionally been active.
 - we can accompany, listen to and share with the world church.
- Membership helps address the objectives of seeking justice, dealing with poverty, accompaniment, developing relationships and fostering mutual learning. ^[xxi]
- Worship: Our membership of ecumenical bodies also helps us nurture enthusiastic worship and witness through exposure to the rich worship of so many other church traditions.
- Our witness to the world is strengthened by our partnership with over 500 million Christians.
- We are encouraged by thriving churches elsewhere to continue our staunch witness to Christ.
- The people who are most involved with the ecumenical bodies, particularly the young people whose opportunities for service are increased by our membership, turn into effective leaders, bringing back to Scotland their vision for what the Church could be, their enthusiasm and their renewed energy.

7.5 The Committee believes that belonging to ecumenical bodies is something to celebrate as a tangible expression that we are all one in Christ. However, in recognition of the financial challenges facing the Church, it has undertaken to enter into discussions with the secretariat of those bodies to which we make the largest financial contributions with a view to ensuring that our level of financial contribution is appropriate. The Committee believes that the Church of Scotland, which historically has been very generous, cannot continue to contribute above a fair level, but neither should it renege on any of its responsibilities. Shifting the financial burden unfairly onto other member churches would be unethical.

7.6 As always, when considering questions of policy and strategy, the primary question is: what does the Church of Scotland want to be? The Committee believes that the Church of Scotland wants to look outward and share with others in God's mission to the world, that this is true to the gospel, that it will inspire the commitment of our members and command the respect of those outwith the Church. The Committee wishes to stress again that active ecumenism cannot be viewed as a choice for a Christian church, nor a mere matter of expediency. It is rather an imperative, at the core of our fidelity to the prayer of Christ that his disciples should all be one in the Father and in him.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 As stated in the opening section of the Report, the vision embedded in the Articles Declaratory, our fundamental constitution, commits us, as it has for a century, to seeking union with other Churches and opens our horizons to the ever-present opportunity of sharing "in Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland". In 2021, the vision of the Church renewed and seeking renewal through Christian unity is as relevant as it has ever been, if not more so, not least through the challenges faced and the innovations made during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is not our

vision alone. Rather, it is a vision shared within the wider community of the Church in Scotland of which we are a part.

8.2 Therefore, it follows that the living out of this vision cannot be undertaken in isolation from our neighbours who, within their own traditions, share a vocation to mission and service. The Report has sought to demonstrate that this is so. Equally, it has sought to offer the possibility of partnership in mission and service a) through learning from the experience of the Church in Cumbria; b) through affirming our common calling with the Scottish Episcopal Church; c) through the continuing development of our relationship with the Church of England; and d) through working with our sister churches in Scotland to increase our effectiveness through the establishment of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and the work towards the establishment of the Scottish Christian Forum. The extent to which the living out of the vision can be realised is dependent on it being embodied in the context of the local Church, encouraged regionally and resourced nationally. It is also dependent on the commitment of the whole church, expressed so eloquently in the Articles Declaratory a century ago, to embrace fully its identity as a Church which seeks unity with others for the sake of the Gospel. As we do so in partnership with our neighbours, we respond to the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ that we "may all be one" (John 17:21), and nothing witnesses better to the saving grace of Christ than that.

In the name of the Committee

ALEXANDER G. HORSBURGH, *Convener*
EILEEN MILLER, *Vice Convener*
JOHN L. MCPAKE, *Secretary*

Addendum

The Rev Kevin Mackenzie was appointed to serve as Vice Convener of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations in 2017. Kevin brought to the Committee his breadth of experience as a parish minister committed to working in cooperative partnership with neighbours representing the complementary traditions of the life of the Church. During his term of service until May 2020, the Committee actively sought to develop a strategy focusing on local ecumenism and Kevin has played an important role in relation to this. His contributions to that strategy were drawn from the practical experience of working with his neighbouring churches in the parish of Westwood in East Kilbride and, in particular, the Roman Catholic parish of Our Lady of Lourdes. The insights generated there enriched Kevin's approach and, in turn, enriched the Committee's and we are grateful to him for his contribution.

In the name of the Committee

ALEXANDER G. HORSBURGH, *Convener*
EILEEN MILLER, *Vice Convener*
JOHN L. MCPAKE, *Secretary*

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FAITH NURTURE FORUM MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Note the work done on discipleship and urge Kirk Sessions to utilise the resources provided in order to respond to the clear call to refocus and reshape around the two-part call of discipleship, to follow Christ and to enable others to follow Christ. *(Section 2)*
3. Instruct the Forum to develop the first modules of a lay training programme, with a view to launching an entry level course in January 2022. *(Section 3)*
4. Instruct the Forum to review the training expectations for Ordained Local Ministers. *(Section 5.6)*
5. Note the current mix of unrestricted and reviewable charges and instruct the Forum to keep questions around call and tenure under review. *(Section 9)*
6. Note the work which has taken place to date on developing a Capability Procedure for Ministers and instruct the Forum to bring detailed proposals for such a procedure to the General Assembly of 2022. *(Section 10)*
7. Instruct the Forum to bring a revised Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of 2022. *(Section 10.5)*
8.
 - (a) Affirm the commitment of the Church to place priority for the poorest at the heart of all that it does, recognising the mission of Priority Area congregations in this. *(Section 11)*
 - (b) Instruct the Forum to continue to develop and deliver this key priority – implementing the whole Church strategy of prioritising support for those living in poverty and at the margins – within the Faith Action Plan, through the Priority Areas Implementation Group and Priority Areas Team. *(Section 11)*
9. Note the research project on Pioneer Ministry, and instruct Presbyteries to consider the findings as they engage in planning new ways of being church. *(Section 12.1.6)*
10. Note the work being done on developing intergenerational church life and instruct all Presbyteries to consider this in their planning. *(Section 14)*
11.
 - a) Note that Heart and Soul will no longer be part of future General Assemblies and give thanks for all who have contributed to it over the years and for all whose experience of the Church and its life have been enriched by their involvement. *(Section 18.2)*
 - b) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to report to a future General Assembly on how stories can be shared and lessons learned, having consulted with the Faith Impact Forum and the Assembly Trustees. *(Section 18.3)*
12. Instruct the Forum to work with the Diaconate Council, the Legal Questions Committee, and other stakeholders, 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. *(Section 20 and Appendix 2)*
13. Pass an Act amending the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010, in terms of Appendix 2. *(Section 20 and Appendix 2)*
14. Pass a Regulation amending the Manse Adjudication Committee Regulations (Regulations III 2013) and Schedule, as set out in Appendix 3. *(Section 21 and Appendix 3)*

Report

1. INTRODUCTION

The key role of the Faith Nurture Forum is to support local congregations, either directly or through our Presbyteries. Over the past year, with all of its pandemic challenges, our staff and Forum members have proved themselves to be adaptable, creative and committed in providing this support. We are grateful to those in our Presbyteries and congregations who have assisted us in so many different ways to fulfil our varied programme of work.

1.1 At a national level the Forum does not work in a bubble or a silo, in isolation, but alongside many others – the Assembly Trustees, the General Trustees, the Legal Questions Committee, and the Faith Impact Forum to name but a few. We have to make decisions about our priorities alongside these colleagues, against a backdrop of financial cuts and staffing constraints, and in the ever-changing landscape of Presbytery reform and congregational adjustment. We work in a continual state of flux which brings its trials and frustrations. Since its inception in January 2020, the Faith Nurture Forum, along with Faith Impact and other parts of the Church, has had to wrestle with the changing background of furlough; of staff moving on; and of internal moves.

1.2 ‘We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.’ These words of Maya Angelou have been our inspiration from the first days of the Forum. We are still in the cocoon, but there are glimpses of the beauty of the butterfly beginning to emerge.

1.3 The history of the Faith Nurture Forum is rooted in the work of its predecessor bodies, and the Forum as it continues to evolve, is committed to supporting the local and regional Church. The shape of this report will reflect how the Forum does this through:

- resourcing for ministries;
- partnerships and development;
- our work in Priority Areas;
- resourcing the local and regional church, and;
- in working with our partners – our partners in Diaconate Council, and our funded partner agencies.

1.4 The final section of our report will cover legislative changes to Regulation III, 2013, governing the Manse Adjudication Committee and will also reference work with the General Trustees on the Consolidated Stipend Fund.

1.5 A list of Implementation Groups within the Forum, and their memberships, can be found at Appendix 1.

2. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – DISCIPLESHIP

2.1 Different reports to the General Assembly have affirmed that the ministry of the whole people of God, and its expression in the recognised ministries of the Church, are rooted in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Forum wishes to reaffirm this, and to recognise the golden thread of church life, which is a combination of how we grow as disciples, and how we disciple one another, whether we are new to faith or responsible for leading in a particular area of ministry.

2.2 The Forum has recently resumed its development of a suite of resources for congregations to create and deepen a discipleship culture, that received the support of the General Assemblies of 2018 and 2019. The suite has been devised through a good deal of research and engagement with a variety of discipleship initiatives in our denomination and others. This will be a crucial part of the continuum of education and training provision available.

2.3 We have already made available one resource to congregations, to support them to stimulate a fresh focus on

discipleship, namely the conversation starter ‘Conversations in Discipleship’.

2.4 A further two forms of provision have yet to reach congregations, which we aim to launch in the second half of 2021:

2.4.1 ‘Exploring discipleship’ is a study resource that introduces and lightly explores the six characteristics of discipleship previously brought to the General Assembly. This resource casts a vision for a culture we can all share and mould. We aim to launch Exploring Discipleship in the first half of 2022.

2.4.2 ‘Encourager training’ is a face-to-face training provision that we will deliver to those inspired to take a lead in the development of a discipleship culture in their own congregational context. For there to be meaningful, sustainable culture change across our membership, accountable and enabling relationships need to form and it is our firm belief that we need to equip individuals in congregations to lead this culture change. Encourager Training has several sessions which could be conducted weekly, monthly, as two two-day weekends or four single days. The first half of every session is about a small group of people being disciples together e.g. sharing faith, developing emotional wellbeing, building an accountable spiritual community through learning about and experiencing together the characteristics of discipleship. In the second half of each session, we examine the tools of group facilitation and reflect together on how we create spaces of safety where we can explore and learn together.

3. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – LAY TRAINING PROGRAMME

3.1 Work on the lay training programme was paused during the first lockdown but has been able to restart during the autumn of 2020.

3.2 The vision for the programme has been clarified as:

- Catalysing and Equipping Inspirational Leadership for every part of our Church, for Worship, Witness, Nurture and Service.

3.3 Aims are identified as:

- Enabling those who wish to deepen their spiritual life, add to their faith knowledge, character and competence to access a menu of opportunities within their local context, through national events and online opportunities.
- Creating pathways between different layers of formation, making it easier for people to understand their vocation and where appropriate begin training for recognised ministries.
- Creating a culture across the church of investing in our faith.

3.4 With objectives of:

- Enabling growth in understanding of the Good News, encounter with the living Christ and the deepening of relationship with God.
- Laying a firm foundation of Christian faith and discipleship.
- Developing a sense of purpose, gifting and call for all who are on the journey of faith.
- Facilitating transformation of life and character.
- Encouraging ‘leadership’, enabling each person to use their God-given influence wherever they are.
- Building confidence in leading worship, and handling scripture and clarity of core beliefs.
- Equipping people for discipleship, enabling them to feed their own faith and help others to do the same.

- Equipping people for mission, enabling them to explain their faith and take the Good News to local communities.
- Equipping people for pastoral care, enabling them to play their part in the community of faith and enabling them to handle a variety of needs.
- Informing and educating for specific areas of responsibility and leadership within the church.

3.5 Our desired outcomes are people who belong to the community of faith and who are...

- confident in their faith, engaged in spiritual reflection and able to articulate how they are growing.
- connected to church community, able to help others grow and investing in discipleship.
- connected to their local communities, being effective witnesses in that place.
- worshippers.
- able to lead, and encouraging of leadership around them.
- stepping into whatever God calls them to, some of those to recognised ministries.

3.6 During the autumn of 2020 a large number of people were involved in shaping a curriculum. The curriculum begins with being for those from local congregations who express a desire to engage with more faith-shaped training, moves through to recognised ministry training and then onto Continuing Professional Development for people experienced in our recognised ministries. It covers a wide variety of subject areas.

3.7 The three layers of formation from the Formation Framework will set the philosophy for the whole curriculum:

- Who We Are
- Theory, Tradition & Knowledge
- Skills, Practice, Abilities & Qualities

3.8 The eight dimensions of Formation from the Formation Framework will bring shape to the curriculum...

- Faith, Vocation & Spirituality
- Character, Ethics and Development
- Leadership & Relationships
- Worship, Sacraments and Preaching
- Pastoral Care
- Mission
- Discipleship
- Church Management

3.9 The whole concept of training has continued to evolve during 2020 with many developing skills of presenting online and recording. There is much more of an appetite to learn from home. It is anticipated that the recording of modules for the lay training programme will be a simpler endeavour than anticipated at a previous stage. Modules will capture the best of existing training already available online or provided by other organisations, alongside specially recorded input which offers a distinctive context for Scotland and the Church of Scotland.

3.10 The building of the first modules will begin in spring 2021, will be advertised in Autumn 2021 and the first cohort will begin in January 2022.

4. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – DISCERNMENT AND RECRUITMENT

4.1 Against the backdrop of Covid-19 it is heartening to report that recruitment to the recognised ministries has continued as a priority.

4.2 National Assessment Conferences were held in May and June 2020 to allow academic entry timetables to be met, with a suitably adapted and robust online Assessment. Similarly, Admissions Conferences were also held online in order to allow those who would have attended an Admissions Conference in 2020 to be assessed. The skills and dedication of Directors, Assessors and staff, and the flexibility of applicants in these circumstances deserve note, and the Faith Nurture Forum is grateful to all who give of their time and energy to the Discernment and Assessment process on an ongoing basis.

4.3 Even in challenging times, many have continued to explore their call to Christian service and enter Discernment for the recognised ministries. Discernment placements needed to be adapted to the local context and associated Covid-19 restrictions, but extra guidance was provided and encouragement gained through a series of Discernment Webinars. The Webinars brought those in Discernment together and also sought to encourage others in embarking on that journey.

4.4 The tables below provide an overview of the statistics relating to applicants at different stages in the Discernment and Assessment processes. [The General Assembly in 2019 agreed to introduce Discernment Conversations as a replacement for Vocations Information Days. In the first part of the table we have provided statistics to reflect this change of process, and will continue to report in this way in future years.]

| Year | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | Jan-Dec 2020 |
|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|--------------|
| Enquirers | | | | 170 | 124 |
| Discernment Conversations | | | | 93 | 65 |
| Applicants for Ministry (all types) | 59 | 78 | 49 | 74 | 50 |
| Entered Local Assessment | 53 | 58 | 43 | 62 | 52 |
| Chose to Withdraw (locally) | 6 | 14 | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| Readership (Applicants) | 11 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| Readership Accepted | 9 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 0 |

| Year | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Completed Local Assessment | 47 | 44 | 37 | 29 | 37 |
| Attended Assessment Conference | 37 | 29 | 37 | 29 | 36 |
| Full-time Ministry (Applicants) | 25 | 20 | 21 | 17 | 25 |
| Full-time Ministry Accepted | 15 | 13 | 16 | 15 | 17 |
| Ordained Local Ministry (Applicants) | 12 | 8 | 14 | 11 | 9 |
| Ordained Local Ministry Accepted | 8 | 5 | 10 | 8 | 7 |
| Deacons (Applicants) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Deacons Accepted | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| First Time Applicants | 48 | 24 | 31 | 25 | 30 |
| Accepted | 23 | 17 | 21 | 19 | 21 |
| Returning Applicants | 5 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 6 |
| Accepted | 0 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 4 |

Additionally, we continue to have a significant number of Admissions Applicants [Ministers of other denominations applying on a full, temporary or re-admission basis] to serve in the Church of Scotland. Not all initial applications proceed to an Admissions Conference as there are a number of criteria that must be satisfied first, but attendance at Admissions Conferences in 2017-2020 is as below:

| Conferences | Attended | Accepted | Not Accepted |
|-------------|----------|----------|--------------|
| 2017 | 16 | 9 | 7 |
| 2018 | 24 | 17 | 7 |
| 2019 | 23 | 13 | 10 |
| 2020 | 27 | 15 | 12 |

4.4.1 Those accepted at Admissions Conference are then invited to begin their Familiarisation Period in the Church of Scotland [within a period of 3 years] and on successful completion are granted a Certificate of Eligibility. 24 individuals have gained Certificates since the General Assembly of 2019.

4.4.2 It should be noted that it is the Certificate of Eligibility that allows an individual to apply for a vacant charge. Faith Nurture are often contacted by Nominating Committees who receive direct interest and enquiries re their vacancy from Ministers of other churches and denominations. No application can be considered in a vacancy unless a Certificate of Eligibility is held, or the minister is already a Church of Scotland minister. Individuals who are not Ministers in the Church of Scotland should be re-directed to Faith Nurture if they are interested in applying for Admission.

4.4.3 At the time of reporting, Faith Nurture will continue to respond and adapt to the Covid-19 challenges that remain in 2021 by continuing to provide online assessment. While this is not our preferred mode of assessment, we will continue to actively recruit for the ministries of the Church.

4.5 Talking Ministry

4.5.1 In order to support discernment in ministry in the widest sense, throughout 2021 a Talking Ministry series has been offered in collaboration with the Communications Department. Monthly news stories will explore examples of ministry from across the Church, along with the encouragement to talk about ministry and consider our own stories.

4.5.2 Examples of those who serve in the recognised ministries will be included alongside those who serve in a variety of different ways. Ministry is not just about the recognised ministries, but about how each Christian responds to the call of God upon their lives. It is hoped the stories will provide personal inspiration, and that an accompanying monthly Discernment Resource will encourage thinking and talking about ministry as a normal part of our Christian experience.

5. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5.1 This has been an extremely challenging year for those in training for the recognised ministries. Placement opportunities have been significantly limited, with the opportunities to shadow a supervisor being almost entirely online; academic study moving online at short notice alongside uncertainty over exams; with many needing to home-school and obviously the 'ordinary' challenges of Covid-19 times. Candidates and probationers alike have met these challenges with creativity and adaptability.

5.2 We are incredibly grateful to supervisors who have continued to offer themselves and their congregations as placement opportunities in these challenging times.

5.3 It is likely that additional support and training opportunities will be required for this cohort of candidates as they begin serving in recognised ministries.

5.4 Conferences

5.4.1 All regular training conferences have been held online over the last year.

5.4.2 We had hoped that the August Candidates' Gathering could have happened in person, but at short notice, online, on MS Teams, became the requirement. Readers-in-training attended for the first time, bringing the whole recognised ministry 'family' together. The curriculum for the event focussed largely on adapting to, and growing skills for, these particular times.

5.4.3 At the heart of our probationer training programme is a series of conferences focussed around four key areas: prayer & worship; leadership; church law & pastoral care; and mission & discipleship. These conferences allow for in-depth work with the Formation Framework, to support the development of those approaching ordination to a first charge. Closer friendships form during this season and this has still been possible online.

5.4.4 In place of the normal First Five Years residential conference, over fifty recently ordained Full Time Ministers of Word and Sacrament (FTWS) and Ordained Local Ministers (OLM) participated in four morning sessions in January and February 2021, offering a retreat, strengthening resilience, exploring discernment and examining ways of serving in Presbyteries.

5.5 Annual Candidate Appraisal

5.5.1 The extremely uncertain picture of Spring 2020 led to all annual candidate appraisals being conducted in the first instance as a 'paper review', with the training team and the presbytery assessors reading all relevant reports and making their comments in writing. Where additional support was required, a number of candidates were then offered 'in person' reviews.

5.5.2 Our hope is that all 2021 annual candidate appraisals will be conducted according to the process agreed at last year's General Assembly, though most will take place online.

5.5.3 Formation supervisor training will take place in summer 2021 and the pilot will begin in the autumn. The formation supervisor will be an individual from the same Presbytery as the candidate, and will accompany them throughout training and complement the role of the placement supervisor. The formation supervisor will focus on ministerial formation while the placement supervisor will focus on the tasks and skills of ministry.

5.6 Reviewing OLM training expectations

5.6.1 Considerable challenges are being faced by individuals who are in training for OLM whilst in full-time employment. As we re-think training for the different recognised ministries it is essential that we learn from the experiences of those in training and respond to the perception that OLM is only for those who are retired.

5.6.2 Training for OLM is designed to take less than 3 years and includes:

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Certificate in Christian Studies | 2 years part-time |
| Term-time placements | 2 x 25 weeks (3hrs plus Sunday per week) |
| Probation | 12 months (10hrs plus Sunday per week) |

5.6.3 In the current system, an individual in full-time employment is being asked to work and train for approximately 75 hrs per week during term-time. The following table, based on a candidate studying via Aberdeen University, shows how the hours are broken down (candidates studying at Aberdeen take 8 modules worth 15 credits each and those studying at Highland Theological College take 6 modules worth 20 credits each across the two years):

| Component | Total hours per week |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Employment | 40 |
| Placement | 10 |
| Studies (2 modules) | 25 |
| TOTAL | 75 |

5.6.4 During probation the expectation reduces to 57 hours per week.

| Component | Total hours per week |
|------------|----------------------|
| Employment | 40 |
| Placement | 17 |
| Total | 57 |

5.6.5 OLM candidates in full-time employment are reporting numerous challenges and going to extremes to try and fit their training into their lives. These candidates are highly qualified, talented and faithful individuals called by God and affirmed by the Church of Scotland. There is a serious risk that the unrealistic expectations of the training programme will result in individuals not applying for this ministry and a number of those who are accepted not completing their training.

The Faith Nurture Forum intends to address this area during 2021.

5.7 Candidates & Probationers

| <i>Candidates who started training in August 2020</i> | |
|---|----|
| FTWS | 17 |
| OLM | 6 |
| Diaconal | 1 |
| <i>Total across categories</i> | 24 |
| <i>Candidates accepted for entry for August 2020 but deferred entry</i> | |
| FTWS | 3 |
| OLM | 2 |
| <i>Deferred training total</i> | 5 |
| <i>Candidates across all years prior to probation as at August 2020 including those who have deferred</i> | |
| FTWS | 53 |
| OLM | 18 |
| Diaconal | 2 |
| <i>Total across all categories</i> | 73 |
| <i>FTWS candidates studying at recognised providers 2020-21</i> | |
| Aberdeen campus based | 1 |
| Aberdeen distance learning | 1 |
| Glasgow campus based | 11 |
| Edinburgh campus based | 11 |
| Highland Theological College campus based | 4 |
| Highland Theological College distance learning | 17 |
| St Andrews campus based | 1 |
| <i>OLM candidates studying at recognised providers 2020-21</i> | |
| Aberdeen distance learning | 7 |
| Highland Theological College distance learning | 9 |
| <i>Diaconal candidates studying at recognised providers 2020-21</i> | |
| Aberdeen campus based | 1 |
| Edinburgh campus based | 1 |
| <i>Number of probationers completing training in 2020</i> | |
| FTWS | 20 |
| OLM | 5 |
| Diaconal | 0 |
| <i>Total</i> | 25 |
| <i>Probationers beginning summer 2020</i> | |
| FTWS | 7 |
| OLM | 7 |
| <i>Total</i> | 14 |
| <i>Readers</i> | |
| Readers in training in 2020 | 9 |
| Readers set apart in 2020 | 1 |

6. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1.1 Support for those who serve in the ministries of the Church remains a core priority of Faith Nurture. Knowing the variety of support that is offered in different local contexts and through Presbyteries, the central Support Team has a distinct role to contribute.

6.1.2 Recognising the challenges of all the changes that have impacted on ministry in this year, the Support Team have acted to support many through the core provisions of Ascend – Pastoral Supervision, Coaching, Counselling – as well as offering direct support and online Webinar provisions, and advising throughout the year in terms of Covid-19 advice relevant to health and wellbeing at work.

6.1.3 The approach of the Support Team is person centred, and we will seek to access the most relevant support for any individual at any given time. Funded provisions include Pastoral Supervision for full-time Ministers up to £240 per calendar year, and counselling through external providers.

6.1.4 Those who serve as Office Holders in ministry have support provisions similar to employees. The Support Team can provide individualised support and guidance for the variety of different situations and circumstances that can arise in the exercise of ministry. The Ministers' Handbook, updated and provided annually, offers a wealth of helpful information primarily intended for those in full-time ministry.

6.1.5 Advice and support provisions are however available across the different recognised ministries, and information is provided for all on the Ascend website. [Ministries Development Staff (MDS) and other employed post holders should first access support through their line manager or the HR department.] <https://ascend.churchofscotland.org.uk/support/>

6.1.6 The Support Team also has responsibilities regarding absence from work due to ill health for those in full-time ministry. Office Holders are required to submit GP "fit notes" to Faith Nurture for any absence that extends beyond one week [self-certification should be provided for the first week], and this is important for the insurance provisions relevant for those serving in ministry, including Income Protection and Death in Service benefit. Providing "fit notes" also allows the Support Team to engage individually with those who are experiencing ill health, and to facilitate phased returns to work, liaising with Presbyteries as appropriate.

6.1.7 The Support Team can be contacted, confidentially, at pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk. This email address is only accessed by Support personnel within Faith Nurture, and can be used in confidence.

6.2 Ascend

6.2.1 Ascend is the main source of resourcing and information for development for those in our recognised ministries. Monthly eNews and an extensive website ensure that a flow of opportunities and relevant experience supports and encourages those in ministry.

6.2.2 Website users climbed to 10,457 in 2020, a 56.1% increase on 2019. Return or repeat users of the site saw a 697.5% increase on 2019. Total page views were 62,492 which is an increase of 96.4% on 2019. The most popular pages were Resources, For These Days and Events.

6.2.3 Online conferences and webinars are plentiful at the moment and we encourage everyone to set aside time to invest in their own discipleship, leadership and / or ministry. Ascend has offered a very well-received 'Wellbeing and Resilience' course and stimulated much reflection and future-thinking through a 'Conversations' series.

6.3 Ministerial Development Conversations (MDCs)

6.3.1 Ministerial Development Conversations continue to offer an annual opportunity for a safe space for processing, refreshing and resetting priorities. Booking an MDC is a wise investment of time as we continue to navigate our way through these uncertain days. These can now be arranged directly with a facilitator. All facilitators are working online.

6.4 Study Leave

6.4.1 Study leave was closed for part of 2020 but is once more available for FTWS, with £275 and 14 days made available for each year of service (capped after seven years at £1,925 and fourteen weeks). Applications can be made through the Ascend website.

7. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – MANSES

7.1 The General Assembly of 2019 instructed the Ministries Council in the following terms:

Instruct the Council to bring an outline timetable to the General Assembly of 2020 in respect of providing a detailed report on the issue of manse occupation, such a report to include but not be limited to:

- the sustainability of current practice;
- a serious exploration of a 'mixed economy' allowing the possibility of Ministers living in their own homes;
- the provision of manses to Associate Ministers, Deacons and Ministries Development Staff where appropriate; and
- consultation with HMRC, General Trustees, other denominations and other relevant parties.

7.2 The General Assembly of October 2020 dealt with essential business only. The Faith Nurture Forum will therefore bring a detailed report to the General Assembly of 2022 on this matter. Conversations have already taken place with other denominations and an opinion has been offered by the professional advisers used by the Church for advice on taxation matters. In addition, previous work on this topic will be revisited as a basis for further consultation with relevant parties.

8. SUPPORTING THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOPMENT

8.1 A New Approach to Presbytery Planning – Ministries Numbers

8.1.1 At the General Assembly of 2020, there was a clearly expressed wish that Presbyteries be equipped with a revised set of ministries numbers, against the background of a realisation that the 2011 numbers, and the advisory numbers issued in 2018, were unsatisfactory. The number of candidates coming forward; the demographic profile of our Ministers; and the financial realities facing the Church have resulted in vacancies becoming ever longer, and the burden on Interim Moderators heavier. Accordingly, work has been done to produce an allocation of ministries which is financially affordable, and this figure of 600 ministries is reported in the Assembly Trustees' Report to this General Assembly.

This challenge can only be met by a commitment to a new kind of mission planning which as has been said over and over again will include, "contracting and expanding, cutting and investing and pruning and planting" all at the same time.

8.1.2 Those figures – 600 ministries, a mix of ministries of Word and Sacrament, and MDS roles, by the end of 2025 – presented in the Assembly Trustees Report draw substantially on the weightings applied first of all in 2004/2005, and then in 2010/2011, which offered what was felt then to be an appropriate and weighted balance of ministries to remote and rural areas, as well as emphasising

a double weighting on population, focussed on Priority Areas. It is clear however that as the Church continues to reconfigure the shape of its Presbyteries, these principles will need to be revisited. The Forum will bring a further report on the allocation of ministries, and weightings, in a Supplementary Report, to this General Assembly.

8.2 A New Approach to Presbytery Planning – A Presbytery Mission Plan Act

8.2.1 For a number of years there has been widespread dissatisfaction with the current Appraisal and Adjustment Procedure Act (Act 7 2003). This has found a voice in various settings, particularly in the conversations between those responsible in Presbyteries for delivering Plans and the staff of what is now Faith Nurture Forum and the Clerks of the General Assembly, as well as in feedback from Presbytery Clerks.

8.2.2 The 2003 Act envisages as the main building blocks the allocation of a Minister to a charge and therefore does not offer the range of alternative forms of ministry, leadership, and human resourcing which the Church continuously demands as it seeks to respond to an ever-changing national and local scene.

8.2.3 There is currently no mention of a limit on Ministry Post numbers and therefore there is no reference to adherence to targets set by the General Assembly.

8.2.4 The requirement in the Act that, Presbytery produces a ten-year Plan, when such a time frame is beyond our shared ability to predict what Church and world will be like, is no longer realistic.

8.2.5 The Act makes no provision for what happens in the latter years of the ten-year Plan apart from an annual review of its provisions.

8.2.6 The section on the future of buildings has given too much leeway, and in some instances has allowed for the avoidance of robust planning decisions.

8.2.7 The Act deals with challenges to Plan decisions through the Appeals Act process which means that there are lengthy delays in achieving clarity for local church work, particularly in situations where appeals are only heard when the Presbytery chooses to deal with them, often at the point of demission or translation which can be well into the future, and often beyond the ten-year time span foreseen by the current Act.

8.2.8 There is a realisation that this Act is no longer fit for purpose, and accordingly the Forum will bring a proposal for a Presbytery Mission Plan Act in a Supplementary Report. Such an Act should:

- Name Mission as the prime driver for Planning
- Align the description of Mission with that being used in the Faith Action Plan (which has now been endorsed by the General Assembly as successor to the Radical Action Plan).
- Commit to a territorial ministry as in the Constitution but also set the scene for ecumenical cooperation in its delivery.
- Bring Ministry Post numbers into the legislation and facilitate Presbyters achieving conformity to their allocation by 2025.
- Set a framework for a five-year rolling plan (as opposed to a fixed ten years in Act VII 2003) and require the Faith Nurture Forum to provide a five-year rolling projection of Ministry Post numbers.
- Simplify the strategic decisions about buildings and draw on the support and guidance provided by the General Trustees [or give the General Trustees the responsibility for approving the buildings section of any proposed Plan].

- Simplify and speed up the process whereby the process of arriving at Plan Decisions and other Planning matters can be challenged by Kirk Sessions and Presbyters through the provision of a bespoke review process. Outstanding appeals will fall if the new Presbytery Mission Plan Act is agreed by the General Assembly.

- Maintain a tight control on budgets by insisting that shortfalls be dealt with and appointments are properly set up with secure funding and good HR practice.
- Offer Presbyteries a wider range of options as they seek to reshape church life and use the Ministry Posts which they have been allocated in particular to add provision for – Team Ministry, “light touch” local church (perhaps called Local Mission Church), online church, new expressions of church.
- Provide a clearer framework for implementing Plans through its description of adjustment processes.

8.2.9 The Forum will report further in its Supplementary Report on implementation of this new Presbytery Mission Plan Act. It is envisaged that Presbyteries continue the process of Planning, and will complete the process of developing and approving revised Presbytery Plans by 31 December 2022, submitting them to the Faith Nurture Forum for agreement by that date.

8.2.10 It would also be the intention of the Forum to publish and maintain guidance resources which would assist Presbyteries in this important and on-going piece of work.

8.3 Ministries Development Staff (MDS)

8.3.1 The General Assembly 2019 called for a moratorium on recruitment to MDS posts and instructed the Ministries Council to put in place a process to ensure the total number of MDS posts did not exceed 120 FTE. This was achieved in November 2019. Three MDS Staffing Approval Panels ran from then until February 2020, when Covid-19 and lockdown prevented active recruitment, and a further panel took place in November 2020. The process sought to ensure MDS job descriptions were robustly drafted and the posts appropriately supported with clear line management. All posts were required to demonstrate evidence of The Planning Principles, (Appraisal and Adjustment Act, 2003) and show innovation.

8.3.2 Recruitment has never exceeded 120 FTE and where applications were not successful, they were all given constructive and supportive feedback. Presbyteries were informed in late February that the Approval Panel was now inviting applications and that recruitment had restarted, still in line with the cap of 120 posts. The number of MDS employed at the end of December 2020 was 100, four less than the forecast figure.

8.3.3 In addition, where posts fall vacant, whether through retirement or resignation, they will not be replaced. This policy will be revised on a regular basis.

8.4 Hub Style Ministry

8.4.1 The concept of hub style ministry was first suggested at the General Assembly of 2016 and has been evolving ever since, in terms of understanding of the term and its application as a model for ministry. In 2018 a Coordinator for New and Emerging Ministries was appointed, to lead on what this ministry might mean, and more specifically, what it might mean in context. Those areas which participated were Argyll, West Angus, Dundee, Aberdeen South, and Leith. Each of these drafted models of team ministry using existing legislation to meet their local needs, with varying degrees of success. The Hub project offered up some models for ministry, influenced wider discussions and decisions in presbytery planning, and contributed to developing legislation on the shape of ministry for the future. It pointed towards the need for changes in legislation and to make provision for new forms of team ministry that cut across traditional parish boundaries and, in some cases, Presbytery boundaries. Hubs

offered an open experiment where pilots were encouraged to develop local solutions. It was a valuable learning experience and brought meaningful change to those involved. The Hub project ended in December 2019 and it now moves to a new phase. This new phase would drop the misleading and confusing term 'Hub' and replace it with something more understandable, e.g. 'New Models of Ministry for the Church'. In parallel with the work of the pilot Hub ministries, two consultation events took place to discuss the merits and risks of introducing new legislation that permitted multiple charges in a single charge. The new phase has evolved from these consultations and numerous conversations with Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Ministers and a variety of others involved in our Church.

8.5 Dissolution

8.5.1 Dissolution in the interest of adjustment will be further explored, alongside work on this subject which the General Trustees are carrying out.

9. REVIEWABLE CHARGES

9.1 The General Assembly of 2019 instructed the Ministries Council in the following terms:

When framing the new Vacancy Procedures Act and reviewing the Appraisal and Adjustment Act, to consider incorporating the following principle: that no charge should, in future, be granted leave to call a minister on an unrestricted basis, but that tenure should instead be granted on a reviewable basis of no more than 7 years and to report to the General Assembly of 2021.

9.2 The General Assembly had considered this in the past, and in 2011, recognising that this question needed particular attention, agreed to the establishment of a Special Commission to look at tenure. This Special Commission General Assembly gave its final Report to the General Assembly of 2014, and it can be found in section 23 of the Volume of Reports to that General Assembly ([here](#)).

9.3 Prior to this, there had also been conversations on Area Team Ministry, and Flexible Tenure, where a minister might be inducted to a Presbytery rather than a charge, although little came from discussions on Flexible Tenure.

9.4 At that same General Assembly, the idea of Reviewable Tenure was replaced with the concept of Reviewable Charge, which reflected more appropriately the wider questions of ministry and tenure in context explored in the Report of the Special Commission. The current situation is that there are 119 out of 987 charges with a basis of Reviewable Charge, 70 of which currently have a sitting minister.

9.5 A straw poll of Presbytery Clerks indicates that of 28 responses from 40 (as at 4th February 2021) only 5 had exercised the right to recall a Reviewable Charge in the last ten years. The data on how many charges are reflected in this statistic is not readily available, and on the surface, the provision does not seem to lend itself to resolving some of the issues which a move to make every charge a Reviewable Charge might seek to address. In addition, the convention in the law of the Church that legislation be not retrospective would mean that the question of overall flexibility is not one which could be addressed by such a move in the short to medium term. It would appear from these statistics that in most instances a Basis of Reviewable Charge is simply renewed at the end of the period allowed, whereas flexibility, and the ability to review congregational life, is something which should be taking place on a continuous basis, irrespective of whether a minister is inducted on an unrestricted or reviewable call.

9.6 One response offered from one Presbytery was to ask the question whether the recall of a Basis of Reviewable Charge would be initiated because of the effectiveness of a particular minister, or on grounds of readjustment. Allowing such an issue only to be raised towards the end of a period of

reviewable charge equally does not give the flexibility needed.

9.7 A similar question was asked at the General Assembly of 2020, about allowing for the exploration in review of Act 7 2003 of whether, where appropriate and after careful consideration, a Presbytery should be enabled to dissolve the pastoral tie so that adjustments can be made. The repealed Act 6 of 1984 on Congregations in Changed Circumstances, allowed for just such a decision, where Presbyteries had the facility to make an enquiry when it judged that a congregation had been affected by adverse circumstances which:

- are peculiar to the charge or its minister; and
- are not attributable to the fault of the minister or of any member or office-bearer; and
- have occurred after the induction of the minister: and
- are wholly or mainly outwith the control of the Church; and
- are unlikely to change for the better.

That Act was also sent down under the Barrier Act.

9.8 The 1984 Act made it possible, following due process, to dissolve the pastoral tie, with some protection for a minister who was affected by such a decision. The process could still be applied, but needs further work and consultation.

9.9 The Special Commission on Tenure and Leadership in the Local Church indicated that to adequately explore questions of mission and tenure in context, different elements needed to be in place to support such a process, including the following:

- Local Church Review;
- Ministerial Development Review;
- Continuing Ministerial Development;
- A Capability Process; and
- Effective Regional and National Structures.

9.10 With the programme of Presbytery Reform underway, local church review will have greater consistency in these new regional structures, and with the work of Ascend; Study Leave provisions; work on Discipleship and Lay Training Modules; and Ministerial Development Conversations, there are more tools available now to help the local church determine its mission. In addition, the Forum is continuing its work on a Capability Process which will be an integral part of exploring and discerning mission at congregational level, and the Forum reports elsewhere in this Report on this work.

9.11 In this time of the pandemic, with the programme of Presbytery Reform due to conclude its current phase in 2023 and with further changes in the shape of a Presbytery Mission Plan Act, the Forum believes that now is not the time to agree that no charge should, in future, be granted leave to call a minister on an unrestricted basis.

9.12 Accordingly, the Faith Nurture Forum would ask the General Assembly to note the above, to note the current mix of unrestricted and reviewable charges, and to keep the question under review.

9.13 Within the space of a Report to the General Assembly, there is not scope to address the not insignificant issue of the impact on Manse Families or the stability of congregational life. Finally, the question has to be asked how does the Church care for a minister who finds that the Basis of Reviewable Charge has been recalled, and he or she has not been able to find a new call at the end of the six months' notice period.

9.14 Ultimately this is a question for the General Assembly; if the General Assembly were to agree to move to

apply a Basis of Reviewable Charge for every call, the Forum would seek advice from the Principal Clerk about this being a matter which would require Barrier Act procedure given its far reaching implications.

10. CAPABILITY PROCEDURE

10.1 In its Report to the 2020 General Assembly, the Forum referred to previous work on a Capability Procedure, and now offers interim reflections on how such a procedure might operate. The Special Commission of 2014 on Tenure and Leadership in the Local Church affirmed that a Capability Procedure should be the responsibility of the Presbytery (or group of Presbyteries) and it also stressed the need for a consistent and fair process across the Church nationally. The Forum agrees with the Special Commission that the main goal of a Capability Procedure is always improvement in what a Minister does and how he or she does it, with a view to helping the congregation to discern its mission in context, and be faithful in fulfilling that mission. Both the Church of England and the United Reformed Church have an informal process and a formal process, as well as an appeal process where appropriate.

10.2 The Minister as office-holder has a significant freedom in determining the content of the role and this is something which the General Assembly has affirmed frequently. This is always set against the context of the place of the local church, and its part within the local Presbytery. With changes to local church review; with the advent of the new Presbytery structure; and with a greater focus on mission, and on inspiring leadership, along with Ministerial Development Conversations, there is scope for greater awareness and clarity on expectations around the ministry of a local congregation. This is also to be seen against the Code of Ministerial Conduct, which has been helpful, although it requires updating. This can be found in the current edition of the Ministers' Handbook on Ascend - <https://bit.ly/3qJMffY>.

10.3 It is important to stress that such a Capability Procedure would sit independently of ill health processes or discipline. Equally, in engaging in conversations around Capability Procedure, it can enable an individual minister to discern that their gifts are not suited to the context in which they find themselves, but might better serve the mission of the Church in a different charge or sphere of activity.

10.4 Any Capability Procedure should be easy to understand, and should consider questions such as funding for training to improve performance. Who would measure improvement, and how, and where ultimate decisions would lie, will be addressed in any procedure.

10.5 The Forum asks the Church to note the work which has taken place to date, and seeks the instruction of the General Assembly to revise the Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland, bringing reports on the Capability Procedure and the revised Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of 2022.

11. PRIORITY AREAS

11.1 Successive General Assemblies have affirmed the work of Priority Areas and restated the Church of Scotland's commitment to being with its poorest communities across the nation and resourcing this missional work. The Church's position to prioritise some of its resources to living this Gospel message is a direct response to that call:

11.2 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 'Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see

you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 'The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Matthew 25: 35-40, NIV

11.3 This work is supported through the Priority Areas Implementation Group, more details of which can be found in the list of Implementation Groups at Appendix 1.

11.4 Priority Areas responding in the Pandemic

11.5 Going Online – the Wee Conversations

11.5.1 We began a series of online Wee Conversations in the first lockdown in March 2020 and this has continued to the present time. It has become a highly valued space for people to gather together.

11.5.2 There has been a mix of both open conversation and more structured discussions. Discussions have included reflecting on reduced funding and closure for Citizens Advice Bureaux and community legal centres; issues with Universal Credit, the Church's response to the pandemic, the role and response of the Assembly Trustees, and financial crises faced by Priority Area congregations.

11.5.3 For our report on the Wee Friday Conversations, capturing the breadth of work and views, email the team - priorityareas@churchofscotland.org.uk

11.5.4 Going Online – "Extra" Wee Conversations

- Sometimes a topic arises that is too current and too large simply to host in the regular Wee Conversation slot. In January 2021, we were invited by the Ministries and Mission Working Group (MMWG) to run a session with them as their first consultation on the new scheme proposals they were developing for M&M contributions.
- Priority Areas in attendance voiced their concerns that for congregations in the poorest areas, struggling at church level to raise an income, the proposals in this first draft seemed to weight the burden even further on these congregations, whilst capping the contributions of churches that had the highest income. To use a tax analogy, this seemed like a regressive move.
- Priority Areas welcomed the invitation from the MMWG to continue dialogue, and offer thinking and assistance in shaping the proposals, and we have revisited this in our Wee Conversations.

11.6 Going Online – The Big Conversation

11.6.1 We came together, in November 2020, with the Presbyterian Church in the USA to run our Big Conversation – Bringing It Home, using their Matthew 25 Initiative, to explore relevance and context for our work.

11.6.2 We already run a partnership programme with PCUSA – the Young Adult Volunteer Programme, focussed on bringing young Americans to work on placement with some of our Priority Areas. Through that (virtual) partnership, we became aware of their Matthew 25 work.

11.6.3 Our keynote speakers included Rev. Dr Diane Moffett, President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In conversation with our own Priority Areas and visiting congregations from PCUSA, we explored the three strands of the Matthew 25 Initiative:

- Building Congregational Vitality
- Eradicating Systemic Poverty
- Dismantling Structural Racism

11.6.4 This work stands us in good stead for our contribution to the Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Group established by the Assembly Trustees, and will feed into that process.

11.7 Going Online – Worship Development

11.7.1 We spent a lot of the year supporting congregations with their transition to online worship, including advice on copyright and licensing, technical support for streaming, and providing musical resources. Challenge Poverty Week also shifted to have a particular focus on the impact of the pandemic on Priority Areas. In order to help congregations to think about their future plans we developed the "Conversations in Worship" online events and Facebook group alongside other teams in Faith Nurture. One of the key areas of work looking forward is developing training to help congregations build local worship teams.

11.8 Going Online – Learning Programme

We continued to develop our programme of support for Priority Areas and shift as much as possible to online provision. We worked in partnership with Cairn to carry on with our programme of developing learning communities in missional work. We also continued to work with Nurture Development to develop our other flagship programme on Asset-Based Community Development.

11.9 Chance to Thrive legacy

11.9.1 Chance to Thrive has been our partnership project between Priority Areas (now within Faith Nurture) and the General Trustees. Originally the project worked directly with six congregations to help them to identify what "thriving" would look like in their local context, then consider how their church buildings might be made fit for purpose, resourced for worship and mission; working with Presbytery and General Trustees. The second phase worked with an additional eight congregations to take them through this model.

11.9.2 The third phase of the work began in June 2018, focussing on:

- Disseminating the model to the whole Church: we have developed two resources under a series entitled Towards Thriving: Developing an Initial Project Proposal; Business Planning for Mission.
- Completing with the Congregations: we continued to work with the existing eight Priority Area congregations on the programme and have been supporting them to complete the process.
- Collaboration with Presbyteries: Presbyteries are crucial partners and we have undertaken to develop strong relationships with six Presbyteries through meetings and/or attendance at strategic subgroups building collaborative practice.
- Joining up with regeneration strategies: we built good links with local authority regeneration managers in South Lanarkshire, Aberdeen and Stirling.

Additionally, we worked with congregations to apply for the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

- Working closely with General Trustees: we partnered in additional ways; by contributing to the recently updated publications, Making It Happen and Buildings Flowchart, by holding regular joint project meetings and by attendance at the Fabric Committee.
- Widening the scope of the work: The project coordinator has worked with congregations outside of Priority Areas; embedding the practices of Chance to Thrive. He has supported the development of 12 additional congregations which the General Trustees thought would benefit.

11.9.3 The programme co-ordinator's post was a fixed term appointment until December 2020. We can see clear links between the practice developed in Chance to Thrive and what the General Trustees are trying to achieve with Well Equipped Spaces and we are actively looking for ways we can support this.

11.10 Updating the Priority Areas List

11.10.1 We have followed the direction of General Assemblies over the past 20 years to commit the resources of the Kirk to giving priority to its poorest communities and congregations, following the Gospel imperative to which we are called.

11.10.2 Historically, one of the ways we have done this is to draw up a list of congregations which are ranked by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as the most deprived in Scotland. Accordingly, in 2014, the last time the list was amended, 64 congregations were designated as a Priority Area. Around half of these are within the Presbytery of Glasgow and the remaining fall in clusters within the following Presbyteries: Edinburgh, Ayr, Kilmarnock, Ardrossan, Clyde, Hamilton, Argyll, Stirling, Fife, Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness.

11.10.3 From 2017 to 2019, the Priority Areas Committee took time to deliberate how the next updated list would be drawn up. Assisted by the Church's statistician, they considered all aspects of SIMD - looking closely at the weighting for each of the 7 Indicators of deprivation: income, education, employment, health, crime, housing and access to amenities. Their conclusion was that using SIMD was the most accurate tool in supporting the designation of Priority Areas.

11.10.4 It is right that the list of Priority Area congregations does not remain static. We want to ensure that our commitment is to continue to support the most deprived areas in Scotland; continuing our mandate to do this work and utilising the most up-to-date information to target resources.

11.10.5 Equally we want to ensure that this work is carried out in partnership and synergy with the process of presbytery planning and reform. To this end the PAIG and Presbytery Planning Task Group are working collaboratively; the PPTG is currently analysing and revising new figures for numbers in ministry and MDS.

Working together in this way we hope to establish within Presbyteries, greater understanding of deprivation, the need to plan accordingly and the resources available.

11.10.6 The Church currently supports Priority Areas through:

11.10.7 Presbytery Planning

11.10.7.1 In line with the guidance issued on Presbytery Planning and agreed by General Assemblies, Priority Areas have historically been accorded double weighting within a Presbytery's plan, allowing for additional staffing (usually an MDS post) to be deployed to each Priority Area to develop work with the congregation and community. For clarity, double weighting does not mean two posts for every Priority Area. It is the population count for the parish which is double weighted – in effect counted twice to allow for additional staff to be placed where deprivation is at its worst.

11.10.8 Principles and structure of an updated list:

11.10.8.1 The approach we have taken in drawing up this list fits with the direction of travel of our work over the past four years. This has been to widen out the reach and understanding of Priority Areas support to those congregations in the church who are intentional about working with the poorest communities.

11.10.9 First Tier Support

11.10.9.1 In our first analysis we identify a list of the top 64 congregations (with presbyteries) which are ranked within SIMD as the 5% most deprived. These are below, and those in *italics* are new to the list.

1. Edinburgh

Edinburgh: Holy Trinity
Edinburgh: Richmond Craigmillar

6. Jedburgh

Hawick: Burnfoot

10. Ayr

Ayr: Newton Wallacetown
Ayr: St Quivox
Dalmellington
Muirkirk
Patna Waterside

11. Kilmarnock

Irvine: Fullarton
Irvine: St Andrew's
Kilmarnock: South

12. Ardrossan

Ardrossan & Saltcoats Kirkgate
Stevenston: Ardeer

13. Lanark

Douglas Valley

14. Clyde

Clydebank: Kilbowie St Andrew's
Dumbarton: West Kirk
Greenock: East End
Greenock: St Margaret's
Greenock: Wellpark Mid Kirk
Greenock: Westburn
Paisley: St Ninian's Ferguslie
Port Glasgow: New
Renton: Trinity

16. Glasgow

Fernhill and Cathkin
Glasgow: Barlanark Greyfriars
Glasgow: Bridgeton St Francis in the East
Glasgow: Calton Parkhead
Glasgow: Carnytnye
Glasgow: Carnwadric
Glasgow: Castlemilk
Glasgow: Colston Milton
Glasgow: Colston Wellpark
Glasgow: Cranhill
Glasgow: Drumchapel St Andrew's
Glasgow: Drumchapel St Mark's
Glasgow: Easterhouse
Glasgow: Gairbraid
Glasgow: Garthamlock & Craigend
Glasgow: Gorbals
Glasgow: Govan and Linthouse
Glasgow: Pollokshaws
Glasgow: Possilpark
Glasgow: Ruchazie
Glasgow: Shettleston New Springburn
Glasgow: St James' (Pollok)
Glasgow: St Paul's
Glasgow: Toryglen
Glasgow: Trinity Possil and Henry Drummond
Glasgow: Tron St Mary's
Glasgow: Wallacewell

17. Hamilton

Airdrie: St Columba's
Larkhall: Chalmers
Motherwell: Crosshill
Wishaw: Craigneuk and Belhaven

19. Argyll

Dunoon: St John's

23. Stirling

Stirling St Mark's

24. Fife

Methil: Wellesley
Methilhill and Denbeath

29. Dundee

Dundee: Camperdown
Dundee: Coldside
Dundee: Douglas and Mid Craigie
Dundee: Lochee

37. Inverness

Inverness: Trinity

11.10.9.2 The intention would be that the parishes in this tier would be supported through:

- double weighting within a presbytery plan; in line with Presbytery Planning Guidance; it is recognised that further recommendations on weighting, which may be different, will feature in a Supplementary Report;
- Priority Areas Team support;
- contracts with external partners: and
- General Trustees continuation of grant funding

11.11 Second Tier Support

11.11.1 There are 13 current Priority Areas which are outwith the 5% most deprived ranking in SIMD 2020:

1. Edinburgh

Edinburgh: Bristo Memorial
Edinburgh: Old Kirk and Muirhouse

11. Kilmarnock

Kilmarnock: New Laigh

12. Ardrossan

Stevenston: High

14. Clyde

Clydebank: Faifley
Johnstone: St Paul's

16. Glasgow

Glasgow: Gallowgate
Glasgow: Queen's Park Govanhill
Glasgow: St Andrew's East Rutherglen West and Wardlawhill

17. Hamilton

Hamilton: Gilmour and Whitehill

29. Dundee

Dundee: Fintry

31. Aberdeen and Shetland

Aberdeen: St George's Tillydrone

11.11.1.1 Transitioning Out – we would offer a two-year transition period whereby a congregation worked with its Presbytery to look at how its staffing needs could be adjusted.

11.11.1.2 We would continue to support all 13 congregations via our Priority Areas programmes. So, they would have access to:

- Staff advice/consultancy
- Priority Area Learning Programme
- Membership of the network; offering mutual support and sharing of ideas and experience
- Invitation to the Big Conversation
- E-communications/social media/web/resources

11.12 Third Tier Support

11.12.1 There are an additional 124 congregations who are not currently a Priority Area but who have a population with one of the 5% data zones within SIMD. Our intention is to offer support through the continued opening up of our

programmes and through the extension of our network to encompass these congregations. They could access:

- Staff advice/consultancy
- Priority Area Learning Programme
- Membership of the network; offering mutual support and sharing of ideas and experience
- Invitation to the Big Conversation
- E-communications/social media/web/resources

11.13 A Holistic Approach

11.13.1 We are intentional about joining up this work with a number of initiatives and agencies: Presbytery Reform, Presbytery Planning Task Group, MDS approval panel, workforce planning through the proposed MDS review body.

11.13.2 One of the key resources that has supported this work, is the deployment of additional MDS staff through presbytery planning. We are concerned that the current moratorium (as at January 21) on recruiting MDS will have the gravest impact on Priority Area congregations.

11.13.3 As Presbytery reform is underway and the aim is for fewer and larger Presbyteries, we would be looking to offer Presbyteries the ways and means of supporting them to make meaningful decisions at the local level based on what needs there are in their communities. One of our key principles is that local people know their own situation and are experts in their own lives. Our **Deprivation Statistics**, <http://bit.ly/38yE4pU> at the Church Finder pages of the Church of Scotland website, developed with the Church statistician, are an obvious tool for this.

11.13.4 We recognise that a lot of different initiatives are happening within Faith Nurture and presbyteries to establish new ways of being Church. This may be new ecclesial models, team ministry, Presbytery Mission Initiatives or work within the General Trustees Well Equipped spaces initiative or simply linkages and unions. As priority for the poorest means just that, Faith Nurture Forum has a key role in ensuring that the needs of Priority Areas are taken account of in any such initiative.

12. SUPPORTING THE LOCAL THROUGH WIDER RESOURCING

12.1 New Ways of Being Church

12.1.1 The report of the Assembly Trustees to the General Assembly in 2020 gave shape to how we might explore New Ways of Being Church:

- Enhance engagement with children, young people and young adults both within and beyond the worshipping life of the Church.
- Identify needs for planting and growing of new contextually relevant worshipping communities.
- Work with other Agencies to develop fresh expressions of Church.
- Consider the learnings from Path of Renewal
- Consider what changes can enhance the effectiveness of the Priority Areas project.
- Review the Pilot Pioneer Project.

12.1.2 How we explore New ways of Being Church will require more than a series of projects or initiatives. It will require a reimagining of how we can be church faithfully and relevantly both today, and in the years to come, and will impact every part of the Church. It is about the renewal of our existing churches, the formation of new congregations, and the creation of structures which provide easy pathways for both. This is a journey that the Church is already on, and one of the highlights of this past year, has been the opportunity to have conversations together, to be curious, to

listen and to dig a little deeper into what is important and meaningful to us.

12.1.3 Part of our contribution to the wider conversations in the church is Rewilding the Church. Written by Mission Development Worker, Steve Aisthorpe, this book was published at the end of July 2020 and reprinted in January 2021. Informed by research and extensive work with local congregations, it has provided a timely and provocative call for a 'refounding' of the Church around Jesus' invitation 'follow me'. It has prompted numerous online conversations within the Kirk and in other denominations and networks. Steve was invited to speak with the Assembly Trustees in November 2020.

12.1.4 New Worshipping Communities

12.1.4.1 Despite the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, new pioneering initiatives have started, more people have begun to explore pioneering opportunities for the first time, and existing projects have been developing and adapting to the new situation. There have also been projects which have been paused, or have come to an end, and it is right to acknowledge that there are individuals and teams who have struggled through 2020.

12.1.4.2 In these times, the Forum's staff have been developing opportunities for mutual encouragement and learning amongst individuals, teams and networks involved in pioneering new ways of being church. While staff are working in a primarily relational, rather than programmatic way, resources and training are being shared across the Kirk and with other denominations. Coaching is being provided to people exploring ideas for pioneering or facing particular challenges on the Fresh Expressions journey.

12.1.4.3 In order to better support initiatives, and to enable the wider church to learn from them, staff across a variety of teams have been working together to develop an evaluation framework. This is an emerging area of work, which means that best practice has yet to be established. A new worshipping community (NWC) is considered to be a recognisable community which meets, or has the potential and intention to meet, the three marks of church; preaching of the word, administration of the sacraments, and exercise of discipline.

12.1.4.4 The following principles have emerged, that any NWC evaluation should:

- provide accountability;
- focus on the nature and quality of relationships;
- be simple and flexible;
- not be burdened with a weight of expectation that is not applied to existing parish churches;
- be developmental;
- provide data gathered compatible with the data gathered on existing congregations in order to give a more comprehensive picture of our denomination; and
- provide information which would satisfy funding bodies within the church, and be useful for learning, within the Church of Scotland and beyond.

12.1.4.5 The specific processes of evaluation will evolve as indicators of good practice are identified.

12.1.5 Path of Renewal

12.1.5.1 In the 6 years since the inception of Path of Renewal, more than 80 congregations have embarked on a journey of renewal, communally discerning God's purpose in each of their contexts and seeking to be involved in the mission of God.

12.1.5.2 This has been an iterative process. In 2015, many congregations were still waking up to the changed landscape in which they served. As that became more widely recognised, congregations more readily accepted the need

for change and were readier to be accompanied through the pain of transition.

12.1.5.3 Throughout this year of pandemic, Ministers have found the skills learned, the reflection fostered and the collegiality developed to be assets in these times:

“the mind-set – priorities, permissions, skills and experience – which we have gained through Path of Renewal have enabled me to cope with the immediate and see beyond the present.”

“Already being on a path of renewal where my congregation were already in a place of transition and change and were comfortable with experimentation and trying new things has meant that this (Covid-19 Lockdown) was just another transition...”

12.1.5.4 Another 20 congregations embarked on Path of Renewal at the beginning of 2020. The furlough of the National Coordinator before the planned supportive Learning Communities were underway meant that the impetus from the first in-person conference in January was diminished. However, some of that has now been recovered as congregational leaders are now meeting regularly online to reflect together and support and encourage one another.

12.1.5.5 The research conducted over the first three years of the project cited the most important elements in Path of Renewal as being:

- creating space for discernment;
- recruiting and developing local leadership;
- intentional investment in a small number of people;
- collegiality, support, accountability; and
- innovation, experimentation, trust.

These insights have been reinforced by the pandemic and will continue to inform how leaders and congregations navigate transition into a new normal.

12.1.6 Pilot Pioneer Project

12.1.6.1 The Pilot Pioneer Project, now in its final year, continues to provide a resource for the whole church as the Pioneers develop relationships, provide support and live out the gospel in their differing contexts.

12.1.6.2 A comprehensive evaluation of the pilot project was commissioned from the Church Army Research Unit and has provided valuable insight into Pioneering in Scotland, highlighting lessons learned and recommendations for future Pioneer posts. The report may be found here (<https://bit.ly/3takGHy>) and a shorter summary here (<https://bit.ly/3coaFzV>)

12.1.6.3 It is good to look at the positives which have come out of this particular pilot, and to recognise the heightened awareness of Pioneer Ministry which these pilots have contributed to. A whole range of contacts and conversations have taken place which would not otherwise have happened, with some very innovative activities, and others which were so obvious that it was surprising that they had not happened before.

12.1.6.4 Lessons have also been learned; that this is only one approach among others; that expectations from the different stakeholders were not clarified and teased through at the different stages of the project; and that overall there is a clear need to build on and integrate the recommendations from the Joint Emerging Church Group Report to the General Assembly of 2019.

12.1.7 Strengthening the Foundations

12.1.7.1 Underpinning all this is the need to learn and adapt, as some of our old ways of working are no longer as effective as they once were. This has been highlighted and accelerated by this time of pandemic. Faith Nurture staff have sought to resource congregations and presbyteries with a range of skills which will be of benefit.

12.1.7.2 On-line presenting skills

As presbyteries, congregations and numerous groups have moved their meetings and conferences online, new ways of connecting and communicating are needed. In addition to developing technical ability, presentation skills need to be updated for the new context, some new techniques learned, and others recognised as being inapplicable in a virtual setting.

Two short training videos are available to help foster good practice. One demonstrates how we can best present ourselves on screen, whilst the other features how to use our voice to suit the new environment. Each is accompanied by a downloadable help-sheet <https://bit.ly/3uUytCX>.

12.1.7.3 Many people are now producing their own video material, using smartphones, iPads and such like. Again, there are some basic skills required that can help improve the effectiveness of recordings in terms of quality, content and creating. A short, demonstration video has been produced and again, a downloadable help-sheet is also available.

12.1.8 Culture of Invitation

12.1.8.1 Being an inviting church is as important as being a welcoming, or hospitable one, and is equally applicable in a New Worshipping Community as in any of our existing congregations. While in lockdown, it may have seemed impossible to put invitation into practice. Working with Michael Harvey, the team has been working with congregations to respond to God's call to connect with others, even in this time of restriction. Michael delivered a webinar on God's Call in a Time of Covid-19 in September 2020, and this is available on YouTube. (<https://bit.ly/38xwX0J>)

12.1.8.2 Since then over a dozen ACORN groups have been established where members support one another to ask God to prompt them to connect with someone, to follow through on that and to share with one another the outcome, and Michael has continued to work with groups within the Church of Scotland over the winter. ACORN stands for the following:

- ASK God to nudge us;
- CALL think of people and put names or initials on post-it notes;
- OBEY by sharing with neighbours and/or sticking names on a cross/heart;
- REPORT back on what happened, share inviter stories; and
- NUMINOUS activity of God – Did you hear the call of God, or feel the presence of God?

12.1.8.3 A working group under Michael Harvey's leadership suggests a useful working definition of ACORN could be: 'ACORN is a movement that seeks to connect Christians with the work God is doing in others through caring conversation.'

12.1.9 Soft Skills for Envisioning and Planning

12.1.9.1 Recent years have seen an increased burden on Presbyteries to engage in vision casting and strategic planning. This is unlikely to abate, given the rapid pace of change in our church and nation, and there is a need to develop a regular practice of reflection, discernment and planning at all levels of the church.

12.1.9.2 Training is now being devised to help provide Presbyteries with the soft skills necessary for the process of considerable change required within their respective areas. Examples of such skills include good facilitation, coaching, listening and conflict-resolution. Those undertaking the training will be better equipped to conduct meetings and conversations that may be quite challenging and more confident in doing so.

12.1.9.3 We are working with our colleagues in other teams in Faith Nurture and also with Place for Hope in offering a suite of resources to enable Presbyteries in what can be difficult conversations.

13. RESOURCING WORSHIP

13.1 The Worship Development Worker, Phill Mellstrom, continues to take forward work relating to producing an online supplement for the Fourth Edition of the Church Hymnary, CH4. CH4 first appeared in 2004, and, some seventeen years later, the world looks very different. CH4 continues as a valuable resource for the Church, and a supplement will augment the content as well as reflecting the very different context of these times. He also works closely with Iain McLarty, Worship Development Worker in Priority Areas. Hymns Ancient and Modern, who also have responsibility for St Andrew Press, is interested in exploring a possible print version.

13.2 Weekly Worship (<http://bit.ly/3vhdHyh>) continues to provide a resource not just for the Church of Scotland but for the wider Church. The Forum continues to explore how this can be further developed to be even more useful. At the time of writing, Scotland is still in lockdown, and these words from the National Worship Team continue to be relevant:

13.3 "We may not all be gathered in the same building, but at this time, when we need each other so much, we are invited to worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all and can blend even distant voices into one song of worship."

14. SUPPORTING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Supporting Children, Youth and Family Ministry

14.1 Since Congregational Learning staff returned from furlough in July, we have offered regular opportunities to those employed by the Church of Scotland as children, youth and family workers, to gather together online. This community of practice has gone from strength to strength as participants share their struggles, challenges, questions, ideas, resources and joys. Participants have reported that these conversations have been a lifeline for them during the pandemic, enabling them to feel connected through such challenging times.

14.2 These conversations have been supplemented by a monthly book club designed to encourage critical theological thinking and contextualisation. A list of books explored is available on request.

14.3 Recognising the need for leaders to take regular time to retreat, our annual Community of Faith Conference for Paid Workers will, in March 2021, be an online retreat focussed on engaging in spiritual practices.

14.4 Throughout the pandemic, we also recognised and sought to meet the needs of volunteers through regular newsletters, wider engagement and support at regional level through 'Children, Youth and Family Ministry – Now Where?' conversations, and the sharing of ideas and resources through our 'Now You're Talking' Facebook group. These have been supplemented by our involvement in the two events hosted by Lanark Presbytery focussed on what children and youth ministry could be like while subject to the various Covid-19 restrictions. 463 took part in the first event in August, and 210 in the second one in November 2020.

14.5 An exciting development has been our series of webinars on Intergenerational Church. Nearly 200 people from all across the world registered for the first one in December 2020, where Darren Philip shared insights from the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer about how we can become an intergenerational church community. Recordings of the three talks by Darren are on the Church of Scotland YouTube page. (<http://bit.ly/2OoOPnO>) These can also be found on

the Faith Nurture Vimeo account for downloading, in order to share more widely, here (<http://bit.ly/3rl1Bwb>). We encourage everyone to take time to watch them and consider what it can mean for your own local context.

14.6 A follow up webinar 'Stories of Change', focussing on hearing stories of those congregations who have begun the journey to becoming an intergenerational church, is scheduled for March 2021. In the future it is planned to build on this success with webinars on other topics, such as family ministry. Ongoing work continues to explore other digital media such as podcasting, seeking to discern a platform which is cost effective and GDPR compliant.

14.7 The exciting content of these webinars also leads the Forum to the conviction that intentionally planning for all our work to be intergenerational is a priority. The scope for drawing on work being done within Priority Areas; across the MDS network; and learning from the annual Community of Faith gathering for paid workers involved in children and families' work could yield a rich harvest in terms of lessons learned for the whole Church.

14.8 Young People and Young Adults

14.9 Following an instruction from the 2019 General Assembly we initiated a youth attitudes survey to try to understand better what the needs and views are of young people in the Church of Scotland. The survey was open to all in the age range 11-30, and was carried out in August and September 2019. Various factors, including Covid-19, have meant that the findings were not disseminated in 2020 as initially envisaged. The aim has since been to provide, on the Church of Scotland website, a summary of the key points raised through the survey, which the whole Church can learn from. Consideration will then be given as to how to undertake a similar yet more robust survey in the future, within the context of a developing research function in the national offices.

14.10 The Covid-19 pandemic led to a pausing in the development of the activities for young people and young adults agreed by the 2019 General Assembly, as a result of staff being furloughed. Development for the residential events will begin again once the framework for exiting the pandemic has become clearer. In the meantime, work has begun on underlying aspects such as branding and communication. The Forum continues to work on how the needs of youth and young people in the Church of Scotland are integrated into the above, and on following up some of the other recommendations made to the 2019 General Assembly as part of a more integrated strategy in this area.

15. LIFE AND WORK

15.1 2020 was a year like no other for the world – and it was no different for Life and Work. On Wednesday March 18 2020, the whole team moved to a pattern of remote working. Without technology, this would have been impossible even five or ten years ago, but we were blessed to have the tools which enabled us to continue with the production of the 141-year-old magazine of our Church and so the decision to continue working when so much other work was on hold was an easy one.

15.2 We were in the middle of producing the May issue when the central office staff moved to remote working. As a result of the sudden change, a decision was made to offer this issue as a free downloadable pdf on our website, as alternative delivery arrangements had not been possible in some cases.

15.3 More than 5,000 people clicked on the page where the download was housed – and many more may have taken advantage but because of rising costs due to the unexpected demand, the promotion was phased out. Those figures (in a short space of time) demonstrated a clear appetite for the content offered by Life and Work.

15.4 The dramatic change meant editorial plans for the months ahead also had to be shelved, but the team were blessed with both new ideas and new material.

15.5 A sharp temporary drop in advertising and a furloughing of most of the team mean that the magazine was downsized for a short period to reflect reduced staffing, but at the beginning of the summer of 2020 when it was clear trading conditions were improving, the size of the magazine was increased.

15.6 The magazine has continued to appear in print and on a digital platform and its social media channels have been updated with new material on every single working day – despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. The Life and Work website can be accessed here - <http://bit.ly/3ctRx3c>.

15.7 Digital supplements were produced offering a snapshot of the business covered at the General Assemblies of May 2019 and October 2020, and at the height of the Covid-19 lockdown in April and May, small one-page digital weekly summaries of changes and key information also proved popular.

15.8 A new hybrid model of distribution was born as a result of the pandemic in 2020 and the challenges of this will continue into 2021 as systems are overhauled. Tough decisions were made in 2020 and also taken in relation to our budget for 2021 to ensure the magazine remained in a positive position and both finances and costs are carefully and closely monitored to ensure best value for the Church.

15.9 At the time of writing we are still homeworking and likely to be in this position for the first part of the year. Looking ahead we cannot yet predict what action needs to be taken, but will do what is required to meet the challenges likely to emerge in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

15.10 During 2020, the whole Life and Work team worked tirelessly and were committed above and beyond the call of duty to deliver the magazine every month. But the team owes a debt of gratitude to our loyal promoters, for their patience and willingness to adapt to change. In this we have been hugely blessed and offer our thanks to subscribers for their support through this difficult time.

15.11 The Life and Work Advisory Committee met on two occasions in 2020.

16. ST ANDREW PRESS

16.1 Saint Andrew Press' publishing year runs from October 1 to September 30, and in the year ending 30 September 2020, four new titles were published, a decrease of two from the previous year.

16.2 Titles published – Church of Scotland Yearbook 2019-20 (October 2019), the annual directory of key data; Let Everyone Find a Voice: Re-imagining the Psalms for worship and devotion (May 2020) by Lezley J. Stewart is a vibrant new resource; Rewilding the Church (July 2020) by Steve Aisthorpe, explores afresh the compelling invitation of Jesus to 'follow me' (now reprinting); Scottish Presbyterian Worship: Proposals for organic change 1843 to the present day, (Sep 2020), by Bryan Spinks, is a key book by one of the world's most distinguished liturgical scholars.

16.3 Though the pandemic has resulted in bookshop and event disruption and closures, Saint Andrew Press has improved its online offering in 2020 with regular promotions via its website, including free postage and packing for most of 2020, online launches and author talks and increased attention to ebooks.

16.4 Planned visits by the Publishing and Marketing Directors to the Church's national offices moved online and discussion continues in relation to the publishing programme for 2021 and beyond, including a new supplement for CH4, as reported elsewhere.

17. FUNDED PARTNERS

17.1 Over a long period of time, the Church has funded five key partners with significant grants, with responsibility up until now for these five partners being located across three different areas of what was the Ministries Council. Faith in Community Scotland; the GKExperience; and Wevolution sat under the oversight of the Priority Areas Committee, while Place for Hope and Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland worked with the Strategic Projects Manager, and Partnerships and Development respectively. The agreed grant schedule for 2021 amounts to a total sum of £445,750, a reduction of £105,250 on 2020. Given the Church's financial position, these grants will further reduce in subsequent years and be reviewed on an annual basis.

17.2 With the advent of the new Forums, and the appointment of a Grants Manager within the Office of the Assembly Trustees, the opportunities to work in a more integrated manner, and to engage on a more intentional basis with all five, have given the Forum deeper insights into the work carried out by our partners. Representatives of the Forum and the Assembly Trustees have met separately and individually with key stakeholders in our partners. Questions of sustainability, added value, and the contribution our partners offer to the mission of the Church have been very much to the fore in our conversations. A set of links to each of these organisations' websites can be found on the Reports section of the Church of Scotland website. The Forum will continue to engage constructively with each of these partners.

18. HEART AND SOUL

18.1 The Special Commission which reported to the General Assembly of 2019 recommended that the responsibility for Heart and Soul should lie with the Faith Nurture Forum. On the Sunday of what would have been the 2020 General Assembly, an online version of Heart and Soul took place which was well received.

18.2 In conversation with the Assembly Business Committee, and recognising uncertainties around what might be possible in 2021, and acknowledging that the General Assembly would not be a typical General Assembly, the Forum took the decision not to proceed with Heart and Soul in a physical or online form for the General Assembly of 2021. This is also a recognition of financial reality, with the event costing £50,000 not including staff time. The Forum proposes that Heart and Soul should no longer take place, and gives thanks for all who have contributed to it over the years and for all whose experience of the Church and its life have been enriched by taking part, either in Princes Street Gardens, or in the online versions of recent years.

18.3 The Forum recognises that the many rich lessons which the Church has taken from Heart and Soul can influence how the Church learns and shares its rich wealth of stories. Work was done through a Listening Project, and the deep insights from that research are valuable for the Church as we move forward. As well as that, we know of the stories from our work with children and families, in Priority Areas, in Path of Renewal, the work of Interim Ministry, workshops on inter-generational Church, and even case studies from Presbytery Planning are all part of what we can share and learn. The Faith Nurture Forum, together with the Faith Impact Forum and the Assembly Trustees will explore how these stories can be shared, what lessons can be learned, and will report back to a future General Assembly.

19. DEAF MINISTRY

19.1 The General Assembly in 2019 instructed the Ministries Council to review the terms and conditions of those who minister for the deaf in Scotland and the associated legislation relating to their appointment, deployment and duties and to report to the General

Assembly of 2020. This work has begun with the Presbytery Clerks of Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh, the Depute Principal Clerk and the Partnership & Development Secretary. However, it has not been possible to satisfactorily conclude the exercise and report to this General Assembly. It is therefore requested that this be carried forward to a future General Assembly.

20. DIACONATE COUNCIL

20.1 The General Assembly of 2018 was made aware of the work done by Diaconate Council in producing the document Deacons of Word and Service. It is helpful to restate that Deacons are called to witness to the ministry of the servant Christ through a ministry which is pastoral in nature, collaborative and prophetic in approach, supporting the Church in its obedient response to Christ's reconciling ministry, and building bridges between Church and society.

20.2 It is also helpful to be aware of other distinctive features of the Diaconate in the Church of Scotland. The role, function and ministry of the Diaconate are laid out in Act 8 (2010), accessible at <https://bit.ly/3t4T9HA>. This Act, and the Ordination Service, state that Deacons shall seek to;

- Assist God's people in worship and prayer
- Hold before the people of God the needs and concerns of the world
- Minister Christ's love and compassion
- Seek out the lost and the lonely
- Help those they are called to serve offer their lives to God.

20.3 The Diaconate Rule of Life

20.4 Deacons in the Church of Scotland also commit to a devotional life which shall be characterised by the following;

- To live prayerfully, remembering others involved in diaconal service
- To place worship with others at the heart of their lives
- To regularly reflect on their work, life and witness
- To make time once a year for retreat

20.5 Deacons through a ministry of word and service shall;

- Respond creatively to the needs around them
- Enable others to use their gifts and talents
- Be committed to diaconal gatherings at local, national and international levels
- Keep in contact with those who are retired and unable to attend gatherings
- Be good stewards of all that God has given – time, talents, money and possessions
- Remember their own physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing and the need for rest and leisure activity.

20.6 The Diaconate Council is aware of the far-reaching decisions made by the General Assemblies of 2019 and 2020 affecting the structures of the Church. Mindful of these changes, Diaconate Council considered its own structure.

20.7 The Diaconate Act incorporates provisions of other Acts and a significant number of amendments. Diaconate Council believes that Act 8 needs revising, as it no longer offers an appropriate framework to support the Diaconate as it seeks to serve the Church; neither does the Act reflect current thinking on the Diaconate's ministry of word and service, recognised at previous General Assemblies.

20.8 The Diaconate Council of 15 August 2020 instructed its Business Committee to carry out a review of the current structure of the Diaconate Council and Local Groups and to consult with members of the Diaconate on a proposed new

structure. This new structure was agreed at Diaconate Council in January 2021, and requires amendments to the existing Appendices to Act 8 2010. These proposed changes can be found at Appendix 2.

20.9 The key parts of these changes are as follows:

- 1 term of office for President and Vice-President; this now extended by one year, to serve for four years;
- replacement of the role of Secretary with that of a Minutes Secretary;
- replacement of the Business Committee with an Executive Committee of five;
- allow for Forum representatives to be corresponding members of Diaconate Council, rather than full members as at present; and
- revision of standing orders to allow for no more than two nominations for President and Vice-President, in place of currently allowing for up to four nominations for each post. In practice most elections have been limited to a choice between two candidates.

20.10 Recognising too that the Act itself needs a major revision, and following discussions with the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Principal Clerk, the Diaconate Business Council would also seek, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to bring to the General Assembly of 2022 a revised or, if appropriate, a new Act on Diaconal Ministry within the Church of Scotland.

21. MANSE ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE

21.1 Amendments to Regulation 3, 2013, Manse Adjudication Committee

With the arrival of a new Chief Executive in the General Trustees, and in the light of remote working experience over these last eleven months, the need to revise Regulation 3 of 2013 on the workings of the Manse Adjudication Committee became apparent.

21.2 The key areas of amendment are as follows:

21.2.1 to reduce the size of the Manse Adjudication Committee (MAC) to four, with two participants from the General Trustees, and two from the Faith Nurture Forum. This is in line with other proposals to reduce the administrative burden. In cases where the Manse is not vested in the General Trustees, the current regulations provide for six representatives from the Faith Nurture Forum to populate the MAC. With only fifteen members in the Faith Nurture Forum, this creates a challenge to find six members.

21.2.2 to allow for the possibility of virtual or online meetings, and, in straightforward cases, to allow for the process to take place by exchange of emails.

21.2.3 to update language to reflect the replacement of the Ministries Council with the Faith Nurture Forum and changes within the structure of the General Trustees; and

21.2.4 appeals against decisions by the MAC be directed to the Ministries Appeal Panel.

21.3 There are currently no cases which require the attention of the MAC, and no appeals waiting to be heard.

21.4 The proposed changes can be found at Appendix 3.

22. CONSOLIDATED STIPEND FUND

22.1 The Forum has engaged in very helpful conversations with the General Trustees about the use of the Consolidated Stipend Fund, and is exploring with them whether there is greater scope for using this Fund to support the work of Parish Ministry. In the meantime, the General Trustees have agreed, as is permitted, to release capital from the Consolidated Stipend Fund to augment investment income.

23. FINANCE AND ALLOWANCES

23.1 Stipends and Salaries

23.1.1 Given the challenging financial situation facing the church as a result of the global coronavirus pandemic, there is no increase to the stipend and salary scales for 2021.

Stipend Scale (including Associate Ministers) 2021

Point 1 £28,137

Point 2 £29,977

Point 3 £31,817

Point 4 £33,658

Point 5 £34,577

Ministries Development Staff Scales 2021
MDS General Scale

Point 1 £25,624

Point 2 £26,462

Point 3 £27,297

Point 4 £28,135

Point 5 £28,968

Team Leader Scale

Point 1 £31,197

Point 2 £31,893

Point 3 £32,589

Point 4 £33,286

Point 5 £33,982

Deacon Scale (Genuine Occupational Requirement)

Point 1 £27,297

Point 2 £28,135

Point 3 £28,968

Point 4 £29,804

Point 5 £30,639

23.2 Island Allowance

This allowance remains the same for 2021.

Outer Island Allowance: £1,798

Inner Island Allowance: £707

23.3 Travel Expenses 2020

The travel expenses payable remain, at HMRC rates:

Rates for those providing their own car:

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.

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

Reimbursed to Ministers and MDS providing their own motor bike for pastoral duties:

24p per mile travelled per annum

Reimbursed to Ministers and MDS providing their own pedal bike for pastoral duties:

20p per mile travelled per annum

23.4 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.

23.5 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 £30,000, the Faith Nurture Forum will meet the full cost of the removal expenses and disturbance allowance. When a Charge's average income base is between £30,001 and £60,000 application may be made to the Faith Nurture Forum for assistance in meeting these 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.

23.6 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.

23.7 Vacancy Allowance

For 2020 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 Ministries and Mission Allocation.

23.8 Guardianship Allowance

For 2020 the Guardianship Allowance also remains at £933 per month in line with the vacancy allowance.

In the name of the Forum

ROSEMARY FREW, *Convener*
KAREN K. CAMPBELL, *Vice-Convener*
ANGUS R MATHIESON, *Interim Head of Forum*

Addendum

Bill Hogg

The Reverend Bill Hogg was first appointed to serve on the Church's Committee on Art and Architecture in 2010, and became Convener in 2016. Having served as Presbytery Clerk in two Presbyteries, Bill brought this experience and his attention to detail into his service as Convener. His passion for the Church's built heritage, and a concern to respect the historical context of the Church's buildings, while still being open to innovation, were hallmarks of his leadership as was his commitment to sacramental worship and liturgical theology. The Church is grateful to him for his contribution which has now come to an end, with the integration of this work in the General Trustees. We wish him well in his retirement, although we note that he is regularly being called on to lead worship in the South West.

In the name of the Forum

ROSEMARY FREW, *Convener*
KAREN K. CAMPBELL, *Vice-Convener*
ANGUS R MATHIESON, *Interim Head of Forum*

Appendix 1

IMPLEMENTATION GROUPS AND MEMBERSHIP

1. Education and Integrated Training

- Ensuring the implementation of Faith Nurture strategy
- Offering expertise into the shaping of Education & Training programmes of work
- Offering critical thinking and reflection into developing new areas of work
- Assisting with the framing of policies and papers to go to FNF for decision
- Doing joined up work on cross cutting themes

Membership

Lesley-Anne Calvert (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Ruth Mackenzie (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Revd Eleanor McMahon (co-opted, background in Review of Initial Training)

Andrew Todd (co-opted, background in Review of Initial Training)

Kay Cathcart (Education & Training Secretary)

2. Life and Work

- Overseeing key business planning aspects of the magazine
- Advising on sales and marketing and long-term plans
- Monitoring advertising revenues and policy.

Membership

Murdo Macmillan (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Rev John Paterson (member of the Life and Work Advisory Committee)

Robert Archibald (Finance Supervisor)

Lynne McNeil (Editor, Life and Work)

Dianne Sanderson (Business Manager, Life and Work)

3. New Ways of being Church

- Supporting growth and renewal
- Ensuring that the formation of new worshipping communities becomes central
- Exploring Emerging Church
- Encouraging a broad spectrum of pioneering activity

Membership

Alan Hamilton (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Richard Lloyd (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Murdo Macmillan (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Andrew Morrice (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Lesley Hamilton-Messer (Team Leader Church without Walls)

4. Presbytery Planning Task Group

- Working with Presbyteries in developing a planning framework which supports and enables a locally-focussed missional approach
- Offering advice and guidance on appraisal and adjustment

Membership

Mike Goss (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Richard Lloyd (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Fraser Penny (co-opt PPAG Member)

Daran Golby (Partnerships & Development Secretary)

5. Priority Areas Implementation Group

- Ensuring the implementation of FNF strategy/Faith Action Plan in the delivery of Priority Areas' work
- Offering expertise into the shaping of Priority Areas' programmes of work

- Offer critical thinking and reflection into developing new areas of work
- Assist with the framing of policies and papers to go to FNF for decision
- Ensuring the voice and concerns of Priority Area congregations (and similar) can inform the thinking of Faith Nurture Forum and through them to the Assembly Trustees
- Working with Faith Impact and other Implementation Groups on cross cutting themes

Membership

Scott McCarthy (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Janice Grant (co-opt, New Laigh Kirk, Kilmarnock)

Jane Howitt (co-opt, St Rollox, Glasgow)

Barry Hughes (co-opt, St Mark's Stirling)

Shirley Grieve (Priority Areas Secretary)

6. Resourcing Worship

- helps to provide a focus for worship resources
- works with congregations to develop worship locally while helping to identify emerging patterns of spirituality and prayer for today.
- works to stimulate and support presbyteries and congregations to reflect critically on our practice and places of worship, and bring about creative change.

Membership

Sue Thompson (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Fraser MacNaughton (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Scott McCarthy (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Phill Mellstrom, Development Worker, Resourcing Worship

Appendix 2

ACT AMENDING THE DEACONS ACT (ACT VIII 2010) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2021, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

- In the existing section 18(2) delete "Appendix" and substitute "Appendices A, B and C".*
- Delete the existing Appendices A, B & C and substitute the following:*

APPENDIX A

CONSTITUTION OF DIACONATE COUNCIL ("Council")

1. Functions

The Functions of Council hereinafter constituted shall be:

- To promote the call to, and ministry of, the Diaconate of the Church of Scotland
- To support the Diaconate Rule of Life
- To provide fellowship and support to those engaged in Diaconal Service
- To formulate and express the collective views of the Diaconate to the wider Church
- To provide opportunity for in-service training and personal development
- To engage with those in similar ministries at home and overseas
- To support the Church in the selection, training and development of Deacons

2. Constitution

Council shall consist of:

All Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **E** or **R** who shall be voting members of Council. In addition:

- Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category I and those engaged in Diaconal Service within other denominations may attend Council at their own expense as corresponding members.
- The Faith Nurture Forum of the Church ("the Forum") will be represented by 3 attendees who will be corresponding members.
- Designated Guests invited by the Executive Committee on behalf of Council may attend Council.
- Diaconal Students and those undertaking probationary periods may be invited to attend Council as designated guests.

3. Office – bearers

The Office bearers shall be:

- A President, who shall hold office for four years and will not be eligible to serve consecutive terms of office.
- A Vice President, who shall hold office for four years and will not be eligible to serve consecutive terms of office.

The President and the Vice President shall be elected by Council in a manner specified in the Standing Orders. Council shall approve the appointment of a Minute Secretary, who shall serve for two years and shall be eligible to serve consecutive terms of office.

4. Committees

4.1 Executive Committee

An Executive Committee of five shall be appointed by Council to attend to matters pertaining to the Diaconate and shall be constituted in a manner provided in Standing Orders.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President and Vice-President, who shall be *ex-officio* and three members elected by Council in manner specified in Standing Orders.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt corresponding members or, where desirable, establish a Short Life Working Group to support the work of the Executive Committee.

Administrative support will be provided by the Forum.

4.2 Short Life Working Groups

Council shall have power to establish, if it so desires, Short Life Working Groups to facilitate its business, consider aspects of Diaconal Ministry and to promote the Diaconate Rule of Life. Any such Short Life Working Group shall be given an agreed remit.

A Short Life Working Group shall nominate one of their number as "Chairperson" who will report on behalf of the Group to the Executive Committee. The Short Life Working Group can, if required and with the permission of the Executive Committee, appoint additional members where appropriate.

5. Finance

Each year the Forum, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall set an operational budget for Council. The Executive Committee shall be accountable for any budget set by the Forum.

Any proposal involving finance amounting to more than the total budget shall, before action is taken, be referred to the Forum.

The Executive Committee shall administer all Discretionary Funds (both Restricted and Designated) held on behalf of Council. In addition, and for the avoidance of doubt, the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the administration and application of the annual "Holiday Grant".

The Executive Committee may use the Discretionary Fund to make grants to members of the Church of Scotland

Diaconate to support activities which are consistent with the Diaconate Rule of Life. In exceptional circumstances, the Executive Committee may consider an Emergency Hardship Grant, to help members of the Diaconate who are in financial need.

Applications for financial assistance should be made in writing to the President. All such applications and grants shall remain confidential.

6. Meetings

Council shall meet twice a year. Usually one of the meetings shall be residential in nature.

The Executive Committee will be responsible for setting the date of such Council meetings and shall make all necessary arrangements.

A draft calendar of meetings for the following twelve months shall be agreed and issued by the Executive Committee in October each year.

The Executive Committee, in agreement with the Forum, may in exceptional circumstances call an extraordinary meeting of Council.

Council shall meet in public or in private as the Executive Committee may decide or following a request under Standing Orders.

7. Procedure

- The Executive Committee shall be responsible for all arrangements pertaining to Council including setting the date and the agenda.
- Worship during Council shall be coordinated by the President.
- Council shall appoint a Minute Secretary who shall record the minutes of Council.
- The cost of Council, including the travelling expenses of full members of Council, and designated guests, shall be met from the Council Budget.

Other procedures shall be as set out in Standing Orders.

8. Regional Diaconate Groups

Council shall recognise and support the establishment of Regional Diaconate Groups. Regional Groups shall do all things necessary for, or incidental to, the functioning of Council, and shall be governed by the Constitution set out in Appendix C.

9. Alteration of Constitution

Any alteration to this Constitution may be made only by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership of Council, upon a motion of which fifteen days' notice has been given to all members thereof.

APPENDIX B

DIACONATE COUNCIL – STANDING ORDERS

1. Procedure at Meetings

1.1 The President, or in their absence the Vice-President, shall preside, whom failing Council shall appoint its own Chairperson *pro tempore*.

1.2 The President shall ensure that each session of Council be opened and closed with prayer.

2. Business Session

2.1 The Business Session of Council shall include:

- (1) Election of Office-bearers
- (2) Roll of Honour
- (3) Finance Report
- (4) Establishment of, and reports from, Short Life Working Groups

- (5) Where invited, appoint representatives to the Faith Nurture Forum of the Church or to other events
- (6) Reports from the General Assembly and the Standing Committees of the General Assembly
- (7) Initiation of discussion on any matters which concern the Diaconate, Diaconal Service and the wider interests of the Church
- (8) Recognition of, and reports from, Regional Groups annually
- (9) Welcome of guests from the Church at home, nationally and internationally
- (10) Welcome and presentation of Diaconal Students

2.2 Council shall normally meet in public, however where a matter is considered contentious, or relates to a sensitive issue, Council may meet in private. It shall be competent for the Executive Committee to move that such items be taken in private. The speaker on any item of business can also request that an item is taken in private, giving reasons briefly; the seconding shall be formal, and any vote necessary shall be taken without debate.

2.3 On a Point of Order being raised (it is necessary for a specific Standing Order to be specified) the President shall rule thereon and such ruling shall be accepted as the finding of Council.

3. Election of Office-bearers

3.1 Nominations for the election of the President and Vice- President shall be sent to the Executive Committee by Regional Groups. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

3.2 Each Regional Group shall send in a maximum of two nominations to the Executive Committee. Nominations will be selected from the membership of Council. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

3.3 The election of Office Bearers shall take place by Postal Vote. The Executive Committee shall notify voting members of Council of nominations and will take all necessary steps to facilitate election of the Office Bearers.

3.4 The Executive Committee shall bring to Council recommendations for the post of Minute Secretary.

4. Executive Committee

4.1 The President and Vice-President shall be *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee. The term of office shall run for 4 years from June 1st of the year elected.

4.2 Council will elect 3 members from their numbers to serve on the Executive Committee, one member to be elected annually.

4.3 Elected members shall serve for 3 years. Nominations to the Executive Committee can be made by Regional Groups or by individual members of Council. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

4.4 Election to the Executive Committee will take place by Postal Vote. The Executive Committee shall notify members of Council of all nominations and will take all necessary steps to facilitate election of the Office Bearers.

5. Short Life Working Groups

5.1 Any Short Life Working Group appointed by Council, by virtue of the power conferred on it in the Constitution, shall be given a special remit, and shall report to Council.

5.2 Members of Short Life Working Groups will be identified, and appointed, by the Executive Committee.

6. Minutes

6.1 The Minutes Secretary shall record the Minutes of Council which shall be approved at the opening session of the next Council.

6.2 Full Minutes of the proceedings of Council shall be circulated to all members at least 15 days prior to the start of Council.

7. Reports

7.1 Reports from Regional Groups shall be sent to the Executive Committee by the last day of February each year.

7.2 Reports from the Executive Committee and from Short Life Working Groups will be sent to Council Members along with the Agenda 15 days prior to the start of Council.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Regional Groups, individuals or Standing Committees of the General Assembly may request that an item be placed on the Agenda for Council, giving 15 days' notice to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall decide if such business is competent.

8.2 When less than 15 days' notice has been given, the mover shall briefly introduce the item and Council shall, without discussion, decide by simple majority whether to take up the item of business or to depart from the matter.

9. Suspension of Standing Orders

9.1 It shall be competent to suspend Standing Orders, or any one of them, in any particular case, but a motion to this effect shall not be carried unless it receives the support of at least two-thirds of the voting members present and voting on the question being put by the President.

10. Close of Council

10.1 When the business set down for the final day of the session of Council has been completed, Council shall approve the date and place of its next meeting.

11. Alterations of Standing Orders

11.1 Fifteen days' notice having been given, these Standing Orders may be altered by a two-thirds majority of voting members present at a meeting of Council.

APPENDIX C

REGIONAL GROUP OF THE DIACONATE – CONSTITUTION

1. The name shall be "Church of Scotland Diaconate Regional Group (area covered)"

2. Aim

- To promote the call to, and ministry of, the Diaconate of the Church of Scotland
- To support the Diaconate Rule of Life
- To provide fellowship and support to those engaged in Diaconal Service
- To support the training of Diaconal students and those serving a probationary period within their bounds
- To communicate with the Executive Committee on matters concerning Diaconal Ministry
- To provide an opportunity for Deacons to reflect on matters concerning Diaconal Ministry or public interest

3. The aim shall be reached by:

- Meeting at least twice each year
- Providing an opportunity for fellowship and the nurturing of devotional life as set out in the Diaconate Rule of Life
- Submitting an annual report to the Executive Committee in February each year for submission to Council
- Considering business sent to the Regional Group by the Executive Committee or Council

- Taking to Council matters concerning Diaconal Ministry

4. Membership

- All Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **E** or **R** shall be full members of the Regional Group.
- All Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **I** may be associated but without voting rights.
- Diaconate students or those serving a probationary period shall be associated but without voting rights.
- Deacons of other denominations may be invited to be associated with a Regional Group.

5. Chairperson

Each Regional Group shall appoint a Chairperson in accordance with a procedure agreed by the Regional Group in advance. The role of the Chairperson shall be:

- To act as a spokesperson for the Regional Group
- To ensure clear and timely communication between the Regional Group and Executive Committee
- To coordinate meetings of the Regional Group
- To coordinate communication between members of the Regional Group

6. Report for Council

A report from each Regional Group will submit a report to the Executive Committee by the end of February each year.

7. Council Business

Regional Groups or individuals may request an item of competent business to be placed on the Agenda of Council, giving 15 days' notice to the Executive Committee. Where shorter notice has been given, the mover shall briefly introduce the item and Council shall, without discussion, decide by simple majority whether or not to take up the item of business.

Any business brought forward by an individual Deacon, if rejected by the Regional Group, shall if desired by the Deacon, be forwarded by the Regional Group with full comments to the Executive Committee for consideration.

8. Election of President and Vice-President of Council

On the occasion of the election of a President or Vice-President of Council, Regional Groups shall send to the Executive Committee by the end of October not more than two nominations.

Nominations shall be selected from the voting membership of Council. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

Nominations to the Executive Committee shall be submitted to the Executive Committee by the Regional Group or by an individual. Nominations shall be sent to the Executive Committee by the end of October. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

9. Change of Constitution

Any request to change the constitution can be proposed by the Executive Committee or a Regional Group. Where the proposal is made by a Regional Group the Group should notify the Executive Committee for discussion and agreement at Council. As each Regional Group is governed by the same Constitution, such changes shall only become effective when approved by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership of Council.

Appendix 3

REGULATIONS AMENDING THE MANSE ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE REGULATIONS (REGULATIONS III 2013)

Edinburgh, [] May 2021, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Manse Adjudication Committee Regulations (Regulations III 2013), shall be amended as follows:

3. *In section B, paragraph 2(a), delete the existing wording and substitute: "the MAC shall comprise two representatives of the General Trustees, one of whom shall be the Convener, and two representatives of the Faith Nurture Forum;"*
4. *In section B, paragraph 2(b) and 2(c), delete "the Secretary and Clerk to the General Trustees" and substitute "the Chief Executive of the General Trustees".*
5. *In section B, paragraphs 2(b), 3(b) and 3(c) delete "the Secretary of the Faith Nurture Forum" and substitute "the Head of the Faith Nurture Forum".*
6. *In section B, paragraph 3(a), delete the existing wording and substitute "the MAC shall comprise four representatives of the Faith Nurture Forum, one of whom shall be appointed as Convener;"*
7. *In section E, delete "Appeals Committee of the Commission of the Assembly" and substitute "Ministries Appeal Panel" and delete references to the Appeals Act and substitute references to the Ministries Appeal Panel Act (Act VI 2007).*
8. *In section E, delete paragraph 3 and substitute "An appeal must be made on the basis of one of the following grounds of appeal: (a) that in the course of the MAC Hearing there were irregularities in the process, (b) that the final decision of the MAC Hearing was influenced by incorrect material fact, or (c) that the MAC Hearing acted contrary to the principles of natural justice."*
9. *In section E, paragraph 6(a), delete "Short Assured Tenancy" and substitute "Private Residential Tenancy".*
10. *In the Schedule Part 2 add a new paragraph 6 "The MAC Hearing may take place by audio and/or video conference call or other appropriate medium."*

TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HOUSING AND LOAN FUND FOR RETIRED MINISTERS AND WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS OF MINISTERS MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and thank the Trustees and Staff.
2. Appoint Mrs Sharon Anne Ho 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 is always accessible to potential applicants to discuss their particular situation, and the assistance which the Trustees may be able to provide to them.

1.2 The Trustees own, and regularly acquire, houses for leasing at concessionary rents to those with insufficient resources to enable them to purchase houses for themselves. Alternatively, loans on favourable terms 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 2021, £140,000 for Shared Appreciation Loans.

2. HOUSING TRANSACTIONS: 2020

2.1 Assistance provided during 2020 to ministers, widows and widowers, and separated and divorced spouses, is detailed in Appendix 1 annexed to this Report. House purchase, sale and loan activity was significantly reduced in 2020 as a result of Covid-19. The property market was effectively closed down from the end of March to the end of June 2020. 18 new and 9 updated applications were approved in 2020.

2.2 The Trustees owned 197 houses at the end of 2020. 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 2020, 9 houses were still being marketed for sale.

3. RENTS AND RENTAL REVIEWS

3.1 Rents charged for housing provided by the Fund are set, at the beginning of the tenancy, at 50% of the Market Rent (as professionally assessed at that time), for Ministers, and at 25% for widows and widowers 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 2021.

3.3 Rental income has been sufficient to cover maintenance and repairs. Routine visits to rental properties have not been carried out during Covid-19 and for much of the year only essential maintenance has been permitted within Government Guidelines. Visits will be resumed when conditions enable this and repairs will be prioritised.

4. LOAN TRANSACTIONS: 2020

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 four per cent for ministers and two per cent for surviving widows or widowers 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 £129,500. Currently rates of interest for such loans are two and a half per cent for ministers and one and a quarter per cent for widows or widowers of ministers. Borrowers due their 5-yearly visit by the Secretary in 2020 were consulted by telephone instead as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. Visits will be resumed when conditions enable this.

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 2020 are given in Appendix 3.

5. DONATIONS, BEQUESTS ETC.

5.1 The Trustees are gratified to report that during 2020 they received a total sum of £13,017 by way of donations, bequests and gifts.

6. FUNDS

6.1 The amount realised from sales of houses, less the expenditure on house purchases, during 2020 was £957,624. The net decrease in long-term loans during 2020 was £96,205.

6.2 Investments at market value, and cash deposits, at 31st December 2020 amounted to £23,256,348.

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. 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 2020, which will require to be met from funds, can be found at Appendix 4. The number of ministers due to retire within a five to ten year period from 31st December 2020 and whose names have been 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, 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 loans from the Fund who may now wish to seek a further advance.

7.2 In December 2020 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 previous maximum price. The Trustees agreed that the house purchase price limits for 2021 be increased so that the maximum price for a house to rent increases by £15,000 to £200,000 and the maximum price, or value, of a house in respect of which a loan would be

given, similarly is increased to £200,000. 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. Applicants for whom assistance is to be granted by way of a house to rent are requested to consider, first, the Fund's vacant properties before the Trustees will be prepared to purchase a house for them.

8. CONSULTATION WITH ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

8.1 The Trustees are working on a Strategic Review of the Fund and are in discussion with the Assembly Trustees. The Trustees recognise that the Fund now has more assets than it is anticipated that it will need to fulfil the Fund's current purposes. The Trustees are working with the Assembly Trustees and the Chief Officer to identify how, in compliance with the Fund's purposes for Housing for Ministry, these assets can be best applied for the benefit of the Fund's Beneficiaries and the wider benefit of the Church.

9. DILIGENCE

9.1 The Trustees confirm that, as far as possible within the constraints of Covid-19, the Staff have monitored their stock of rental housing, and housing over which loans have been secured, and have continued to support all of their tenants and borrowers. No significant problems have been identified or encountered.

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 re-let 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 properties owned by the Fund are maintained at a high standard and all legal requirements are dealt with.

9.4 During 2020 new safety procedures for visits and repairs were introduced and altered 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 previous Support Assistant of the Fund Mr John Lunn retired in the summer of 2020 and his successor Mrs Selena MacArthur has been in post since November 2020. The Fund wishes to thank Mr Lunn for his service.

11. MEMBERSHIP

11.1 Mr Gavin Burt has served an initial four-year term as a Trustee. He has decided not to seek a further four-year term. The Fund wishes to thank Mr Burt for his service.

11.2 The Trustees would be pleased if the General Assembly would agree to the appointment of Mrs Sharon Anne Ho as a Trustee of the Fund.

In the name of the Trustees

MARYANN R RENNIE, *Chair*
DOROTHY U ANDERSON, *Deputy Chair*
HAZEL BETT, *Secretary*

Appendix 1

| Assistance provided | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Number of Ministers retiring * | 29 | 37 | 33 |
| Percentage assisted with a house to rent | 7% | 11% | 6% |
| Percentage assisted with a house purchase loan | 3% | 5% | 9% |
| Total percentage assisted | 10% | 16% | 15% |
| Instances of assistance provided* | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
| Retiring Ministers | 3 | 6 | 7 |
| Ministers already retired | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Widow(er)s & Civil Partners | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Spouses | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 9 | 10 | 11 |

*Assistance may be provided in a different calendar year to that in which the Minister actually retires

| <i>Tenants as at 31st December</i> | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ministers | 123 | 130 | 131 |
| Widow(er)s & Civil Partners | 51 | 55 | 59 |
| Spouses | 9 | 7 | 8 |
| Commercial rental | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Vacant | 11 | 8 | 11 |
| <i>Borrowers as at 31st December</i> | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
| Ministers** | 72 | 73 | 75 |
| Widow(er)s & Civil Partners | 38 | 39 | 41 |
| Spouses | 0 | 0 | 0 |

** 3 Ministers have dual loans

Appendix 2

| Rental Housing | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
| Total number of houses owned at 1st January | 203 | 212 | 222 |
| Houses purchased during year | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Total cost of purchases | £641,673 | £783,000 | £948,060 |
| Average house price | £160,418 | £156,600 | £158,010 |
| | | | |
| Houses sold during year | 10 | 14 | 16 |
| Total amount realised | £1,599,297 | £2,250,674 | £2,653,013 |
| Average proceeds | £159,930 | £160,762 | £165,813 |
| | | | |
| Houses bequeathed/gifted during year | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | |
| Houses relet during year | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | | | |
| Total number of houses owned at 31st December | 197 | 203 | 212 |
| | | | |
| Average market rent of property purchased during year | £8,175 | £7,848 | £7,620 |
| Average rent of new tenancies - Ministers/Spouses | £4,088 | £3,924 | £3,788 |
| Average rent of new tenancies - Widow(er)s | £2,044 | £1,962 | £1,928 |

Appendix 3

| Housing Loans | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
| <i>Long term loans outstanding at 1st January</i> | 112 | 118 | 121 |
| Value of loans outstanding | £6,337,955 | £6,516,250 | £6,456,150 |
| New loans granted during year | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Additional loans granted during year | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Value of loans granted | £252,500 | £137,205 | £290,500 |
| Loans fully repaid during year | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| Loans partially repaid during year | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Value of loans repaid | £348,705 | £315,500 | £230,400 |
| Long term loans outstanding at 31st December | 110 | 112 | 118 |
| Value of long term loans outstanding | £6,241,750 | £6,337,955 | £6,516,250 |
| | | | |
| <i>Short term Bridging Loans outstanding at 1st January</i> | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Value of Bridging Loans outstanding | £0 | £80,000 | £0 |
| Bridging loans granted during year | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Value of Bridging Loans granted | £0 | £40,000 | £140,000 |
| Bridging loans repaid during year | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Value of Bridging Loans repaid | £0 | £120,000 | £60,000 |
| Short term Bridging Loans outstanding at 31st December | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Value of Bridging Loans outstanding at 31st December | £0 | £0 | £80,000 |

Appendix 4

| Outstanding Commitments at year end | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| For next 5 years | | | |
| Houses to rent | 23 | 20 | 19 |
| Housing Loans | 9 | 12 | 12 |
| Value of outstanding commitments | £5,550,000 | £4,552,075 | £4,444,000 |
| | | | |
| Preliminary Applications | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 |
| For those retiring between 5 - 10 years | 2 | 3 | 2 |

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Welcome the Guild's Strategy for 2021-24, "Look Forward in Faith" and its annual themes, "Lights and Bushels", "Wee Seeds, Big trees" and "New Wine, New Wine Skins". (Section 1.2.1)
3. Commend the Guild on its efforts to maintain contact with and involvement of its membership during the Covid-19 pandemic. (Section 3)
4. Commend the Guild on its fund-raising and twinning.
5. Celebrate the success of the Guild's Partnership Projects from 2018-21 and the raising of over £516 000. (Section 3.9 and Appendix)
6. Note and welcome the Guild's new Partnership Projects for 2021-24. (Section 4.17)

Report**1. INTRODUCTION****1.1 Reflecting and projecting**

1.1.1 There is a very real temptation to focus this report on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the work of the Guild, as that has been the overpowering, defining matter since March 2020.

1.1.2 Whilst the report will indeed acknowledge the virus, its aim is to look ahead to better times, to times when we can learn from our experiences, take account of our losses (both operational and human) and seek to concentrate on the things we can control and the opportunities that lie before us.

1.1.3 The report is written with a sense of optimism and determination at its heart, but it should also be noted that the Guild has faced enormous challenges in terms of income from capitation fees, loss of income for the current Projects and the general, fundamental, loss of fellowship through the lack of meetings at every level and especially in local groups.

1.1.4 A number of groups have said they will not be re-starting and that is a loss to the Guild, but also to the congregations of which they are part.

1.2 "Look Forward in Faith"

1.2.1 The Guild's work is built on three year cycles, each named by an over-arching theme, known as the strategy. In 2021, we begin a new strategy and, given the uncertainties that we now face and the need for us to re-energise for the future, it now seems prescient that we chose **"Look Forward in Faith"** as our strategy for 2021-2024!

1.2.2 We intend to "Look Forward in Faith" with the Guild's usual enthusiasm and its willingness to embrace new ideas and new ways of working as times change.

This attitude is backed up by the three themes for 2021-2024:

- 2021-22 "Lights and Bushels"
- 2022-23 "Wee Seeds, Big trees"
- 2023-24 "New Wine, New Wine Skins"

1.3 Past, present, future

1.3.1 The report looks at three clear phases that we are living through....where we were before the Covid-19 pandemic, how we have been working through it and where we go from here.

2. THE GUILD PAST

2.1 Heading through the session 2019-20, the Guild was embarking on a range of exciting and innovative work.

2.2 Under our headings of communications, outreach, resources and events, we had so much to celebrate.

2.3. We were running Regional Gatherings to share thinking and practice and to offer mutual support; our "Big Sings" at Assembly and Christmas and the Annual Gathering in Dundee would be huge celebrations and would help support our work in Malawi and elsewhere; our Project Partnerships continued to touch the lives of thousands at home and abroad; we had planned a national conference to look at the future of the Guild in an ever-changing world.

2.4 The arrival of the pandemic immediately challenged the Guild at every level to re-assess its programmes and plans and to begin to find ways of reacting to it.

2.5 Never an organisation to avoid a challenge, the Guild immediately reacted positively and much has happened where maintenance and conservation could have been the reaction.

2.6 Plans were laid and methods of working adapted to meet the new environment and to keep the spirit of the movement alive.

3. THE GUILD PRESENT

3.1 During the course of 2020, a raft of work continued and new work was developed.

3.1.1 This despite the furloughing of staff and the retirement of one staff member and other pressures due to ill-health.

3.1.2 Thanks are particularly due to Karen Gillon, Associate Secretary, whose energy and commitment saw that communications and events in particular were continued over the year.

3.2 On-going work

3.2.1 Communications

3.2.1.1 The Guild's monthly E-news moved from a monthly to a weekly publication and is sent to over 1200 people and read by many more.

3.2.1.2 Our twice yearly magazine still went to every member and, along with the e-news, kept Guild people in touch with what the organisation was doing in groups, Guilds Together and nationally.

3.2.1.3 The Guild's Facebook page, with over 2300 "likes" continued to provide a great way to share information and news quickly.

3.2.2 Outreach

3.2.2.1 Much of what the Guild does to reach out beyond its own agendas is described elsewhere in this report.

3.2.2.3 That this is so, really emphasises how outward-looking and empathetic the Guild is.

3.2.2.4 There is no doubt that the efforts of the Guild's membership result in actions that touch the lives of many, many people, often in very dark times in their lives.

3.3 Resources

3.3.1 One of the most important functions of Guild Office is to provide resources that help Guild leaders run their activities.

3.3.2 Many Guild Conveners and others speak highly of the usefulness of the materials that are produced and great credit is due to those members of the National Council who are involved in writing these.

3.4 Events

3.4.1 The Guild is a fellowship and it is good to celebrate it.

3.4.2 This is done within the Guild by a series of events over the year, most of which are mentioned elsewhere in this report, including:

- Big Sings at the Assembly and at Christmas
- The Annual Gathering in Dundee
- Roadshows and Regional Gatherings

3.4.3 Clearly, we were unable to hold these events in person in 2020, but some still went ahead.

3.4.4 The Annual Gathering and the Big Sing at Christmas were taken on-line, with music enhanced by the voices of the Guild's "Virtual Choir", co-ordinated by Bea Nicholson from Guilds Together in North Ayrshire.

3.4.5 New Events

3.4.5.1 Given that few Guilds were able to meet in any conventional way and that fund-raising for the Guild's Project Partners was badly restricted, it was decided to meet the need for fellowship and financial support in new ways.

3.4.5.2 So, we had:

- A virtual soup lunch, which raised over £ 3000 for CrossReach
- A virtual afternoon tea for the projects
- A Lenten event to celebrate the 2018-21 Project Partnerships as they came to their end

We were also delighted (and very grateful) that, in January, the Moderator hosted an on-line quiz dedicated to the support of the Guild's Project Partnership Scheme.

3.4.5.3 These events can never replace the "real thing", but they have served to maintain a sense of fellowship and hope amongst many of our members and to provide a platform where the voice of the Guild was heard.

3.5 Meetings

3.5.1 Over the course of the year, meetings of the Guild's National Council and a number of conference events have been moved to an on-line basis.

3.5.2 Whilst this has been less than ideal, it has kept the work of the Guild going and has the benefit of allowing some people to attend meetings who could not do so in person and is a model which will continue to be used in appropriate circumstances.

3.6 Convener's Challenge

3.6.1 The challenge is, as the name suggests, chosen by the National Convener and reflects something of their own character and interests.

3.6.2 This year's challenge is to produce a photograph of a tree, a rainbow or both, the winner to be announced at the Annual Gathering in September.

3.6.3 Following as it does a bowling competition, a sewing one and a writing one, we see a pattern of diversity emerging that once again shows the breadth of the Guild and its membership.

3.7 External contacts

3.7.1 The Guild has continued to contribute greatly to the work of several groups, both within the Church of Scotland and beyond.

These include:

- Representation on the Faith Impact Forum's group on gender-based violence, Integrity
- Running a series of events in partnership with Faith in Older People
- Playing a full-part in events and resource development with the Inter-faith Group on Domestic Abuse
- Representation on the Scottish Churches' Anti-human Trafficking Group
- Reciprocal representation with CrossReach
- Close connections with the Scottish Committee of the World Day of Prayer

3.7.2 These partnerships continue the Guild's interest in work beyond its own and its desire to contribute to the broad work of the Church of Scotland and other bodies.

3.8 Malawi and other overseas work

3.8.1 The Guild's partnership with the Synod of Livingstonia in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) dates back to the 1997-2000 Project Partnership with World Mission to develop the Livingstonia Synod Aids Project (LISAP).

3.8.2 Over the years visits have been made to the CCAP's Women's and Men's Guild Conferences and thousands of pounds have been raised at Big Sings to support work there.

3.8.3 Twinning with our friends in Malawi

3.8.3.1 In August 2019, a number of Guild folk visited Malawi and began conversations that are forming the basis of a series of twinings between Guilds Together in Ayr and

District, North Ayrshire, Shetland and Dunbartonshire with Presbyterian Guilds in Bandawe, Milala, Dwangwa and Mzuzu respectively.

3.8.3.2 Above all, these connections are founded on mutual, prayerful support, with each partner bringing different gifts, experiences and resources to the twinning table. That support will be encouraged and enhanced by sharing information and ideas and by continued dialogue between the Church of Scotland Guild and the Umanyano (Women's Guild) and Madodana (Men's Guild) in the Synod of Livingstonia.

3.8.3.3 As always, our visit confirmed that there is much we can learn from their deep, faithful and spiritually profound commitment and energy. Their community focus, including pastoral support for disadvantaged members of their communities and income generating projects such as maize mills, Guild houses and a tailoring project are practical areas from which we can learn and to which we can perhaps offer assistance and encouragement.

3.8.3.4 This exciting development has already seen bonds being formed and both Shetland and Dunbartonshire have put together projects to fund the provision of Bibles for their twinned areas, working with the Bible Society in Scotland and in Malawi to see this work carried out. This collaborative project which enables effective community-based evangelism is an example of the kind of partnerships we will be developing.

3.8.4 Raising the roof...Big Sings and Matope Church

Also as part of the 2019 visit, we were able to present a cheque for almost £ 8000 to fund the roofing of a new church for the Matope congregation in Mzuzu, a project that will allow space for the 3000 people who want to attend services every Sunday to do so and for the work of the congregation to continue to grow.

3.8.5 Malawi Fruits

A highlight of the visit to Malawi was to see the work of our project partner, Malawi Fruits, at first hand. The work of this project is truly transformational, seeing farmers increase yields by a factor of three, seeing them produce two or three crops instead of one, seeing them diversify into cash crops brought home the reality of what Malawi Fruits are achieving. The provision of solar irrigation pumps and poly-tunnels are simple things with complex results.

3.8.6 Solar light for Schools

3.8.6.1 A chance conversation with the leader of a project providing solar lights for schools has led to a new piece of work for the Guild.

3.8.6.2 The provision of a solar powered lighting unit for primary schools hugely extends the scope of those schools to provide evening tuition and homework clubs, as well as opening them to the possibility of providing a space in which adults can attend evening classes, something which benefits women in particular.

3.8.6.3 Funding from this session's Big Sings is likely to allow us to provide systems for twenty four schools in the areas where we are building our twinning arrangements.

3.8.6.4 Over the four year life of the unit, it is estimated that an additional 3200 hours of study time will be possible. Multiply that by twenty four and the number rises to 76,800 hours.

3.8.7 India

The Free to Live Trust works with the children of sex workers in the Indian city of Pune. These children are at huge risk and it is to the enormous credit of the Trust that they work in a dangerous and challenging environment to offer the children and women a place of safety. Not only of safety, but taking them to a location away from the city and offering them security, food and education.

3.8.8 Zambia

3.8.8.1 In Zambia, the Guild is partnering the World Mission Council in the "Journeying Together" project, supporting teenage mothers and their children as they look to develop skills and knowledge that will allow them to earn more money, eat healthily and gain educational qualifications. The project works with these young women who face enormous cultural and economic hurdles, but do so with determination and positivity.

3.8.8.2 In March 2020, a group of Guild members spent a week visiting and working with the "Journeying Together" project.

3.9 Guild Partnership Projects

3.9.1 The pandemic has had a major effect on the ability of the Guild to raise fund for its current Partnership Projects and to hear from the projects directly.

3.9.2 This is a major source of regret to us as we know the incredible value of the work that these projects undertake and the effect that work has on the lives of people in their care and who they support.

3.9.3 The six projects come to an end this year and we wish them all every success in the future as they continue to touch lives in so many ways.

3.9.4 The six projects that have run from 2018-21 are:

- **BB Scotland** on their project "Faith in Younger People", looking to support young leaders, encourage membership and develop Christian education within the BB.
- **The Free to Live Trust**, "Seema's Project", working to support sex workers and their children in Pune in India.
- **CrossReach's** project "Join up the dots", addressing loneliness, isolation and mental health issues.
- **Malawi Fruits** and a scheme to encourage, support and train young farmers, entitled "Growing the Future."
- **World Mission's** work with young mothers in Zambia, "Makeni Mother and Child Centre."
- "Port Chaplaincy in Scotland" with the **Sailors' Society**, aiming to provide a chaplaincy service in every port in Scotland.

3.10 Operational Changes

3.10.1 Over the past two years, the Guild has made a number of changes to its operations at National Level.

3.10.2 One of the most significant has been the pairing of its National Vice-Conveners with regions of the country to offer a network of support and personal contact to our Guilds Together groupings.

3.10.3 This has added a personal touch to these connections and has already proved very welcome from both the national and regional perspectives.

3.10.4 On a wider note, this system helps the Guild reflect on changes to Presbytery structures and how that might affect us.

3.10.5 Conversations are already underway around the emergence of the Presbyteries of Fife and Clyde, with the expectation of more to follow.

3.10.6 Having not reported to the Assembly of 2020, we include here a short summary of what has been happening in the four areas.

3.10.7 North:

- During the 2019-20 session, we held Roadshow events in, Inverness, Tain, Pitlochry and Scone.
- Our National Convener for this year was from Shetland.
- We had National Vice-Conveners from Lochaber and Abernethy.

3.10.8 South:

- We held Roadshows in Dumfries, Rhins, Ayrshire, Irvine and Kilmarnock.
- We had a National Vice-Convener from Dumfries.

3.10.9 East:

- There were Roadshows in Dundee, Dalgety Bay, Kirkcaldy, Wormit, and Dalkeith.
- We took part in the Ministries Council's Candidates' Conference in St Andrews.
- Our Annual Gathering took place in the Caird Hall in Dundee.
- At the General Assembly the Guild Big Sing and Heart and Soul saw us working in Edinburgh.

3.10.10 West:

- Here there were Roadshows in Dumbarton and in Motherwell
- In December 2019, we had our Christmas Big Sings in St George's Tron Church in Glasgow, with around 600 people attending the three services needed to satisfy the demand for tickets.

3.10.11 Whilst these lists relate to the 2019-20 session, they give a flavour of the national coverage that work emanating from the National Council has produced. They do not include the vast array of events, services and experiences that the regional and local Guilds produce. Neither do they include over 50 speaking engagements undertaken by the National Convener and others from the leadership team and occasions when the Guild has been represented at events run by other, similar organisations.

3.10.12 The various events listed above had a total of over 4000 people in attendance and we can only guess at the "knock-on" effect that the motivation these people found in these events has had within the Guild and within the wider Church of Scotland.

3.11 Term of Office of the National Convener

3.11.1 The emergence of the Covid-19 virus and the resultant lockdowns had a debilitating and profound effect on all of the work of the Church of Scotland Guild.

3.11.2 One of these effects was on the experience of the National Convener, with her year of office seemingly curtailed and her opportunity to report to the General Assembly lost.

3.11.3 However, from challenge comes opportunity and innovation.

3.11.4 By reflecting on the effects of the pandemic, we began also to reflect on the term of office of the National Convener, which ran from General Assembly to General Assembly, rather than in parallel with the traditional "academic year" session of most Guilds.

3.11.5 In terms of our own work, the Guild Convener was taking up office just as the Guild year was ending for the vast majority of our people.

3.11.6 Therefore, we made these changes:

- The term of office for the 2019-20 year was extended to September, ending at the Annual Gathering in 2020.
- The term of office now runs from the Annual Gathering in one year to the Annual Gathering in the next year.

3.11.7 This means that the National Convener will take up their post at a time of national focus and the beginning of Guild Week and will culminate in them addressing the Gathering again at the end of their term.

3.11.8 The terms of office for Vice-Conveners now reflect the same pattern.

4. THE GUILD FUTURE

4.1 As reported above, much of the work of the Guild has continued despite the limitations placed upon us by the pandemic.

4.2 Now, however, we begin to look ahead to a time when life returns to something approaching normality and when we can meet together in worship, prayer, action and fellowship.

4.3 At paragraph 1.2 above, we announced our new strategy for 2021-24, "Look Forward in Faith", with its themes:

- 2021-22 "Lights and Bushels"
- 2022-23 "Wee Seeds, Big trees"
- 2023-24 "New Wine, New Wine Skins"

4.4 In a very real sense, this is actually just a re-statement of what the Guild has always done. From its inception in 1887, when Archibald Charteris convinced the General Assembly (against some fierce and disdainful opposition!), through the next 134 years, there has always been a positive and often innovative spirit about the Church of Scotland Guild, grounded in its motto "Whose we are and whom we serve".

4.5 As we emerge from the time of lockdowns, it is the intention of the Guild to truly "Look forward in Faith" and to see this time as a new beginning, not just a return to old ways, but building on what we have learned from the dark days of 2020-21.

4.6 This will mean change and evolution, but change and evolution built on the thinking behind some words used in our Action Plan from 2015, which has already been the basis of much new thinking and practice.

4.7 Those words were:

"Change is about the acknowledgement of the present and the anticipation of the future.... It is not about criticism of the past!"

4.8 As we move forward, we do so building on our past rather than denying it.

4.9 Perhaps the most important thing that we have seen is the impact that losing fellowship and personal contact has.

4.10 Given that the Guild is so fundamentally about fellowship and service, we feel in a strong position to offer new hope and encouragement to our membership.

4.11 We will do that in many ways...in our events, our meetings, our resources, our conferences and our partnerships.

4.12 In our operations, we will aim to offer support where it is needed and sought.

4.13 That will include working to maintain the regional structure of Guilds Together, a crucial element in the maintenance of a national movement whose sum outweighs its parts.

4.14 It will mean finding new ways of planning and leading that overcome and alleviate the pressures that changing demographics and reducing numbers bring.

4.15 It will mean the Guild working nationally alongside the Forums, regionally alongside Presbyteries and locally within congregations and communities, taking a full part in the life of the church and playing an important role as the whole institution meets an uncertain future.

4.16 Not least in this will be, for us, our new Partnership Projects, which will have been announced by the time this report has been received by the General Assembly and which will once again see the Guild reaching out to people in times of adversity at home and around the world.

4.17 The new partners are:**BEAT**

"Blether with Beat", addressing issues around eating disorders

Home for Good

"A home for good... Finding homes for vulnerable children." Working on awareness raising and promotion of foster care.

Pioneers

Chocolate Heaven - changing lives through chocolate, supporting farmers in the development of fair trade chocolate manufacturing in an island in South East Asia

Starchild

"Finding the light in every child"....supporting children with additional needs and their families in Uganda

UNIDA (A Higher Education Institution in Vitoria, capital of the State of Espírito Santo, Brazil).

"Hear our voice!"...Training women for ministry and service in Brazil

Vine Trust

"Kazunu: Village of Hope, Tanzania". Building and supporting a village on the shores of Lake Tanzania.

5. IN CONCLUSION

5.1 This has been a difficult time, but this too will pass.

5.2 The Guild will re-emerge to face a future that we can see as full of opportunity. We can grasp nettles. We can cross bridges. We can dream dreams. We can see visions.

5.3 All of this we can do within our themes for the three years to come.

5.4 During that time, we will take our lights out from under bushels; plant wee seeds to grow big trees; find new ways of putting new wine into new wine skins.

5.5 All of this we will do with the words of our founder, Very Rev Professor Archibald Charteris, in mind:

'It is they who dream bright dreams that in the end deliver....do not be afraid or ashamed to announce splendid hopes. It is enthusiasts the world needs, and I pray you to be enthusiastic.'

In the name of the Committee

MABEL WALLACE, *National Convener*
IAIN WHYTE, *General Secretary*

Appendix**Guild Finances 2020**

| General Fund Income | £ | General Fund Expenditure | £ |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Members' Contributions | 191,396 | Management and admin | 179,968 |
| Donations and Grants | 17,004 | Objects Expenditure | 10,593 |
| Sales | 2,484 | Cost of sales | 1,462 |
| | | | |
| Project Support | 22,262 | | |
| Other | 21,088 | | |
| Total | 254,234 | Total | 192,023 |

Project Donations 2018 to 28/2/2021

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| CrossReach Join up the Dots | £98,665.39 |
| Sailors' Society A chaplain in every port | £74,823.72 |
| Boys' Brigade Scotland Faith in Young People | £90,778.11 |
| World Mission Council Journeying Together | £76,623.70 |
| Malawi Fruits Growing the Future | £82,187.36 |
| Free to Live Trust Seema's Project | £92,941.05 |
| Total | £516,019.33 |

Mabel Wallace, National Convener

Mabel Wallace, whose term as National Convener will conclude at the Guild's Annual Gathering on 4 September, has led her own Guild in Duncansburgh MacIntosh Church in Fort William as well as Lochaber Guilds Together over many years. She has served on the Guild National Council as the representative of Lochaber, as a Committee Convener, as National Vice-Convener and now as National Convener. Mabel has served as Convener during one of the most unusual periods of the Guild's existence and the whole movement thanks her for her enthusiastic, encouraging and above all faithful service in her role. We wish her every blessing for the future.

IAIN WHYTE, *General Secretary*

THEOLOGICAL FORUM MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report
2. Commend Section 3 "Being Confirmed, Professing the Faith, Sharing Communion" as an exploration of Profession of Faith/Confirmation and church membership. (*Section 3*)
3. Receive the report "Westminster, Confessions and the Church" (*Appendix*) as an interim response to the instruction given by the General Assembly of 2018.
4. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to discuss the questions laid out in Section 23 of "Westminster, Confessions and the Church" (*Appendix*) and respond to the Theological Forum by 31 December 2021.
5. Instruct the Theological Forum to bring firm proposals regarding the confessional standards of the Church to the General Assembly of 2022.

Report**1. INTRODUCTION**

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

- (a) To 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) To express the theological vision of the Church in its worship, fellowship, witness and mission in and beyond contemporary Scotland;
- (c) To 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) To draw to the attention of the General Assembly theological matters which the Theological Forum considers to be of pressing contemporary relevance;
- (e) To 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 throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and over the last two years has concentrated on those issues assigned to it by the 2018, 2019 and 2020 General Assemblies. Its work has been carried out through substantial reading, discussion, attendance at conferences, 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.

1.3 The Forum was due to report on Profession of Faith and the Westminster Confession of Faith at the 2020 General Assembly. As this was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Forum now offers the following Report and Appendix, providing an update both on work undertaken throughout 2019-2020, and throughout 2020-2021.

2019-2020**2. WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH**

The General Assembly of 2018 instructed the Forum to review the status of the Westminster Confession of Faith, and to report to the General Assembly of 2020. As part of its work on this issue, the Forum commissioned four papers and organised a conference titled *Westminster, Confessions and the Church*, which was held at New College on Wednesday 8 May 2019^[1]. The Forum's report, contained in the Appendix, is offered as an interim contribution; we hope to bring firmer proposals to the Assembly of 2022.

3. PROFESSION OF FAITH**Being Confirmed, Professing the Faith, Sharing Communion**

This section, in response to instructions from the General Assembly, explores the meaning and nature of Profession of Faith/Confirmation within the Church, and relationships with Baptism, Communion and membership. It sees Profession of Faith and Confirmation as aspects of expressing commitment to Christ and the church, publicly in worship, which should be seen principally as theologically rich and pastorally helpful to individuals and to congregations.

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 At the 2018 and 2019 General Assemblies, the Theological Forum was instructed “to consider the place of Profession of Faith (Admission to the Lord’s Supper or Confirmation) and sharing Communion in today’s Church,” and to “explore the concept of church membership in relation to age.”

3.1.2 The Forum welcomed these instructions, particularly in relation to the Forum’s previous work on children and Communion. A working group was set up to consider the theological, pastoral, ecclesiological and legal considerations surrounding Profession of Faith/Confirmation and Communion, as well as how these considerations might influence discussions on church membership.

3.1.3 As part of this ongoing work, the working group also collaborated with the Mission and Discipleship Council, following the instructions received at the 2018 General Assembly:

10. *Instruct the Council, in collaboration with the Theological Forum, to develop creative, instructive and grace-filled pathways for the spiritual development of children and young people in order to support congregations in welcoming them to the Lord’s Table.*
11. *Commend the work done on the ‘Children, Young People and Communion Survey Findings 2018’ and instruct the Council in consultation with the Theological Forum to produce a resource on the theology and practice of Communion in the 21st Century Church of Scotland.*

3.1.4 The resource “Together at the Table”^[2] was produced as part of an initiative to provide resources for local congregations as they consider the theological issues, pastoral importance and practical considerations surrounding Profession of Faith/Confirmation and Communion.

3.1.5 The aforementioned activities have been particularly pressing insofar as there are growing concerns about low and declining numbers of children and young people in local congregations.^[3] Not only are there increasing numbers of local congregations with no children or young people in regular attendance, but the mode and depth of engagement characterised by those who do attend is concerning. Recent years have seen a significant decrease in children being baptised, and a great many congregations do not report children or young people receiving Communion. Often this is due to the fact that there simply are no children or young people in attendance, but it is also the case that many congregations still do not admit children or young people to Communion in the first place (even though Church legislation has permitted this since 1992).^[4] The Forum would like to draw attention to the strong theological rationale for admitting children to the Table, laid out in its 2018 Report^[5] and accepted by the General Assembly, and we encourage local congregations to take seriously the developmental, theological, and communal importance of welcoming children and young people to Communion.

3.1.6 With this concerning context in mind, the central conviction arising from the Forum’s work on issues surrounding Profession of Faith/Confirmation in particular is the affirmation that while Profession of Faith/Confirmation has been decoupled from its previous function as Admission to the Lord’s Supper, the theological, pastoral and communal importance of these rites remains as significant as ever. Further, it seems clear that the personal and corporate significance of Profession of Faith/Confirmation requires that pastoral sensitivity and flexibility be encouraged within local congregations. These rites may rightly be seen not as rigid templates to be followed in precisely the same manner in all times and all places. Rather they can be recognised as relational, communal, educational and spiritual processes allowing for individuality, creativity, and pastoral sensitivity to the specific needs and contexts of

the individuals undergoing Profession of Faith/Confirmation within the broad range of different congregational settings.

3.2 Theological Dimensions of Confirmation/ Profession of Faith and Communion

3.2.1 The history of Confirmation/Profession of Faith within the Church of Scotland is complicated. There may indeed be some confusion about Confirmation and Profession of Faith: Are these equivalent? If so, why do we have two different terms to refer to the same rite? (Or more – people popularly speak in this context of “joining the church.”) If they are not equivalent, what is the difference between Confirmation and Profession of Faith? Then there are questions around the relationship between Confirmation and Profession of Faith on the one hand, and Admission to the Lord’s Supper on the other. Moreover, those familiar with the history of Confirmation may be concerned about the rite’s origin as a sacrament: why should the Church of Scotland practise Confirmation, when our theology does not recognise the sacramental status or function with which it was originally associated? Responding to these questions requires some awareness of the Church’s evolving use of and legislation surrounding Confirmation/Profession of Faith, and an appreciation of the Church’s *dynamic* theological relationship with such rites – in all their historical particularities.

3.2.2 For much of the Church of Scotland’s history, Profession of Faith was considered a requirement for partaking in the Lord’s Supper. Children were usually baptised as infants, and later, usually as teenagers, made a public Profession of Faith. While there was of course variation in the way people were prepared, including the form of any classes or services, the rite itself was seen as officially admitting the young person to Communion. In the service, young people would be invited to make a Profession of Faith, articulating their commitment to a life of faith and to the local congregation. The General Assembly of 1706 enacted that “At the first admission of any to the Lord’s Supper, ministers should put the persons to be admitted in mind of their parents’ engagement for them in Baptism, and bid them explicitly and personally to renew their baptismal covenant to be the Lord’s, and to live unto Him and serve Him all the days of their life.”^[6]

3.2.3 It was only in the mid-nineteenth century that the language of Confirmation began to make its way in the Church of Scotland, influenced by the usage of the Episcopal Church. By 1923, in *Prayers for Divine Service: By Authority of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*^[7], the title of the service admitting people to Communion has become *Form and Order for the Confirmation of Baptismal Vows and Admission to the Lord’s Supper*.

3.2.4 The link with Baptism is made explicit here, as a confirmation (by the person when mature enough to confess their own faith) of baptismal vows. But the sense may also be of a confirmation in this rite of the Spirit’s action in Baptism. Hence, Confirmation and Profession of Faith are two aspects of a single service: Confirmation is a rite in which the Holy Spirit’s seal on the individual is symbolically recognised or ‘confirmed,’ and the Profession of Faith is a public commitment to pursue a life of faith in accordance with one’s baptismal vows (or reflecting the vows made by the child’s parents and church family). The ceremony is thus a single event with two theological emphases: the symbolic Confirmation of the Holy Spirit’s seal on the individual’s life, and the public Profession of Faith and commitment to pursue a life of faith and service in the Church. In addition to once functioning as the route of admittance to Communion, Confirmation has also been seen as admitting the individual to all the privileges and responsibilities of membership “within this congregation of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.”^[8] The service includes promises regarding commitment to God and to the church.

3.2.5 Here it is important to note the symbolic nature of the Confirmation rite within the Church of Scotland.

Confirmation has its historical roots in the pre-Reformation Catholic Church, which recognised Confirmation as a sacrament which made a real change in the relationship between the confirmed individual and the Holy Spirit. Because of the distinctively reformed theological approach of the Church of Scotland, Confirmation in the Church is not seen sacramentally: Confirmation is not theologically necessary for a person to receive the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in their life.

3.2.6 However, this historical and theological reality need not be seen as detracting from the theological and pastoral value of Confirmation/Profession of Faith. Rites and practices that enable, facilitate and encourage spiritual growth and maturity within the context of a nurturing community can be affirmed as *theologically meaningful*, even if they are not strictly necessary for a person to exist in right relationship with God. With this in mind, it remains to articulate how the Church might view Confirmation/Profession of Faith as pastorally significant, developmentally meaningful, and communally enriching rites that can be creatively tailored to local and personal contexts.

3.2.7 Within the Church, children have been admitted to Communion since 1992, subject to the approval of the Kirk Session. (As stated above and in our Report of 2018, the Forum would encourage the inclusion of children in Communion). Church of Scotland legislation around Communion is permissive, recognising along with James B. Torrance that “God’s Covenant Love (held out in Baptism and the Lord’s Supper) is unconditioned by any considerations of worth or merit or good works – unconditioned even by faith and repentance.”^[9] Baptism and Communion are *both* ‘signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace,’ operating independently of individual merit and performance. Given this theological logic, there is no requirement in principle for an individual to go through Confirmation/Profession of Faith prior to receiving Communion. Church legislation reflects this theological logic, such that there is no legislative necessity to be confirmed before participating in Communion. In other words, Confirmation/Profession of Faith has been decoupled from Communion, such that unconfirmed people are free to participate in the Lord’s Supper, subject to the policy of the Kirk Session. Again, this is not to *devalue* Communion, but to recognise the nature of the unearned grace received in Communion. In short, the Church recognises that God’s grace goes before us all, prior to our own faith, drawing us to respond to that grace, in faith.

3.2.8 Even though Confirmation/Profession of Faith no longer functions as a requirement for Admission to the Lord’s Supper, there is still significant theological and pastoral warrant to encourage Confirmation and Profession of Faith. First, Confirmation/Profession of Faith is especially important in light of the Church’s practice of infant Baptism. When young children are baptised, they are welcomed into the universal body of Christ, and the local congregation commits to investing in the spiritual nurture and education of such children until such time as they are able and willing to make a personal commitment to Christ and the Church. A baptised infant is not yet capable of understanding doctrinal content or expressing personal faith, but this does not preclude the child from being fully embraced as a child of God and member of the universal church. However, the sacrament of Baptism is undertaken in the hope and expectation that the child will grow in the knowledge of the faith, developing both an awareness of the history, doctrine, and practices of the Christian church, and also a growing sense of personal faith and relationship with God and the Church. Therefore, Confirmation/Profession of Faith can be an important counterpart to the sacrament of Baptism, particularly when an individual has been baptised as an infant.

3.2.9 Second, and relatedly, Confirmation/Profession of Faith can function as an immensely important rite of

passage within the life of an individual. It is often (though not always) the case that an individual is confirmed and makes a Profession of Faith as a young person – a teenager, young adult, or even a pre-teen. These years of adolescence are developmentally pivotal, and significant rites of passage are experienced as particularly powerful, sacred and transformative. This is true not only of the young person’s individual faith life, but also of their sense of belonging and connectedness to the local congregation and universal church. The public act of committing one’s life to Christ and the Church in a Profession of Faith, in making promises of commitment, and the communal embrace and anointing of baptised individuals in Confirmation, can be powerful and important experiences for both individuals and congregations as a whole.

3.3 Practical and Pastoral Considerations

It is important to note that an emphasis on the pastoral importance of Confirmation/Profession of Faith allows plenty of scope for creativity, individuality and pastoral sensitivity to the needs of the individual and congregation. For example, it is increasingly the case that individuals are not baptised as infants, but as young people or adults. In such cases, it is possible that Confirmation classes or enquirers’ classes might be provided prior to Baptism. After this period of preparation there could be a service both of Baptism and Profession of Faith. It is also possible that a single Confirmation/Profession of Faith service might include young people who were baptised as infants, adults who were baptised only a week prior, or even, if appropriate, adults who have been confirmed as a young person but wish to make a new Profession of Faith. Services in the current *Common Order* (1994) of Baptism for an Adult and/or Confirmation (pp. 95-120) offer this helpful flexibility given the different journeys of faith which people make. Further, the education and pastoral support that precede Confirmation/Profession of Faith can be as immersive, creative and dynamic as possible, given the resources of the congregation or Presbytery. Confirmation/Profession of Faith services themselves are also opportunities for creativity and a variety of ways of articulating one’s faith journey. Of course, it is already the case that individuals are continually making ‘unofficial’ professions of faith: public services of Confirmation/Profession of Faith, in some ways, merely recognise and facilitate the growth and commitment that are already present in many lives. Such facilitation can add to the significance of the spiritual growth process not only for the individual, but also for the congregation as a whole.

3.4 Age and Membership

Given that one effect of Confirmation/Profession of Faith is to render the individual a member of the Church of Scotland within a particular congregation, the question of age and membership may arise. Indeed, the Forum was instructed by the General Assembly of 2019 to examine just this question in relation to its work on Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation/Profession of Faith. There is no minimum age requirement for membership of the Church. It is thus imaginable that young people, even pre-teens, might well be confirmed and made full members of the Church within a congregation, stepping into the privileges and responsibilities of membership. After extensive discussion and consideration of these matters, the Forum is not unduly concerned by this possibility. We see no theological reason for an age requirement whose effect is to exclude young people from congregational decision-making processes. Rather, the Forum would urge pastoral discretion on the part of parents, ministers, and Kirk Sessions as young people are known, educated and supported on an individual basis. This recognises individual differences in spiritual, mental and emotional maturity, and allows for appropriate flexibility within individual church families.

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Forum wishes to reaffirm the theological and pastoral importance of Confirmation and Profession of Faith as vital and powerful opportunities in the lives of individuals and congregations. Confirmation/Profession may no longer be required for admission to Communion, but the educational, spiritual and communal importance of these rites is no less rich for that. As local congregations examine anew the creative and pastorally sensitive possibilities for regularly facilitating Confirmation/Profession of Faith, it is hoped that the congregations as a whole will be encouraged to examine anew pathways of spiritual transformation.

4. RETHINKING INITIAL TRAINING CURRICULUM

The Forum was asked by the Rethinking Initial Training (RIT) group to provide comment on proposals for a new curriculum framework, as part of the ongoing consultation process with academic providers on the future provision of Initial Ministerial Education. After reflection upon the outlined proposals, and through discussion with RIT representatives, the Forum provided written feedback which took into account both academic requirements and the current ecclesial context.

5. CONFERENCES

5.1 The Forum welcomes the following instruction that was received at the 2019 General Assembly:

Encourage the Forum to give consideration to hosting conferences to promote and encourage biblical and theological reflection.

5.2 The Forum is keen to organise future conferences, particularly if it provides the Forum the chance to direct the Church to areas of theological interest that it would like to explore more deeply. However, the Forum is also aware that financial and administrative costs would need to be taken into account.

2020-2021

6. REFLECTIONS ON ONLINE SACRAMENTS

Since the Covid-19 restrictions came into force in March 2020, many Church of Scotland congregations have been meeting for worship online. In the early stages of this transition to online worship, the Theological Forum, along with others in the church, began to consider this practice and to explore some of the theological questions raised by it. In accordance with section (e) of the Forum's remit, 'to stimulate wider theological reflection throughout the Church on key doctrinal, ethical and apologetic matters through the provision of appropriate materials and other activities', the Forum offered 'Reflections on Online Communion'^[10], which was published on the church website in April 2020, and also in the November 2020 Issue of the Church Service Society's *The Record*^[11]. These reflections are not prescriptions, or even firm guidance, but are an initial response to a rapidly developing situation.

7. THE FIVE MARKS OF MISSION

7.1 In May 2020, the Assembly Trustees provided an update report and webinar^[12], detailing their progress in the year since their appointment, and the new challenges and opportunities presented as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was reported that in this time of crisis, the church would need to scale back certain areas of its work, and that to help with this practical task of prioritisation, guidance would be drawn from the Five Marks of Mission, which are as follows:

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

7.2 The Assembly Trustees indicated that for work to continue to be funded, it would need to fall under one or more of the first three marks. If work were to fall under marks 4 or 5, it would need also to fall under 1-3, in "a fusion of proclamation and practice."

7.3 This approach gave rise to debate in the church and the Assembly Trustees invited the Theological Forum to write a brief report on the Five Marks of Mission for the Church of Scotland today. The Report^[13] was published on the church website in August 2020, and concluded that the Five Marks of Mission are definitional, offering "a broad, generous theological vision" for Christian mission, hanging together inseparably in proclamation and service. As such, they are "not particularly suitable for informing specific decisions about resource-allocation." Instead, the process of discernment of strategic priorities requires "a practical wisdom, with an awareness of specific local, regional and national contexts."

7.4 The Forum's contribution helped to inform the approach of the Assembly Trustees in their **Report**^[14] to the 2020 General Assembly. The Five Marks of Mission, along with the Church of Scotland's Vision Statement^[15], were subsequently adopted at the General Assembly as underpinning the Faith Action Plan^[16]. It is the Faith Action Plan that "will inform the difficult choices that will have to be made in order to balance the budget", a methodology that reflects the Theological Forum's observation on "pragmatic decision making – requiring practical wisdom."

8. ECOTHEOLOGY

8.1 Part of the Forum's remit is:

- (d) *to draw to the attention of the General Assembly theological matters which the Theological Forum considers to be of pressing contemporary relevance.*

8.2 The Forum is convinced that theological reflection on climate change, and the present ecological crisis more generally, falls clearly within this section of the remit, indeed also as part of our commitment to the fifth Mark of Mission, which is "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth."

8.3 That this is very much a live and pressing issue within the church today is demonstrated by the instruction received by the Faith Impact Forum in its Report^[17] to the 2020 General Assembly, as follows:

6. *Instruct the Faith Impact Forum to work with others to develop a strategy for the Church to transition both locally and nationally to net zero carbon emissions by 2030, reporting an outline strategy to the General Assembly of 2021.*

8.4 The Theological Forum took the initiative to proceed with work on ecotheology over the last year and, from our reading, discussion and consultation thus far, has identified the need for a robust, in-depth theological context for the ethical commitment to care for creation. The Forum hopes to bring a report on ecotheology to a future General Assembly. It is intended that this theological work be of service to the local church.

8.5 The Forum has also been in dialogue with the Faith Impact Forum over the following instruction received in Faith Impact's Report to the 2020 General Assembly:

8. *Instruct the Forum to report to the General Assembly of 2021 on the ethical, scientific and theological arguments for and against urgent disinvestment from oil and gas companies.*

9. CHURCH BUILDINGS

9.1 The Forum received an enquiry from a church minister in June 2020, asking whether the Forum would consider exploring the theology of church buildings. Then, at the 2020 General Assembly, theological questions around aesthetics, architecture, mission, and the biographical importance of space were raised in relation to the Report of the General Trustees^[18].

9.2 The Forum set up a small Working Group to explore the theology of church buildings and it has since become clear that theological and pastoral considerations, in addition to financial ones, are meaningful and important aspects of this discussion.

9.3 The Forum acknowledges that a reduction in the number of church buildings is necessary. However, it is hoped that an exploration of the theology of church buildings could help congregations to discuss and articulate the importance of their worship spaces, and help to support the decision-making processes of the church.

9.4 Dialogue has been opened with the General Trustees, and the Theological Forum looks forward to exploring this topic further.

10. FUTURE WORK

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.

11. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Forum is grateful to all those who have sought its views and listened so graciously to its comments. The Forum would also like to express its thanks to all those who participated in and contributed to the conference Westminster, Confessions and the Church. The Forum values the hard work, commitment and contribution of each of its members, and is particularly grateful to Professor Lindsay Sawyer and Professor Scott Spurlock, who both retired from membership at the 2020 General Assembly, and to Rev Dr Jean Kirkwood and Rev Alastair Symington, who will be retiring at this General Assembly.

In the name of the Theological Forum,

DONALD MacEWAN, Convener
LIAM JERROLD FRASER, Vice-Convener
NATHALIE MARES, Secretary

Addendum

Dr Sarah Lane Ritchie

The 2020 General Assembly marked the retirement of Dr Sarah Lane Ritchie as Vice-Convener of the Forum. During her three years in this role, she brought enthusiasm, expertise and rigour to the Forum's conversations, reflection and writing, particularly in contributing to our reports on reconciliation, and on Baptism, Confirmation/Profession of Faith, Communion and membership. We wish her well in her continued service in the academy and the church.

Rev Dr Donald MacEwan

Rev Dr Donald MacEwan completes his term as Convener of the Theological Forum at this year's General Assembly. Donald has served on the Forum since its inception, and prior to becoming Convener served as Vice-Convener. During his Convenorship he has led with wisdom and fairness, fostering open debate, and encouraging all members of the Forum to shape its work. This has enabled the Forum to reach consensus on a number of theological issues, with major reports being written on reconciliation and the Westminster Confession of Faith. He has combined this admirable work with his role as Chaplain of the University of St Andrews,

officiating at weekly services in St Salvator's, and supporting the emotional needs of students and staff. He has blessed the Forum and the Church with his leadership, and we pray God's blessing upon him in his future ministry.

LIAM JERROLD FRASER, Vice-Convener
NATHALIE MARES, Secretary

Appendix

WESTMINSTER, CONFESSIONS AND THE CHURCH (2021)

Following a successful overture to the General Assembly of 2018 regarding the confessional standards of the Church of Scotland, this report is the Theological Forum's interim response to the instruction to us, to review the current confessional position of the Church and explore certain possibilities for change. We discuss the functions of a confession within a reformed context, and offer comparisons with creeds, declarations and other confessions expressing the Christian faith. We examine the Westminster Confession of Faith^[19] in particular – its origins and emphases, and perceptions of its strengths and difficulties. The history is sketched of different forms of subscription to the Westminster Confession over time in Scotland which emerged partly in response to these difficulties, and of twentieth century attempts in the Church to alter the relationship with the Confession found in the status quo set out in the Articles Declaratory. We describe an alternative model for confessional standards found in the Presbyterian Church (USA) – a Book of Confessions – before laying out a range of options which the Church could take. We offer our own preferred option – that those exercising recognised ministries would assent to creeds and the first Article Declaratory, and commit to be guided by a range of confessions including the Westminster Confession, recognising in this commitment liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the fundamentals of the faith. We believe that this would preserve the essential functions of a confession of faith in a reformed church, as part of an ecumenical context, while recognising personal and theological integrity. We invite responses to the Forum by 31 December this year to help us offer firm proposals to the General Assembly of 2022.

1. Instruction

1.1 The General Assembly of 2018 passed an Overture from the Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles, resulting in the following instruction to the Theological Forum:

Instruct the 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.*

1.2 Since then the Theological Forum has been working to fulfil this instruction through reading the Westminster Confession, other creeds, confessions, catechisms and theological statements including the Articles Declaratory, theological reflection on creeds and confessions particularly Westminster, and reports to the General Assembly in this area; through the conference *Westminster, Confessions and the Church*^[20]; through ecumenical engagement with other

reformed churches; through correspondence; and through our own prayerful reflection and discussion. This report is an attempt to offer support and guidance to the Assembly as concisely as possible.

2. The functions of a confession of faith within a reformed church

Any approach to the status of the Westminster Confession of Faith in the Church of Scotland needs to have a grasp of the functions of a confession of faith within a reformed church, acknowledging that the weight of these functions will vary in different historical and geographical contexts. At the very least, these functions are as follows: proclaiming the faith in the society in which the church is found; teaching the faith within the church; providing a standard by which theological orthodoxy can be assessed and error exposed; providing a written standard of orthodox belief by which to judge ministers and elders, both in admitting them to their offices and in sustaining them therein; providing a rallying-point which defines and forms unity within a church and on occasion, society more broadly, and which acts to support opposition to perceived external threats to the church's doctrine, practice and existence. The Bible is the supreme rule of faith and life in reformed understanding; confessions are subordinate standards, subordinate to the Bible.

3. Creeds, confessions and other texts

3.1 Confessions belong to a broader family of documents which define and express Christian faith, including creeds, catechisms and declarations. Creeds, notably the Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed, both commonly used liturgically in the Church of Scotland, typically differ from confessions in the following ways. Creeds are shorter, their language more compressed. Creeds emerged from ecumenical councils, and have a universal intention. And creeds are capable of transcending their historical origins – though some confessions may share something of this capacity.

3.2 Other material can also function confessionally. This includes catechisms which often (though need not) use a question and answer format to teach the faith to children and others. In some parts of the church, particularly the Anglican Communion, authorised liturgy shares the confessional functions outlined above, for example in daily offices, prayers and sacramental liturgy and practice. And across the church, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs can have confessional function, usually for the individual believer rather than as a commonly agreed standard.

4. The writing of the Westminster Standards

There is only space here for a brief sketch of the origins of the Westminster Confession and its standing in the Church of Scotland. It was a product of the Westminster Assembly, a committee about 150-strong, set up by the English Parliament in 1643 to advise on religious reform. Within weeks of the Assembly's formation, in the context of Civil War, the English Parliament signed a 'Solemn League and Covenant' with the Scots to resist Charles I. The alliance included a promise to work for religious reform in England and Scotland, 'according to the Word of God and the Example of the best Reformed Churches'. As a result, eleven Scottish commissioners joined the Assembly as non-voting participants. The Confession of Faith was hammered out at the Assembly to construct a common platform for reform, along with the other 'Westminster Standards' (the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Directory of Public Worship, the Form of Church Government). In England its authority was short-lived: the English Parliament endorsed the Confession in 1648 but its official status was quickly undermined by Cromwell's policy of religious toleration in the 1650s, and ended when the Church of England reaffirmed the Thirty-Nine Articles in 1662. In Scotland it was a different matter. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland adopted the Confession gladly in 1647, and in time it became the touchstone for orthodoxy for its ministers and elders. It is still the principal subordinate standard of belief in the

Church of Scotland, and ministers and elders still subscribe to it when ordained and, for ministers, when inducted to a charge. (See section 9 below for details of subscription.)

5. Westminster Emphases

In 33 chapters, amounting to over 12,000 words, the Westminster Confession confesses the Christian faith with the following significant emphases: scriptural authority for faith; God's sovereignty found in his eternal decree; creation and providence in the light of God's sovereignty; election and predestination; that God has made two covenants – of works and of grace; promise and fulfilment in Christ; limited, penal, substitutionary atonement; the continuation of the moral law; the authority of state. There are no chapters on the Holy Spirit or evangelism. The distinctive theological influence is federalism (*foedus* is Latin for covenant), a development after Calvin, which was influential in reformed theology in the seventeenth century and beyond.

6. Description of Larger and Shorter Catechisms

The Larger and Shorter Catechisms, which also emerged from the Westminster Assembly, cover similar ground in question and answer format, along with teaching the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer. The Larger was aimed at the education of adults, the Shorter with children in mind. In many parts of Scotland, the Shorter Catechism has been the principal medium for the learning of Westminster theology, both in English and Gaelic, and was so taught within living memory. Many sermons will still refer to the opening question in the Shorter Catechism:

What is the chief end of man?

Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.

7. Perceived strengths of the Confession – theologically and symbolically

7.1 There are many people within the Church of Scotland and more broadly in the reformed family who perceive significant strengths in Westminster theology and in its being retained as a standard within the Church. While recognising that the Confession is a human document, they hold that the Confession obediently reflects the teaching of scripture in its covenantal framework for understanding God's relationship with humanity. This faithfulness to scripture they perceive in the Confession's understanding of the sovereignty of God, his will to elect, his power within creation, the role of Jesus as mediator, God's effectual calling of the elect to grace, salvation, and to justification, pardoning their sins for Christ's sake alone, giving them the Spirit of adoption, sanctified, and enabled to believe by the grace of faith; that such pardon requires repentance, that the saved shall persevere to the end, receiving assurance that they are in a state of grace.

7.2 Fundamentally, they see the church's reformed identity reflected in and constituted by the Confession's approach to scripture, the 'rule of faith and life', the Word of God whose author is God, in which the whole counsel of God regarding God's glory, salvation, faith and life is set down or deducible therefrom, and which interprets itself (chapter I). Such reformed identity they further find in the Confession's understandings of ethics, marriage, the church, the sacraments, and the last things. Many find its clear, systematic style and confidence of tone a strength, reflecting confidence in the clarity of divine revelation. Alongside theological considerations, they acknowledge the Confession's long, profound and continuing role in ordering the Church of Scotland (and other reformed churches), preserving the Church's distinctively reformed identity, and maintaining confessional identity with other reformed churches.

8. Difficulties the Confession faces in exercising the functions of a confession in the Church of Scotland

8.1 Almost since the time of its adoption by the General Assembly, the Westminster Confession has given rise to a wide range of objections, to its theological positions, its

status within the Church, and the nature of subscription to it. These include the following principal issues, though this list is not exhaustive.

8.2 There has been severe disagreement over theological positions on election and limited atonement, the sovereignty of God and eternal decrees. These objections are to the central spine of the Confession's theological approach. Opponents believe that the priority given to eternal decrees within the understanding of God leads to unacceptable consequences in doctrine, particularly in holding to predestination. It appears to these opponents that the grace and love of God thereby become secondary to God's sovereignty, that atonement is thereby limited only to those elected in God's eternal decree, that this denies hope of salvation to vast numbers of human beings, not least those who follow other faiths. Opponents believe strongly that the trinitarian revelation of God in scripture makes holding to God's prior commitment to eternal decrees untenable. Furthermore, such an emphasis on God's sovereignty spills over into a doctrine of Providence with very little room for creaturely freedom, or to find helpful explanations for the ongoing presence of so much evil in creaturely life.

8.3 A second and closely related area which has exercised many has been the Confession's approach to scripture. There have been two centuries and more of historical criticism of the Bible, forms of study of scripture which generations of candidates for ministry and others have explored in universities and private study, and which have informed their preaching and teaching. It is clearly now recognised that scripture is interpreted in the church and in theology. While the Westminster divines may well have been aware of the most current scriptural scholarship of their day, the Confession's approach to scripture itself barely recognises the need for interpretation. It was written before the tools of scriptural criticism were established, and it offers a particular pattern of interpretation of scripture which has long been disputed. Biblical study increasingly questioned Westminster presuppositions, for example, doubts over Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch, questioning the literal understanding of the six days of creation as 24 hour periods, or holding that the gospel writers were not themselves eye-witnesses. Indeed, William Robertson Smith was deposed from his Old Testament chair at the Aberdeen Free Church College in 1881 by the General Assembly of the Free Church for publishing the fruits of historical criticism which were believed to be incompatible with the teaching of the Confession.

8.4 A third area of deep concern in much of the world has been the Confession's position on the civil magistrate. In the United States of America, for example, the Confession has been criticised (and indeed amended) for being too open to civil oversight of the church.

8.5 A fourth area of strong disquiet follows in part from the fact that the Confession was written when many of our contemporary concerns had not emerged, particularly issues of mission, social justice, gender, science, climate and the environment. Opponents do not necessarily criticise the Confession for omitting such matters, but they do argue that as the principal subordinate standard, these omissions make the Confession inadequate to serve in such a role.

8.6 A fifth criticism often made is over the form of the Confession. Many people doubt that a document of this length, level of detail, confidence and force should have such a significant status within the church. Such a maximal text encourages narrow boundaries within belief, in areas of faith which have generated a vastly broader range of theological positions both before and after the writing of the Confession. There are many other ways in which Christians, even reformed Christians, have understood God's love, sovereignty, election, atonement and salvation – the most contentious matters – but also questions of moral theology and church life which the Confession lays down. Even though

the Confession articulates a form of reformed faith which resonates with some in the Church, there are many more who cannot in good conscience say that it truly expresses their faith in Jesus Christ.

8.7 A sixth criticism, that the Confession's polemic against the Roman Catholic Church made it deeply unhelpful in fostering good ecumenical relations and an anti-sectarian spirit, was addressed by the Assembly of 1986 which passed a Declaratory Act dissociating itself from the intemperate language employed by the Confession when referring to the Pope, the Mass and the Roman Catholic Church.

8.8 These and other criticisms have led many to question the need or indeed the rightness for ministers and elders to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

9. The necessity for various holding positions, including Articles Declaratory, up to the current Formula of subscription

9.1 The centuries following the adoption of the Westminster Confession saw the objections described above coming to the fore in debate, including trials for heresy in different Presbyterian churches. Reformed churches in Scotland found different ways of qualifying subscription to the Confession to make room for disquiet over the role of the civil magistrate, and over scriptural and theological concerns, particularly over predestination, limited atonement and the hope of salvation, and over increasingly scientific understandings of creation. The United Presbyterian Church passed a Declaratory Act in 1879 which they hoped would check and counterbalance some of the implications of the Confession, and which introduced "liberty of opinion" on such points in the Standards "not entering into the substance of the faith." The Free Church passed a similar Declaratory Act in 1892, while the Church of Scotland in 1910 changed its Formula of subscription to soften acceptance of Westminster in its entirety.

9.2 This process culminated in the Articles Declaratory of the Church of Scotland, which – along with the Basis and Plan of Union – paved the way for the Union of 1929, and forms the constitution of the present-day Church of Scotland. In the Articles Declaratory, the Church of Scotland sought to define its identity not only in relation to the State but in relation to its own reformed heritage and that of the Catholic – i.e. Universal – Church. These questions became most pronounced in discussions surrounding the First Article Declaratory. On the one hand were those who, in faithfulness to the ecumenical creeds and reformed tradition, argued for constraints to be placed on the Church's ability to alter its doctrine and redefine its core identity. On the other hand, some sought to maximise the Church's ability to reform its doctrine and self-understanding in light of present experience and knowledge, and not to be bound by the thought of previous times.^[21] A compromise was found in the First Article Declaratory. Specific fundamentals of the Catholic faith – Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement, Resurrection, and the Word of God contained in Scripture – were declared to be unalterable and of the substance of the faith. Yet this list of fundamentals was not intended to be exhaustive, and no specific creed or confession is mentioned in the First Article. As such, when office holders of the Church of Scotland are ordained, inducted, or admitted, they make vows and subscribe to a set of fundamental doctrines contained in the First Article Declaratory, which – following the Seventh Article Declaratory – cannot be modified in any way.^[22]

9.3 The Articles Declaratory of the Church of Scotland further set forth the Formula by which elders and ministers subscribe to the Confession. It is worth laying out the relevant parts of the Articles Declaratory in full:

- I. *The Church of Scotland is part of the Holy Catholic or Universal Church; worshipping one God, Almighty, all-wise, and all-loving, in the Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; adoring the Father, infinite in Majesty, of whom are all things; confessing our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, made very man for our salvation; glorying in His Cross and Resurrection, and owning obedience to Him as the Head over all things to His Church; trusting in the promised renewal and guidance of the Holy Spirit; proclaiming the forgiveness of sins and acceptance with God through faith in Christ, and the gift of Eternal Life; and labouring for the advancement of the Kingdom of God throughout the world. The Church of Scotland adheres to the Scottish Reformation; 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; and avows the fundamental doctrines of the Catholic faith founded thereupon.*
- 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, [Provincial Synods deleted by Act V, 1992], 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.*
- V. *This Church has the inherent right, free from interference by civil authority, but under the safeguards for deliberate action and legislation provided by the Church itself, to frame or adopt its subordinate standards, to declare the sense in which it understands its Confession of Faith, to modify the forms of expression therein, or to formulate other doctrinal statements, and to define the relation thereto of its office-bearers and members, but 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 shall be sole judge, and with due regard to liberty of opinion in points which do not enter into the substance of the Faith.*

9.4 As for the words used in services of ordination and induction, these are as follows:

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, Who, being ascended on high, has given gifts to God's people for the edifying of the body of Christ, we are met here as a Presbytery to ordain A. B. to the office of the Holy Ministry by prayer and the laying on of hands by the Presbyters to whom it belongs, and to induct him/her into the pastoral charge of

In this act of ordination the Church of Scotland, as part of the Holy Catholic or Universal Church worshipping One God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — affirms anew its belief in the Gospel of the sovereign grace and love of God, wherein through Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, Incarnate, Crucified, and Risen, He freely offers to all people, upon repentance and faith, the forgiveness of sins, renewal by the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, and calls them to labour in the fellowship of faith for the advancement of the Kingdom of God throughout the world.

The Church of Scotland acknowledges the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the supreme rule of faith and life.

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.

9.5 Questions to be put to Minister about to be ordained/inducted.

1. *Do you believe in one God — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and do you confess anew the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?*
2. *Do you believe the Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the supreme rule of faith and life?*
3. *Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church?*
4. *Do you acknowledge the Presbyterian Government of this Church to be agreeable to the Word of God; and do you promise to be subject in the Lord to this Presbytery and to the superior Courts of the Church, and to take your due part in the administration of its affairs?*
5. *Do you promise to seek the unity and peace of this Church; to uphold the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline thereof; and to cherish a spirit of love towards all your brothers and sisters in Christ?*
6. *Are not zeal for the glory of God, love to the Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire for the salvation of all people, so far as you know your own heart, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the office of the Holy Ministry?*
7. *Do you engage in the strength of the Lord Jesus Christ to live a godly and circumspect life; and faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge the duties of your ministry, seeking in all things the advancement of the Kingdom of God?*
8. *Do you accept and close with the call to be Pastor of this charge, and promise through grace to study to approve yourself a faithful Minister of the Gospel among this people?*

9.6 Question to Elders on Ordination and Admission.

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith; do you promise to seek the unity and peace of this Church; to uphold its doctrine, worship, government and discipline; and to take your due part in the administration of its affairs?

9.7 The Formula which is signed by Ministers, Elders, Deacons and Readers.

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

I acknowledge the Presbyterian government of this Church to be agreeable to the Word of God, and promise that I will submit thereto and concur therewith.

I promise to observe the order of worship and the administration of all public ordinances as the same are or may be allowed in this Church.

9.8 In short, the status quo is as follows:

- The Word of God contained in the Bible is the supreme rule of faith and life in the Church.
- The Church avows the fundamental doctrines of the faith contained in the Confession of Faith as specified by Article Declaratory I.
- The Westminster Confession is the principal subordinate standard.
- Ministers in being ordained and inducted assent that the Word of God is the supreme rule of faith and life.

- Ministers in being ordained and inducted further assent that they believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church.
- That Confession is the Westminster Confession, with the significant qualification – *recognising liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the substance of the Faith*.
- Elders, deacons and readers also assent to belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the [Westminster] Confession of Faith of this Church, subject to the same qualification as for ministers.

10. The central problem with the status quo

10.1 The obvious questions here are – What is the substance of the faith? What points of doctrine in the Westminster Confession do or do not enter into that substance? Neither the Articles Declaratory, nor any of the formularies used in inaugurating different ministries answer these questions explicitly. This allows ministers and others, who assent publicly to belief in the fundamental doctrines contained in the Confession, to feel able to do so even when they disagree with doctrines in the Confession. In signing the Formula, they rest their conscience on liberty of opinion.

10.2 For some this may be awkward but preserves a breadth of theological opinion among ministers and elders within the Church. For others it is a bad witness, that something can be so fundamental to the Church's identity with such a significant status in our Church constitution and in our understanding of what our ministers, elders and others believe, and yet which can be disregarded or profoundly disagreed with by people in various ministries. It is barely studied or even read by most people preparing for ordination, and lacks respect across much of the Church.

10.3 It is clear that, generally speaking within the Church of Scotland as a whole, the Westminster Confession in practice no longer exercises the functions of a confession in a reformed church, as laid out above – proclaiming the faith in society; teaching the faith within the church; providing a standard by which theological orthodoxy can be assessed and error exposed, and by which ministers and elders are judged; or defining and expressing unity internally and against external threats to the church.

11. 1968 to the present day: a resumé of attempts at change

11.1 Recognising these serious difficulties, from the late 1960s to the early 1990s a series of attempts were made to make changes to the status quo. Work done by the Panel on Doctrine was presented to a number of General Assemblies with the following proposed changes: removing references to a subordinate standard, adding the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as "declarations of the faith of the Universal Church"; declaring the Scots and Westminster Confessions to be "historic statements of the faith of the Reformed Church"; providing a set of doctrines defining the substance of the faith, and offering a series of more modern statements of Christian belief. In the end, while the General Assembly authorised in 1992 a new Statement of Christian Faith which is printed in the endpapers of the current edition of *Common Order*, it did not ultimately agree to any change in the status of the Westminster Confession.

11.2 It is important to recognise that opposition to change came from at least two broad groups in the Church. Proponents of reformed orthodoxy wanted no diminution in the status of Westminster as principal subordinate standard and in the implied status of its theological emphases. But many who would have understood themselves as liberal or progressive wanted no further defining of the substance of the faith, preferring the breadth of theological difference which the liberty of opinion clause appears to supply. It was this alliance that proved at a number of Assemblies to have enough weight and influence to prevent significant change.

11.3 Having reviewed the reports across these decades from the Panel of Doctrine, we find them to be part of a lengthy, unhurried and genuinely consultative process that encouraged theological discussion and engagement at the level of Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions. In many ways the debates have not changed radically since then, but our context is not the same forty, indeed fifty years on – internally in the Church of Scotland, ecumenically, and in relation to society. Nevertheless, their tone – eirenic, patient, open to views from across the Church theologically and geographically – remains a helpful model for today.

12. Exploration of the experience of the PC(USA) in having a Book of Confessions

12.1 The deliverance to the Forum instructs us in section (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.*

12.2 The Presbyterian Church (USA) has a Book of Confessions, and so it will be helpful to explore their experience. For them there is a largely positive meaning in having multiple confessions in the following ways.

12.3 First, they are glad to be a confessional church as the confessions express normatively who they are, what they believe, and what they resolve to do. Such confessions speak inwardly to the church, helping the church understand these questions for itself. They also speak outwardly as a depiction of the church's self-understanding with which others can engage.

12.4 Second, they see plurality as normal, plurality in how they express who they are, what they believe and what they resolve to do. No single creed or confession can sufficiently capture the breadth of their church in these fundamental questions. Moreover, no statement is final or infallible, so having a plurality ensures that each confession is open to the critique of the others, confirming their provisionality and fallibility, but also revealing their overlapping and divergent emphases, strengths and significance.

12.5 Third, a Book of Confessions is not parochial. Only two of the 12 documents originated in the USA – having so many originating elsewhere situates the church not only in the physical geography and history of the United States, but of the church throughout the world and across history.

12.6 Fourth, a Book of Confessions is unfinished. There is no back cover, as they put it. New documents have been added, and could be again, by agreement of the church. As the PC(USA) recognises, new confessions arise when there is an urgent need to clarify the faith from distortion, when under attack, or when there is new insight. All such situations could arise in the future.

12.7 A key question is where authority rests in a variety of standards. This is a question which leads us to examine the Formula of subscription or other ways of relating to the texts in the Book. American Presbyterian ordinands, before the development of a Book of Confessions, were asked, "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the [Westminster Confession] as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?" But now two of the questions asked at ordination are:

- "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the essential tenets of the Reformed faith as expressed in the confessions of our church as authentic and reliable expositions of what Scripture leads us to believe and do, and will you be instructed and led by those confessions as you lead the people of God?"
- And "Will you fulfil your ministry in obedience to Jesus Christ, under the authority of Scripture, and continually guided by our Confessions?"

12.8 In other words, they are to be guided by the confessions, but their obedience to Christ and instruction by scripture are prior in importance.

12.9 The PC(USA) sees in this the preservation of freedom and variety in the church, given the plurality of confessions and the absence of a defined list of essential tenets of the reformed faith. But they also see the preservation of authority and unity of the church in this approach. Scripture is the supreme standard of faith, but the confessions are also standards, albeit subordinate. The church's consensus (at the level of General Assemblies, synods and presbyteries) on the meaning of the confessions remains authoritative – and those who are ordained do not have unlimited freedom of interpretation.

13. Brief examination of a range of creeds and confessions

13.1 Clearly the question as to which creeds and confessions are included in any Book of Confessions is part and parcel of the question as to whether to have a plurality at all. We briefly set a number out below, in chronological order, again making no claims to be exhaustive.

13.2 *Nicene Creed.* This was agreed at an ecumenical council in Constantinople in 381 drawing on an earlier creed promulgated in Nicaea in 325. It is affirmed by most Protestant churches, the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church except for a significant disagreement over one word in the Latin text – *filioque*. The addition of this word, indicating belief that the Spirit proceeds from the Father *and from the Son* (*filioque*), is not accepted in Eastern Orthodox Christianity. *Common Order* encourages congregational affirmation of the Nicene Creed in services of Holy Communion.

13.3 *Apostles' Creed.* Attaining its final form in the eighth century, this creed, while not written by the apostles, reflects very early Christian theological formulations. Successive versions were used by baptismal candidates in affirming their faith, and indeed *Common Order* still encourages congregational affirmation of the Apostles' Creed in the sacrament of Baptism.

13.4 *Scots Confession.* This was written in four days in 1560 at the request of the Scottish Parliament by six ministers, but is largely the work of John Knox. It was the principal subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland until superseded by the Westminster Confession in 1647. Distinctively reformed, the confession begins with the triune God, before expounding the principal points of Christian doctrine giving particular weight to those questions on which the reformers diverged from the Roman Church. The writers make it clear that scripture is paramount, and the confession very much secondary. Indeed in the preface they make the following request: "gif onie man will note in this our confessioun onie Artickle or sentence repugnant to Gods halie word, that it wald pleis him of his gentleness and for christian charities sake to admonish us of the same in writing." This reformed understanding of the Church was underpinned by the reception of the *Second Helvetic Confession* (1561, adopted by the Church of Scotland in 1566) and the wide use of the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563).

13.5 *Westminster Confession of Faith.* This has been discussed in detail above.

13.6 *Short Statement of the Church's Faith.* Written by a committee convened by H. R. Mackintosh, and drawing on work from the United Free Church, this statement was approved by the General Assembly in 1935. Little known today, this is an intriguing work, which, as David Fergusson noted in his conference paper, is "trinitarian, Christocentric, sacramental, ecumenical, and engaged with the more critical social theology that had emerged in the churches by the earlier twentieth century."^[23]

13.7 *Barmen Declaration.* This was written and agreed, following a number of regional meetings, in May 1934 in

Barmen, Wuppertal, Germany. In six propositions, it proclaims the church's freedom in Jesus Christ, the Lord of every area of life. It was written in strong opposition to the "German Christians" who believed that the ideals of Hitler's National Socialism were in harmony with the Christian faith. The Declaration has proved inspirational in many different contexts when churches and Christians have felt under significant pressure to conform to political ideologies.

13.8 *Belhar Confession.* This was adopted in 1986 in South Africa, written by the Dutch Reformed Mission Church, the "coloured" church created by the Dutch Reformed Church. It emphasises the singleness of the human family, the call to reconciliation and unity in the church, and the divine desire for justice, and it rejects enforced separation of people. This Confession has been influential in contexts of racial and other separation between people.

13.9 *A Statement of Christian Faith (1992).* Mentioned above, this emerged from the last sustained exploration of the Westminster Confession in the Church of Scotland. Authorised for use in worship and teaching by the General Assembly of 1992, it follows broadly the layout of the Apostles' Creed while explicitly affirming in the third line that "God is love."

14. Options

14.1 To recap: we have explored the functions of confessions in a reformed context, the relationship which the Church of Scotland has had with the Westminster Confession, its emphases, perceived strengths and weaknesses, and the difficulties which have led to the current Formula of subscription with its significant liberty of opinion clause. We have described attempts to change the status quo over the past 50 years, and an alternative model from within Presbyterianism, the PC(USA) which is constituted by a Book of Confessions, with a significantly different form of subscription from the Church of Scotland's.

14.2 The Theological Forum has been asked not only to bring fresh consideration of these issues before the General Assembly but to advise the Assembly on the Formula of subscription. We wish to do so as follows: by teasing out the different parts which need to be assessed in any proposal; by offering some options as to ways forward (recognising that no such list could be exhaustive), by suggesting an approach which the Forum, following our deliberations, considers to offer the best way forward, and by then inviting the Church to spend time considering this report and the options we lay out, and to share these reflections with us to help produce firm proposals for a subsequent Assembly to consider.

14.3 There is a fairly complicated set of considerations which lie before us. The following parts will all need to be part of a coherent approach:

- What document(s) should be named in the Articles Declaratory as subordinate standards, if any?
- What form of relationship, subscription or otherwise, should ministers, elders, deacons, readers and others have with the subordinate standard(s)?
- Will each text have the same status, or could there be different levels of relationship?
- What status should liberty of opinion have?
- What should be said in the liturgies which inaugurate ministries?

14.4 We now lay out a number of basic possible options for the way forward, considering advantages and drawbacks, bearing in mind ecumenical considerations. We have chosen a number of options ranging from the status quo to the addition of other documents, with or without the writing of a new text, to give a sense as to how the considerations described above might work in practice in different combinations. This list is not exhaustive and some options could be slightly amended, or indeed could exist together with others.

15. Option (a) The status quo

15.1 This may appeal both to defenders of reformed orthodoxy, who like the retention of the Confession as principal subordinate standard, and (somewhat ironically) to those who wish not to subscribe to many of the tenets of reformed orthodoxy, and who favour the absence of a definitive description of the substance of the faith. It has the possible advantage that the very inconsistency regarding the Confession somehow holds the Church together. It may also appeal to those who feel that in a time of significant decline in the Church, and change in patterns of church life, ministry and central organisation, there is a lack of energy to embark on confessional change as well.

15.2 However, given the significance of the change which the Church is undergoing both within its own experience and in the context of society as a whole, there are strong arguments that our theological standards need to be assessed, and be augmented, as part of the ongoing process of being reformed. Moreover the main drawback of the status quo becomes more apparent as the years pass. How can it be good for a Church, whose people seek to worship God in Spirit and in truth, to subscribe to a Confession when many and possibly most of the Church's ministers and elders are convinced that in subscribing to it they do not have to believe it? Indeed such inconsistency embedded in church culture may inhibit exploration of the fundamental beliefs that form theological identity, and so prevent the Church from understanding itself, and expressing its identity more widely.

16. Option (b) The Westminster Confession as the sole principal guiding document but without a Formula of subscription, no matter how attenuated

16.1 In this option ministers and elders would affirm their Christian faith as they currently do in ordination vows (and their equivalents) but without these fundamental doctrines being defined by the Westminster Confession. Rather the Confession would be cited as the principal guiding document.

16.2 This would have the advantage of removing the main problem of the status quo – its inconsistency – while allowing those whose faith is significantly guided by the Confession to affirm that as part of their ministry, given its immense historical significance for the Church.

16.3 However in the absence of subscription, would the Confession have any salient function within the Church? Would that cause a significant breach with other churches in the reformed family?

17. Option (c) Dependence on Article Declaratory I

17.1 This approach would be similar to option (b) but would remove all reference to the Westminster Confession. Instead it would explicitly make reference to the summary of Christian faith in the First Article Declaratory (and possibly the Nicene and Apostles' Creed) as the faith to which the Church of Scotland adheres. However there would be no subscription in the services of ordination, induction and equivalents for ministries in the Church.

17.2 A possible benefit of this approach for some is that it would remove any lingering sense that the Westminster Confession has a particular role over and above any other historical confession, reformed or otherwise. Ecumenically it would reaffirm the Church of Scotland's identity within the Church Catholic.

17.3 However it may be seen as a clear drawback that removing all reference to the Confession will undercut the Church's identity as a reformed church. There is much more to a reformed identity than subscription to the theological framework of Westminster, but there is also more to a reformed identity than belonging to the Church Catholic. Even if the Westminster Confession offers a partial, historic expression of reformed theology, it would still be *reformed* aspects of the Confession that disappear from the Church of

Scotland's avowed identity if replaced with the Creeds and/or the First Article Declaratory.

18. Option (d) Retaining the Westminster Confession and adding further existing documents to a set of creeds and confessions with which the Church would be in formal relationship

18.1 This approach is a development of the proposed change which was brought to the General Assembly in the 1970s and which fell at the final hurdle. The Westminster Confession would be retained, but other documents would be added to the texts with which the Church would be in a formal relationship. These could include the ecumenical creeds, other reformed confessions, and other declarations and documents of faith from the Church of Scotland and beyond. A clear model for this is the Presbyterian Church (USA).

18.2 If the Church decides to broaden its named and acknowledged confessions from the Westminster Confession alone, how would that relationship be defined and articulated in services inaugurating ministries? We have noted that in the status quo, subscription has been seen for over 200 years as problematic, hence the allowance of liberty of opinion, arguably evacuating subscription of meaning. Subscription to a broad range of creeds, confessions and other texts seems to be equally in need of conscience clauses, if not more so, and equally as open to the critique made of the status quo. By contrast the approach taken in the PC(USA) removes the constraint of subscription but still ensures that ministers are "continually guided" by their (Book of) Confessions.

18.3 Note that one of the problems of *subscription* to a Confession is that it tends to see the Confession as nearly uncontested. All deviations from it are assumed to be mistaken unless proved otherwise. While there may be a theoretical possibility of arguing against a theological position in a confession on the grounds of scripture or the Lordship of Christ, in practice the Westminster Confession has functioned as being so close a proxy for scripture or Christ that such arguments are rarely successful. The history of heresy trials in the nineteenth century church in Scotland makes that clear.

18.4 To be *guided* by confessions, by contrast, seems a more fruitful way of integrating their insights with the ongoing revelation of God in scripture and as Christ is encountered in contemporary life. *Guided* maintains a position between, for example, being *accompanied*, which may lack the important sense of the confessions leading us, and, for example, *instructed*, which may be thought to lower the input of ministers or elders in exploring their faith for themselves.

18.5 A key potential difficulty with this is complexity in being guided by a number of confessions which have different emphases and positions, and which are not always in agreement with each other. And so it could be seen as a drawback that a set of confessions lacks agreement as to the essential tenets of faith. This may be thought to encourage a 'pick and choose' mentality, and make discipline difficult to maintain. Moreover, there are clearly questions over when, how and by whom documents would be added to the number. A further drawback could be the length and complexity of a Book of Confessions, which could deter some from engaging with the texts.

19. Option (e) A new confessional document, written from now within the Church of Scotland with ecumenical involvement

19.1 The Forum has also considered whether this is the time to consider the development of a new confessional text for the Church of Scotland with ecumenical partners. Confessions arise in times of theological ferment when there are competing accounts of the truth, in times of opposition from or to society or political authority, or when a new

church emerges which needs to articulate its theological identity, declare its boundaries and form unity among its ministers and members.

19.2 From these categories the clearest which could be thought to apply to the Church at this time is that of opposition from society – an opposition which can be exercised directly but is also found in indifference. The Forum is aware of the transformation taking place across the Church – rapid decline in members, Baptisms, weddings, Professions of Faith/Confirmations, ministers and charges, smaller congregations, a shrinking centre, the closure of church buildings, the loss of influence.

19.3 In the light of this transformation, there could be much to be gained in the development of a new confession, not least the encouragement of theological engagement at many levels across different age-groups within the church in Scotland. Such an expression may well be in contemporary language and media, reflecting concerns which previous confessions have not considered important enough to include – for example social justice, gender equality, and environmental concern. It may well bring to bear new insights into God which have emerged in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, helping us see the Westminster concerns of sovereignty and election in intriguingly new ways.

19.4 On the other hand, there is clearly a danger that the Church may not enjoy enough theological unity to produce a confession which would find broad support, or the energy to sustain its development. Indeed the attempt to agree a new statement could be counter-productive, taking up much valuable time and energy, and generating unhelpful tensions in the Church.

20. Option (f) Assent to creeds and the First Article Declaratory, and guidance from a set of confessions – the Forum's preferred option

20.1 At this stage in our reflection on the instruction from the General Assembly, the Forum believes that it is time for change in the Church's confessional position. We are minded to encourage the Church to adopt a combination of the approaches explored in options (c) and (d). In other words, we favour holding the ecumenical creeds (Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed) and Article Declaratory I as the subordinate standards to which ministers, elders and people in other ministries would assent, alongside the selection of a set of confessions and texts which the Church would formally acknowledge. In its early decades, the reformed Church of Scotland acknowledged a number of creeds and confessions – the Apostles' Creed, the Scots Confession, the Second Helvetic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism – and while the Scots Confession was superseded by the Westminster in 1647, it was never revoked. Adopting a set of documents now would be a return to the beginnings of reformed confessional practice in Scotland. At this stage the Forum has not arrived at a definitive sense as to which texts we would advise should be included in any Book of Confessions, and we look forward to reading responses from the Church on this question. Nor have we been sufficiently persuaded that this is the right time for the sustained collaborative work which any new statement would require, given the risks outlined above in section 19 – option (e) – though in principle we favour an open set of confessions to which others can be added.

20.2 Ministers and other office-bearers, as part of the service inaugurating their ministry – ordination or equivalent – would acknowledge acceptance of this set of confessions. At this stage we are drawn to the PC(USA)'s language of being "continually guided" by the Confessions. This set of confessions would include the Westminster Confession, and other confessions reflecting the Church's reformed identity, and its relationship with Scotland.

20.3 A possible wording for the third question to ordinands could be:

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith set out in the Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed and First Article Declaratory of this Church? Answer – I do.

20.4 A new fourth question might then be:

Will you be guided by the confessions in the Church's Book of Confessions, recognising liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the fundamentals of the Faith? Answer – I will.

20.5 This approach or something similar seems to us to retain the central functions of a confession in a reformed church – proclaiming the faith in society; teaching the faith within the church; providing a standard by which theological orthodoxy can be assessed and error exposed; and defining and expressing unity internally and against external threats to the church. It avoids the two clearest difficulties of the status quo – first, the lack of adherence by ministers and elders today to the Church's principal subordinate standard, the Westminster Confession, and second, because of the liberty of opinion clause, the absence of any clear summary of faith to which the ordained can be expected to adhere. It retains liberty of opinion for confessions but not for the fundamental doctrines of the faith. It retains scripture as the supreme rule of faith and life but broadens the range of theological interpretations of scripture which can inform us today, and which is in principle open to new expressions of the faith. It confirms the Church of Scotland's Catholic identity and strengthens its broader ecumenical relationships in adherence to the creeds, and confirms its reformed identity in the Book of Confessions by which we are guided. The Book of Confessions would indeed, as our instruction suggested, be a teaching resource for office-bearers, members and enquirers, particularly if made available online.

20.6 In both assenting to belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the ecumenical creeds and First Article Declaratory, and in promising to be guided by the confessions, there is room for interpretation. The Church recognises that each person being ordained will interpret the creeds, fundamental doctrines and confessions. But they will do so in the light of scripture as the supreme rule of faith and life, and under the authority of the Church to which they belong. This proposal maintains the Church's acceptance of constrained difference in its recent decision-making where people sincerely disagree over matters of doctrine and practice.

21. Legal questions

The Forum has consulted with the Legal Questions Committee over an earlier draft of this report. They have confirmed that it is legally possible for the Church of Scotland to alter, exchange, or remove its subordinate standard, using provisions stipulated in the Articles Declaratory, very probably involving a double Barrier Act process as set out in Article VIII. This means that the proposed change would require the approval of the General Assembly, then two-thirds of Presbyteries in two successive years, before final approval by the General Assembly. Furthermore it is legally possible for the Church of Scotland to alter, exchange, or remove its Formula of subscription for office holders, again as laid out in the Articles Declaratory. The particular form of Barrier Act mechanism required would depend on the precise nature of the change proposed.

22. Difference and reconciliation

22.1 The Forum is conscious that we are recommending significant change which will not necessarily be welcomed by all. But whether or not any change takes place over the status of the Westminster Confession, debating these questions may give rise to serious disagreement. We began our deliberations on these questions while in the midst of writing a report on reconciliation in the church, which was a helpful overlap of subjects. A quotation from that Report^[24] which was received by the General Assembly of 2019 may be of benefit:

We are never called in our faith to throw our hands up in despair at the lack of reconciliation between people, communities, factions and churches who have come to blows, and in whom bitterness remains. Instead, we are called to be ambassadors of reconciliation, calling people to accept the reconciliation from God and for that to flow into their human relations. We do not stop praying the Lord's Prayer because it is hard. Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. It is because it is hard that it is a prayer – we offer it to God, trusting that there are resources of grace beyond us which are shared with us, in our need.

We do so in the knowledge that reconciliation does happen, sometimes slowly, usually imperfectly, within the church. Other issues which have been lightning rods for disagreement, conflict and division have settled down over time, as people continue to live together in fellowship despite different views. Examples are patronage in the Church, ecumenical engagement with Roman Catholics and other Christians, divorce and the remarriage of divorced people, and women's ordination. While debate... may continue, the tone may increasingly be a calmer one of a reconciled community learning what it means to have taken a series of decisions and stayed together despite significant disagreement.

22.2 We learned in preparing that Report that disagreeing well and living together in reconciliation is more likely to happen in organisations including churches which allow time for people to talk, to know each other, to listen and understand the other's perspective, which allow space to talk of truth and justice, which do not rush to judgment, and which encourage decision-making by consensus. We would hope that these principles have been part (imperfectly no doubt) of the Forum's own deliberations so far, and will guide the Church's ongoing discussions of these issues.

23. Recommendation

23.1 Our recommendation therefore is that this report go to Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions for discussion, with the following questions, inviting responses to the Theological Forum by 31 December 2021. That timescale will allow the Forum to read and consider every response, and produce a report for the 2022 Assembly with firm proposals for the way forward.

- (i) Do you favour any of the options laid out in sections 15-20?
- (ii) Would you like to see any of the options combined?
- (iii) Are there any further options you would suggest as a good way forward?
- (iv) If you favour a set of creedal and confessional documents with which the Church would be in relationship, which documents would you like to see included? The texts described in section 13 will be available at <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/councils-committees-and-departments/committees/theological-forum> for consideration but other texts may be considered as well.
- (v) If you favour a new statement of faith, what aspects of the Christian faith would you like to see explored within it?

23.2 The Forum would then hope to bring a report to the 2022 General Assembly with proposals emerging from this 2021 report, its reception by the Assembly, and responses by Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and by other interested parties.

References

- [1] 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>
- [2] "Together at the Table", Mission and Discipleship Council, Church of Scotland, 2019. Available in hard copy and in digital format at the following web address: https://churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/62992/Together-at-the-Table-booklet.pdf
- [3] See "Together at the Table" https://churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/62992/Together-at-the-Table-booklet.pdf
- [4] Act V.15, Consolidating Act Anent The Sacraments http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1839/2000_act_05.pdf
- [5] http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/50214/Theological_Forum.pdf
- [6] <https://www.churchservicesociety.org/sites/default/files/journals/1938-1939-17-21.pdf>, p. 18.
- [7] See <https://www.churchservicesociety.org/sites/default/files/journals/1938-1939-17-21.pdf>, p. 19.
- [8] See the current *Common Order* (1994), p. 116.
- [9] James B. Torrance, "Some Theological Grounds for Admitting Children to the Lord's Table," in *Children at the Table*, ed. by David G. Hamilton and Finlay A. J. Macdonald, (Edinburgh: The Church of Scotland, 1982), p.5.
- [10] <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/councils-committees-and-departments/committees/theological-forum/reflections-on-online-communion>
- [11] <http://churchservicesociety.org/publications/record>
- [12] <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-structure/assembly-trustees/may-2020-update-report-and-webinar>
- [13] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/69749/Church-of-Scotland-Theological-Forum-Five-Marks-of-Mission.pdf
- [14] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/70111/3601-GA-Reports-to-the-General-Assembly-2020-V6.2.pdf, pp. 55-78.
- [15] <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us>
- [16] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/70111/3601-GA-Reports-to-the-General-Assembly-2020-V6.2.pdf, pp. 62-68.
- [17] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/70111/3601-GA-Reports-to-the-General-Assembly-2020-V6.2.pdf, pp. 78-97.
- [18] https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/70111/3601-GA-Reports-to-the-General-Assembly-2020-V6.2.pdf, pp. 103-123.
- [19] Full text can be found here: <https://www.pcaac.org/bco/westminster-confession/>
- [20] See endnote ^[1] for details

- [21] See Douglas Murray, *Freedom to Reform: The 'Articles Declaratory' of the Church of Scotland 1921*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993), pp. 43-67.
- [22] Andrew Herron, *The Law and Practice of the Kirk: A Practical Guide and Commentary*, (Glasgow: Chapter House, 1995), p. 360 and James L. Weatherhead ed., *The Constitution and Laws of the Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Church of Scotland, 1997), pp. 18-19.
- [23] David Fergusson, "A Subordinate Standard: Where Next?" p. 53. <https://ojs.st-andrews.ac.uk/index.php/TIS/article/view/1875/1394>
- [24] <https://ga.churchofscotland.org.uk/storage/uploads/theological-forum.pdf>, p. 9.

REGISTRATION OF MINISTRIES COMMITTEE MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.

Report

1.1 It is now over three years since the Registration of Ministries Act came into effect on 1st January 2018. While the principal responsibilities for the Act lie with Presbyteries and the Faith Nurture Forum, the main function of the Registration of Ministries Committee 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. Following changes to the Registration of Ministries Act made by the General Assembly of 2020, the Committee now considers comments made by the Recruitment Sub-Committee of the Safeguarding Committee.

1.2 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.

1.3 In 2020, the Committee has met five times to consider applications, with only one of these meetings being a face to face encounter. A further two meetings took place in the first half of 2021.

1.4 The Committee continues to examine how it operates, and seeks to offer a process which is robust and yet pastoral, and meets the needs of both those coming before it and the needs of the wider church.

1.5 Dates for the Committee's cycle of meetings are published on the Church of Scotland website [here](#), along with an indication of a deadline for prior submission of papers.

In the name of the Committee

NEIL DOUGALL, *Convener*
HAZEL HASTIE, *Vice-Convener*
ANGUS R. MATHIESON, *Registrar*

Addendum

Neil Dougall has convened the Registration of Ministries Committee for the first three years of its life, and has brought a passion for the ministry of the Church to this role. In the early months of developing processes to support the work of the Committee, Neil has demonstrated a knowledge of the Church, and an attention to detail, as well as a pastoral concern and warmth towards those engaging with the Committee. He had established a fruitful relationship with the Ministries Council and successfully moved into working with the Faith Nurture Forum. The Committee expresses its gratitude to Neil for his commitment, passion and insights into ministry in his Convenership of the Committee.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. 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.
3. Recognise and give thanks for the critical role of the voices, concerns, and passion of young people involved in the life of the Church of Scotland who have campaigned for disinvestment from fossil fuels; and urge congregations to provide an opportunity to listen to young people in the congregation, or in the local community, to hear about their concerns. *(Section 2.2)*
4. Urge congregations to prepare for the COP26 UN Climate Summit due to take place in Glasgow in November 2021 by using the Climate Sunday prayer and worship resources (www.climatesunday.org); and consider how they can respond in prayer and action. *(Section 2.3)*
5.
 - (i) Instruct the Forum to work with the Assembly Trustees, the General Trustees, the Social Care Council, the Faith Nurture Forum, and others as appropriate, to use the "Net Zero by 2030" framework to develop plans and activities for the Church to work towards meeting this ambition, and to report annually to the General Assembly
 - (ii) Urge all congregations and Presbyteries to consider the implications of Net Zero for their own buildings, activities, procurement and finances, and to start long-term planning for the changes that will be required. *(Section 2.4)*
6. Welcome the agreement with the Church of Scotland Investors Trust that, as a matter of principle, the portfolios of investments managed should align with the UN Paris Agreement in pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. *(Section 2.5)*
7. Welcome the fact that no oil and gas company shares are currently held; and note that any future investment in oil and gas would only follow agreement between the Church of Scotland Investors Trust and the Faith Impact Forum that there were good evidence that its strategy and implementation was aligned with the stringent targets set by the Paris Agreement. *(Section 2.5)*
8.
 - (i) 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.
 - (ii) Instruct the Selection Committee to consider carefully the range of skills and diversity of backgrounds required for this task and present the names for this Special Committee on ethical investment practice to a later session of this General Assembly. *(Section 2.5)*
9. Urge the UK Government to do all that it can to ensure Covid-19 vaccines are available throughout the world, particularly in resource-poor countries, on the basis of clinical need to preserve human life. *(Section 3.3)*
10. Invite Kirk Sessions to arrange a public meeting to consider themes and ideas for a just and green future following the Covid-19 pandemic, and identify the implications for their parish, the wider community, for Scotland and the world, and instruct the Forum to support Kirk Sessions in this. *(Section 3.4)*
11. Instruct the Forum to call for the development of safe and legal routes for people desperately seeking sanctuary so that they can travel, live, work and contribute to our society with respect and dignity. *(Section 4.1)*
12. Urge the UK Government to reverse its policies regarding migrants crossing the English Channel, the accommodation of asylum seekers in former army camps or other institutions rather than in the community, and the plans to increase the deportation of asylum seekers to other countries. *(Section 4.2)*
13. Call on the UK Government and Parliament to continue to provide a minimum of 0.7% of Gross National Income as Overseas Development Assistance in line with the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 and all main parties' 2019 manifesto commitments. *(Section 4.3)*
14. Welcome the cross-Church work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and of engaging with the experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people within the Church of Scotland; and instruct the Forum, the Faith Nurture Forum and the Assembly Trustees to consider how best to ensure the necessary resources are available to act on the outcomes. *(Section 4.7)*
15. Urge Kirk Sessions to take part in the basic training provided by Integrity – the Church of Scotland's Violence Against Women Task Group. *(Section 4.8)*
16. Instruct the Forum, in consultation with the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to renew and strengthen ecumenical dialogue, partnership and collaboration on public affairs with: (1) the Church of England; (2) through the new Scottish Christian Forum; and (3) within the Joint Public Issues Team. *(Section 6.1)*
17. Urge congregations to support the Reset the Debt campaign; instruct the Forum to promote the campaign, and to call on the UK Government to establish a Jubilee Fund to provide grants to pay off and cancel unavoidable debt accrued by households because of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions. *(Section 6.2)*
18. Instruct the Forum to promote the Meet Your MSP resources and encourage congregations to approach their MSPs, especially those newly elected to the Scottish Parliament, in order to establish and strengthen relations with elected representatives. *(Section 6.3)*
19. Commend the report on Artificial Intelligence; urge the Church to engage with the issues raised, especially in relation to pastoral care, worship and mission; and instruct the Forum to provide resources to support this engagement. *(Section 7)*

20. Urge all parts of the Church of Scotland to continue to support Christian Aid as an expression of the Church of Scotland's solidarity and commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide.
21. Urge congregations and Presbyteries to seek ways to listen and learn from partner churches around the world in relation to issues such as poverty, climate change, migration, HIV, recovery from Covid-19 and interfaith activities, and to develop partner and twinning relationships.

Report

1. SEEKING THE RIGHT PATH

Caring for God's creation, coping in a time of coronavirus, responding to racism, and pursuing inclusivity, diversity and justice for all have been key areas of witness, prayer and action for the Church in the past year. These are all brought together in the pursuit of a just and green future, and tie in with the Church's declared aim of practising the Five Marks of Mission:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

This is a broad agenda which needs involvement from all parts of the Church. God came in Christ for all the world, and demands the proclamation of the Good News for us all and for the earth and everything it contains, especially for those who struggle against poverty. Our mission is about sharing God's plans, about being actively involved in parish and nation and throughout the world to share God's love, seek transformation and justice for human beings, the whole created order and the world itself. We can only love God if we love our neighbour. As the Special Commission on Presbyterian Effectiveness reports elsewhere, the key to this is in the application of the Five Marks of Mission, "imaginatively, intentionally and decisively across the life and witness of our Church". Our response cannot only be about structures and finances. Underpinning our response must be a passion for justice in God's world. And it must speak to the whole person. There is growing recognition of the importance of kindness and relationships for societal wellbeing. Julia Unwin's report, *Kindness, emotions and human relationships: The blind spot in public policy*^[1], argues that the great public policy challenges of our time demand an approach that is more centred on relationships. This is very much part of our learning from our African partners who share with us their concept of Ubuntu: I am because you are; my success and my failures are bound up in yours. We are made for each other, part of one family, the human family, with one shared earth.^[2]

Relationships are central to the Church's international and political involvement. Nearly 75 years ago, the Church of Scotland was at the heart of the decolonisation process, recognising the independence of living branches of the church in other countries. Today it is predominantly through partnerships with indigenous churches and Christian organisations that the Church of Scotland continues its worldwide commitment. The basis for these relationships is a two-way sharing of human, material, and spiritual resources, from which all parties learn and develop. Since decolonisation, we have sought to walk side by side with the world church: it is about accompaniment, building and supporting connections with people, and conversations, and visits, and prayer, all celebrating our interconnectedness. This is also true of the involvement of the Church in the political life of Scotland and the UK – it is about building connections with politicians, civil servants, and civil society to support a just and bright future for our nation.

2. THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY: HOW DO WE RESPOND

2.1 Walking the walk

One of the five marks of mission, which the General Assembly agreed in 2020 should guide the Church, is to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. In Matthew 7, Jesus warns us to look at

the plank in our own eye before passing judgement on others. The Church of Scotland is on a journey of understanding and reversing its own contribution to the climate crisis. We believe that a decision to divest from oil and gas is one step in this journey, but it is far from enough. The task facing the Church is, without further delay, to make a commitment aligned with our Christian obligation to care for creation. Environmental concern is God's mission, for it is a public proclamation of God's love for the world. The Church must start preparations now. We recognise the challenges this poses and that it will involve all congregations and all members. Campsie Parish Church is an example: The Church decided to look at energy saving measures when they had to install a new boiler. The sanctuary and entrance areas lost heat from large single glazed windows. The Windows Advisory Service supported them in getting the right solution, and they were able to obtain an energy saving grant to cover the costs through the Scottish Government's Community Climate Asset Fund. The congregation recycles, supports Christian Aid, sells fair trade goods and has recently registered for the eco-congregation programme.

At a time of significant change and reform in the Church, and the post Covid-19 world where we need to address the challenges of rebuilding our social and economic fabric in new and more sustainable ways for people and the planet, we believe that this is the right thing to do and the right time to do it. Alongside other UK, European and world churches, it is essential that we are part of a global witness, and hold the UK and Scottish governments to their commitments to net zero carbon emissions. And it is urgent, as President Biden emphasised in his inaugural address: "A cry for survival comes from the planet itself; a cry that can't be any more desperate or any more clear." We want to support, encourage and enable the whole Church to pray, speak and act prophetically on environmental issues which threaten the flourishing of the whole of creation.

2.2 Respectful Dialogue – listening for the concerns of our young people

It is recommended that the General Assembly encourage congregations to listen to young people to learn about their concerns and aspirations. The largest **opinion poll** yet conducted (by United Nations Development Programme in conjunction with Oxford University, and reported in Feb 2021) on tackling global warming has found almost two thirds of people around the world now view climate change as a global emergency. More than a million people in 50 countries took part in the survey, with almost half the participants aged between 14 and 18. In a BBC Newsround survey, when asked about the action being taken by grown-ups to tackle the problem, two in five young people responded that they did not trust adults to tackle the challenges that climate change presents, and nearly two-thirds said leaders are not listening enough to young people's views. A recent Tearfund survey, **Burning Down the House**, highlighted the frustration and disaffection amongst young Christians when climate concerns were not spoken about in sermons or acted upon more widely by their church members and leaders. Churches provide a safe space in which the tradition of respectful dialogue is well established. Listening to young people's concerns about the climate emergency extends this practice across the generations, encouraging young people to speak out and have their concerns heard respectfully, and to encourage action by the whole community.

2.3 Conference of the Parties 26 (CoP26) comes to Glasgow

The 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (CoP26), originally planned for 2020, was postponed until November 2021 in Glasgow. It will attract delegations from most nation states in the UN, lobbyists, and others, although it now seems unlikely that the normal twenty to thirty thousand participants will be

able to come, with Covid-19 still influencing our lives. The conference will discuss progress on the Paris climate agreement and will seek to press governments around the world to increase their commitment to carbon reduction and the transition to a low carbon economy. There would normally be a large faith presence, with churches and other faith groups from around the world well represented.

A Glasgow churches co-ordinating group was set up in 2019 by Glasgow Churches Together to examine how churches could get involved. At the outset the group identified three important and complementary priorities.

1. Liturgy – worship

Worship will be at the heart of the church's involvement. At the time of writing, it is hoped to have a major service in Glasgow Cathedral in the middle of the gathering.

2. Logistics – Hospitality and pastoral care

Delegates arriving from around the world will have a range of practical and spiritual needs. Can churches in Glasgow and beyond help care for visitors to the CoP?

3. Legacy – Transformational Change

The CoP is a once in a lifetime opportunity to promote awareness and action. To implement the Paris agreement and make a just transition to a low carbon economy requires not only technical or political change, it also requires a change of heart. The CoP offers a chance for churches to show vision and leadership.

With the Presbytery of Glasgow, Eco-Congregation Scotland, Interfaith Scotland, World Council of Churches, World Communion of Reformed Churches, representatives from different churches in Scotland, UK and around the world, Christian Aid and others, the Forum will be promoting opportunities for congregational involvement in the months leading up to the CoP. Every congregation can join in using the resources provided on the Climate Sunday website www.climatesunday.org to help organise a worship service on the theme of care for creation. Individuals and congregations can also through Eco-congregation Scotland, sign the Scottish Churches COP26 pledge (<https://www.ecocongregationscotland.org/scottishchurchespledge/>) to encourage urgent action in response to the climate crisis and to support a just and green recovery.

2.4 Net Zero by 2030

Net zero refers to achieving a balance between the amount of greenhouse gas emissions produced and the amount removed from the atmosphere. There are two different routes to achieving net zero, which work in tandem: reducing existing emissions and actively removing greenhouse gases. The General Assembly 2020 wanted the church to play its part in achieving the Scottish Government's call for net-zero carbon emissions by 2045, and gave the instruction:

to work with others to develop a strategy for the Church to transition both locally and nationally to net zero carbon emissions by 2030, reporting an outline strategy to the General Assembly of 2021.

The Forum initiated a broad group to address this instruction with representatives from the Forum, local congregations, under 40s, the General Trustees, CrossReach, and the Assembly Trustees.

The Scottish Government aims to reduce net carbon emissions to 100% lower than 1990 levels by 2045. To achieve this, they have set the following targets nationally:

- By 2024 all new builds must have zero emission heating systems.
- By 2025 70% of all waste will be recycled, and food waste reduced by one third from the 2013 baseline.
- By 2024 18,000 ha of new woodlands will be created annually and 250,000 ha of peatland will be restored by 2032.

- By 2030 around half of all domestic and non-domestic buildings will have converted to a low carbon or zero carbon heating system. In 2020 a £1.6 billion Heat in Buildings Fund was announced to enable this.
- By 2030 car kilometres will have reduced by 20%
- By 2032 most passenger railways will be decarbonised.

Scotland is committed to national and international efforts to limit climate change, with a goal of restricting global warming to an increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The Church must rise to the challenge. The Church of Finland and the Church of England have already started out on this road, and the group sought to learn from both of these.

The Church of Finland examined the carbon footprint of the Church and its activities and concluded the largest emissions were from properties, travel, and procurement; they then worked to identify actions to reduce carbon footprint; and they then did detailed work with congregations to put these actions into effect.

In the UK, the Church of England has designed its own carbon baseline measurement tool to measure carbon footprint from energy use. As part of their annual return of statistics to the Church, congregations fill in an online form with their energy readings, and the size and age of their buildings, and it calculates the church's energy use and carbon footprint, per metre and per person, and gives each congregation a rating in comparison to similar sized churches. It also adjusts for weather changes from year to year. Overall, 84% of energy use goes on heating, 6% on lighting, and 10% on other uses. The Church of England is putting effort into changing heating systems from gas and oil to electricity. It is targeting its support and advice to help those churches with the biggest fossil fuel footprint to manage their transition.

Seeking to follow the instruction of the General Assembly, the group sought to "tartanise" the work of our friends in the Church of Finland and the Church of England who had concluded they needed to:

- Examine the carbon footprint of the Church and its activities.
- Carry out detailed work to identify actions to reduce carbon footprints.
- Work with all parts of the church to put these actions into effect.

An outline strategic direction for achieving Net Zero could then look like this, and would include both short-term and longer-term actions:

Goal 1: Reduction of CO2 emissions from buildings

Actions: Establish current baselines, monitor and reduce energy usage, green supply of electricity and gas, gradual switch to renewable heat sources.

Goal 2: Reduction of activities' carbon footprint

Actions: Sustainable procurement, reduction in food waste, low emission travel, EV charging at church property.

Goal 3: Compensate for emissions

Actions: Establish church carbon stock on lands, investigate off-setting unavoidable emissions.

Goal 4: The church plays an active role as a social actor and debater

Actions: Whole church engagement in climate justice and responsibilities, and witness to society and political processes.

Goal 5: Congregations, Presbyteries and the Church Offices commit to climate engagement

Actions: All parts of the church devote adequate resources to do the work necessary to implement changes to achieve the goals.

While the group has done initial work in populating possible directions and actions in each of these areas, it is not at the

stage to be rolled out, and further ground work and analysis will be necessary, especially with the General Trustees and CrossReach. It will also need broader congregational input and involvement to help develop an implementation plan involving the whole church and, most likely, in cooperation with other churches, as we are all part of the problem and all need to be part of the solution. Indeed, it may also be something which can be developed across multiple faith communities working together in seeking to safeguard God's world.

Developing the framework into a practical strategy will require significant additional input, and it is planned to continue the life of the cross agency working group to offer direction, while getting practical input from those best placed within the whole church to make things happen. The Forum believes that with ambition, energy and commitment, by 2030, our greenhouse gas emissions can be reduced by 80% from the current levels, while the remaining 20% could be offset – for example, through carbon stock of land.

The Church encourages and challenges its members, congregations, presbyteries - indeed all parts of society, and those in decision-making - in their efforts to achieve climate and carbon neutrality. The Church is a significant advocate for climate issues in Scotland, and worldwide as part of the global ecumenical community of churches. We have much to learn from the experience of the church in other parts of the world.

One practical, positive action is in Ghana. Both the Presbyterian Church of Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana have joined an interfaith tree nursery project. Highlighting the challenges of land degradation and the threat of desertification, Christians and Muslims joined together to study current approaches to tree planting and growing in dry lands, and to develop nursery management skills. Tens of thousands of seedlings have been planted and many acres of vegetation cover restored, which helps mitigate the negative effects of climate change, especially in northern Ghana, where studies have clearly shown that climate variability contributes to poverty through food insecurity and seasonal migration. This project also challenges the threat of desertification from the southward drift of the Sahara Desert. In Scotland, a first step for congregations could be to count the trees on church land; this will allow each congregation to assess the amount of carbon being offset each year. And could also encourage the planting of more.

Achieving Net Zero will require broad cooperation and action. The Faith Impact Forum is committed to coordinating this work between General Assemblies and to making a space where all the necessary church actors can come together. It will also work in partnership with other bodies including Historic Environment Scotland, Energy Saving Church, Eco-Congregation Scotland, and the European Churches Environment Network, and government – local and national - and their agencies, to ensure that all we seek to do in God's name is 'just' and 'green'. It is right to seek to make these absolutely necessary changes, which soon will be mandatory in law.

2.5 The Church's investments and its commitment to protecting the earth

The General Assembly 2020 instructed, "*the Forum to report to the General Assembly of 2021 on the ethical, scientific and theological arguments for and against urgent disinvestment from oil and gas companies.*" With the Theological Forum undertaking a theological and missiological exploration of the environment and our relationship with it, with a plan to report to the 2022 General Assembly, it was appropriate for the Faith Impact Forum not to duplicate this work. The Forum will cooperate with the Theological Forum, and especially welcomes the Theological Forum's intention that this not only be an academic exercise, but also that it will have practical applications which can help and serve the local church.

The report which was prepared for the 2020 General Assembly is attached in Appendix I, with some updates. A decision to disinvest from oil and gas companies should not be about how they perform financially, but must be made on ethical grounds. Universities in Scotland have been disinvesting. Many churches have already disinvested, including numerous international partners. In the UK, the Quakers in Britain, the United Reformed Church, and parts of the Church of England have disinvested. The Investors Trust already avoids investing in any companies with 15% or more of total turnover derived from "activities which are felt to harm society more than they benefit it".^[3] Fossil fuels are clearly harming our world. Sir David Attenborough has commented that the world knows what to do but does not do it. This cannot be the default position of the Church of Scotland.

The Forum was informed, just as this report was being finalised, that the COSIT had disinvested from oil and gas. The Forum welcomes this divestment and hopes the General Assembly will welcome and endorse the divestment from oil and gas companies, as a matter of principle. We must also look at other kinds of investments, and ones which will help our world. We echo Archbishop Desmond Tutu: "Divest from fossil fuels and invest in a clean energy future. Move your money out of the problem and into solutions."^[4] This is what our friends in the Evangelical Church of Westphalia (EKvW) are trying to do, through various actions in Germany. They have also created the **One Climate Fund** Southern Africa which invests in renewable energy products and projects that will help reduce carbon emissions world-wide. The fund focuses on investing in areas of energy poverty in Southern Africa and is interested in projects that help broad-based economic development and that generate employment.

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.

3. WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME STORM – BUT NOT IN THE SAME BOAT...

Churches have been at the heart of many neighbourhoods around the country and the world supporting local communities seeking human flourishing in the midst of pandemic. As we recover and move forward, churches must be at the centre of seeking justice and wholeness for all. All of the areas in this report are part of the bigger picture – of the Church at the heart of seeking justice for people and creation, at home and internationally.

3.1 Covid-19 realities

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused human misery and economic and social disruption across the world. Our partners around the world have experienced the devastation of Covid-19. Rev W. Tembo, General Secretary, CCAP Synod

of Livingstonia, wrote in February 2021, "After being relatively spared by the first wave of Covid-19 in 2020, Malawi is now being swept by a new, fast-spreading wave of the disease that is quickly overwhelming the healthcare system. In the first few weeks of January the number of people confirmed with the disease has doubled every four to five days, and... access to vaccines is likely a few months away." Gary Brough, Mission Partner, added that the virus "is not the greatest threat to many people's wellbeing when employment is low, food is expensive and other diseases present a more imminent threat. Malawians are sadly all too used to hardships in life. It may be that they are better prepared for the long journey out of this pandemic than many of us are." This is a very real situation for so many places around the world.

In Nepal, our partner organisation, the **United Mission to Nepal**, struggled to continue their invaluable health care work as Covid-19 meant members of the community feared going to hospital for normal care needs, which meant no income for the hospitals and therefore an inability to pay staff. The Church of Scotland was able to give a small grant to help in this crisis, along with other global partners, and the hospitals at Tansen and Okhaldhunga were able to remain open.

It has been highlighted by the WHO that Covid-19 has set back gains in treatment and support for people living with and affected by HIV by 10 years, with much of the vaccine research for HIV on hold as the scientists worked on Covid-19 vaccines. For some 30 years the Church of Scotland has supported partner churches and organisations as they have addressed the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The Church of Scotland HIV Programme continues to support partner initiatives throughout the world and encourages all congregations to lend support by using the **Souper Sunday** online service materials.

The Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCURA), with its office in Nairobi, recognised the need for sanitation measures in the urban poor areas of Nairobi, and installed hand washing points within the slums. Various community groups were tasked to keep the drums topped up with water, and to help community members understand the need to wash their hands frequently.

The work of the Faith Impact Forum has inevitably been affected by the pandemic. Staff were furloughed and staffing in the national office has been reduced. Forum members met only twice in person before going online. Many congregational visits to partners, or from partners to Scotland, had to be cancelled, as did a proposed pilgrimage to Jordan. It has not been possible for speakers to visit local congregations and Guilds. Yet, as local churches have done, the Forum has embraced the challenge and the opportunities of gathering virtually. Meetings with speakers have been held for Presbytery Conveners and/or Forum members, including by Fiona Kendall, Mission Partner in Italy, on the situation for refugees and migrants. We are continuing to develop plans for online events with mission partners for congregations and hope that more people will be able to join in. On St Andrew's Day, the annual service from St Andrew's Memorial Church Jerusalem went online, with contributions from a number of the Church's Israeli and Palestinian partners.

3.2 Israel Institutions

In July, Peter Hehle, the manager of the Scots Hotel in Tiberias for the last 10 years, was killed in a motorcycle accident. The Forum, and the Directors, would like to place on record their appreciation for the work that he did at the Hotel, and for his commitment to equality and ethical standards evident in his efforts to support the Church's partners. He will be greatly missed. Our thoughts are also with those dearest to him, and for the staff at the Hotel who worked so closely with him.

Because of the pandemic, 2020 was an extremely challenging year for the Israeli Institutions. The Hotel and Guesthouse both closed at the start of Israel's first lockdown in March. Whilst the Guesthouse has still not re-opened, as of February 2021, the Hotel was able to open in the summer months between the lockdowns, with a high demand from local Israelis keen for a vacation. With the second lockdown in September, all accommodation providers were again closed, and this was still the case in February 2021. The staff have been on furlough for the closed periods, with the exception of those vital to the maintenance and ongoing commitments. Financially, the Government has provided subsidies to the tourism industry, which have covered many of the fixed costs that have been incurred, ensuring that cash balances have remained positive. The Directors of the Hotel and Guesthouse have been working to ensure that both institutions are well-equipped to recommence full operations as soon as possible and to continue to support our objectives on peace and justice in the region.

Tabetha School has perhaps faced the toughest challenges, with the education system often being opened and closed with only a day's notice, and with government regulations frequently changing. There has been little forward planning by the Israeli government, which has meant staff and students have been constantly unsure of what they are able to do. The new Executive Director started the month before the first lockdown and has done a remarkable job, alongside the rest of the staff, in ensuring that the students have received the best possible education, whether that be online or in person.

John McCulloch, Minister at St Andrew's, Jerusalem, returned to Scotland in the early stages of the pandemic and was furloughed until September, when he managed to go back to Jerusalem, where he is providing an important presence on the ground for the congregation, our partners and friends. Kate McDonald, our Mission Partner in Tiberias, resigned in September. We thank her for her service to the Forum and to the Church, and for the hugely positive impression she made on the local community.

3.3 A Moral Imperative, and Safety in Numbers

Many in the global south fared much better than feared in the early part of the pandemic, but were hit harder later. With already struggling health systems, the South African variant which emerged in early 2021 has meant local health systems, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, are at capacity. And it is spreading through many of the countries neighbouring South Africa.

The fair distribution of vaccines, with a particular focus on making them available to those who are in the most at-risk situations, is essential.^[5] The virus disrupts every aspect of human life, but it hits those the worst who are already facing existing and often existential challenges. The Rev Christie Manisto, Pastor of St Andrew's, Cairo highlighted two concerns for people in Egypt: because distrust of authorities is very high amongst people who have few reasons to trust the government, the numbers wanting to take it will probably be low; and as the vaccine will not be free, the chance of much of the population being able to pay for it is slim. The Director of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, noted it would be a "catastrophic moral failure" to see young, healthy people in high-income countries receiving their vaccines, while vulnerable and elderly people in low-income countries might need to wait years.^[6] The Forum encourages the General Assembly to urge all wealthy countries to ensure vaccines are available widely around the world and are given first to those for whom the WHO and medical authorities have agreed will make the biggest difference to save life and reduce the number of people needing hospital treatment. This would show moral leadership. It might also be enlightened self-interest, for to defeat Covid-19 anywhere, it will need to be defeated everywhere. Countries like the UK which have ordered vastly more doses than they need must share these with those in

need around the world as part of international solidarity in seeking to eradicate this virus.

3.4 Just and Green

A just and green agenda is our response to God's call to strive for a better future for all people and the whole of creation. It is time to ask what sort of economic activity we need for a just and green world. One of the contributors at the annual United Nations Human Development Index^[7], Belinda Reyers from the Stockholm Resilience Centre, highlights our modern reality: "...in our hyperconnected, rapidly changing world, environment and human development are no longer separate or separable... Human development from now on is about making choices that are good for people and planet." There is compelling evidence that a green recovery can be faster and fairer. Governments – including the UK – need to fast-track plans to create zero-carbon economies and societies. Any economic stimulus packages must be consistent with those plans. Richer countries and multilateral institutions must end all support for fossil fuels at home and overseas, and increase their investments in renewable energy instead. Given the UK's historic contribution to the climate crisis, it must, along with other richer countries, provide additional finance to support the climate emergency response of the world's poorest countries.

The Church of Scotland joined over 80 organisations calling for a focus on a just and green future. A **letter** sent to the First Minister set out a five-point plan for recovery, urging the Scottish Government to address both poverty and climate change to create a more just and responsive economy. The Scottish Government has responded positively to the letter (as has the UK government, to a certain extent, to similar concerns in England). How can the Church of Scotland through worship, witness, and service make a significant contribution to a more just and greener future? Where can we add true value to the efforts of others? We are a national Church with faith and civic partners with whom we can promote the common good. We are also an international Church - walking with many partners globally committed to witness to God's unlimited love for the world, by calling out injustice and giving a lead to new goals in practical ways. A just and green future needs an holistic approach.

One Church of Scotland partner in Palestine, the **Joint Advocacy Initiative** of the YMCA and YWCA, runs an olive tree campaign. This provides olive trees for Palestinian farmers whose land and property are at risk of confiscation by the Israeli authorities. Olive trees are particularly well suited to the local environment, requiring little or no watering once they are established. And trees provide oxygen and store carbon, making this project an excellent example of combining just and green.

Westray Parish Church in Orkney has a twinning with Thyolo Highlands Presbytery in Southern Malawi. Rev Iain MacDonald shared how having an international focus was important in helping them be local and global. "Eco congregation makes you look inwards at how you do things in buildings, spending resources locally, and so on, but it also important for you to look outwards too, and well beyond the local community, with a strong emphasis on what is happening beyond your area. Working with Christian Aid, or on global projects such as twinning, Fairtrade, addressing global warming etc., helped us focus on gaining our Gold Eco-congregation award, because we know that what we do here impacts our friends in Thyolo. Looking towards a just and green future for the whole world is an important part of all our ministries."

The whole Church needs to work together, and the Forum is committed to joining with other agencies of the church, and other parts of society, to promote a recovery that leads to a fairer, more equal and more just Scotland in a fairer, more equal and more just world. We would ask every Kirk Session, within the following 6 months, to discuss themes and ideas

for campaigning and practical action – and where possible to arrange a community meeting to include as many as possible – about what just and green means for the parish, the community and for Scotland, and for key results and messages to be sent back to the Forum. Relationships are what the church is about. Let's make sure they are at the heart of all we do.

3.5 Fullness of life

'The gospel is the good news for every part of creation and every aspect of our life and society.'^[8] It may be rather easy to proclaim "build back better", but it is harder to put into practice. It will require tough decisions. It may require the sacrifice of a degree of wealth or privilege by some to raise up the many. Children in some areas of the richest city in the country have no winter shoes or warm coats to go to school. Homeless people were found rooms in B&Bs or hotels during the pandemic, which was welcome in providing shelter, but it was not a long-term solution to the complex issues that are the root cause of homelessness. The pandemic has hit the world in very different ways.

Rev Lydia Neshangwe, from the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) Presbytery of Zimbabwe, wrote in the Life and Work **Coronavirus diaries**: "For the majority of the world the situation of no jobs, no political stability, no insurances, no predictable measures, no certainty, no social safety nets, is a way of life. This is why the Coronavirus pandemic has been labelled the Great Revealer. It has simply revealed the already existing pandemics around us – the pandemic of poverty, the pandemic of racism, the pandemic of political disorder, and the pandemic of social decay."

Our aspirations for the world after the worst of the pandemic has passed must be different from what went before. All was not well in the world when Covid-19 struck. We acknowledge the climate emergency; we see the injustices faced by displaced people, the unequal impact on men and women, on young and old, in rich countries and poor ones; in the UK life expectancy is stalling and health inequality is growing. Children and young people have lost out on education and the poorest have suffered most. Many jobs have been protected by Government support schemes, but many others have been lost.

General Assemblies over the last decade received numerous reports which help us chart a course, including *A Right Relationship With Money*, the report of the Special Commission on the Purposes of Economic Activity; *Imagining Scotland's Future: Our Vision*, following community meetings and participatory democracy before the 2014 referendum; *10,000 Voices for Change* and *Speak Out* on social and political issues in Scotland, imagining a Scotland in 20 years' time that was a fairer, more equal, more just country in a fairer, more equal, more just world. We can recognise that Scotland is a wealthy country but that resources are not distributed equally. We need a 'wellbeing economy': one that has social justice and environmental health at its core. Beyond our borders, the Church of Scotland has a long tradition of walking in accompaniment and solidarity with others. As we move beyond the pandemic we must continue to cooperate with other churches and organisations here in Scotland and around the world, such as the British and Irish Churches development agency, Christian Aid, and other local and international bodies, to seek and support ways to make life in all its fullness possible for all.

4. JUSTICE FOR ALL

4.1 Migration

Climate is also an impulse for migration. Wild fires, drought, flooding, storms, sea level rises, competition and violence over scarce resources: the climate emergency has wide-reaching consequences for people's lives and livelihoods, and climate change-induced displacement is now an undeniable reality. It is said to be one of the biggest humanitarian challenges of the 21st century as an average of 25 million

people are displaced by climate disasters every year. And yet people who are forced to flee their homes due to climate emergencies have no right to seek asylum in a safe country under the 1951 UN Convention for Refugees.

The climate emergency is also a great multiplier as it influences social dynamics, raises tensions and potential for conflict, and exacerbates already existing unjust structures that cause poverty, gender inequality and racial injustice. With shame we observe that it is often the most vulnerable in these respects who suffer the effects of climate change first. As one of the world's lowest-lying countries, with rising sea levels and the melting of Himalayan glaciers, Bangladesh could see more than 20 million people displaced by 2050.^[9] Some may remember Bishop Michael Baroi, of the Church of Bangladesh, at our General Assembly over a decade ago, eloquently pleading for faster action on climate change to limit the rise in sea levels which were threatening the people of his country. Kiribati, with a population of over 100,000, faces the likelihood of being completely submerged by the end of the century if sea levels continue to rise at the current rate.^[10]

Desertification is also a problem: it is destroying fertile land in parts of Africa. And so, rightly, activists and campaigners insist that climate justice is migrant justice. We must redouble our commitment to care for those who have been forced on the road or the seas through changes in climate, to which many of us have contributed, and to working for the climate justice that would avoid such forced migration in the future.

The global Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation for refugees across the globe.^[11] Many governments used the opportunity to harden their borders, install restrictive immigration practices and prevent people from making use of their right to seek asylum. In Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees from Myanmar have been stigmatised as those spreading the virus, and at the end of 2020 the Bangladeshi Government started to move hundreds of Rohingya refugees to an unsafe, low-lying, remote island that is prone to flooding and cyclones, and only emerged from the sea 20 years ago.^[12] With little opportunity to maintain physical distancing, wash hands or use soap, and with face masks being unaffordable, Covid-19 has ravaged the lives of thousands in refugee camps across the world who have already had to leave all behind.

The doubling in the number of those displaced in the last decade – to over 80 million today – indicates vast failings of governments both to maintain and work towards peace, and to offer durable solutions, safe passage and sanctuary for those fleeing war, persecution and conflict. At the same time, refugee resettlement from areas of conflict to safe countries reached a 20-year low in 2020.^[13] It is evident that the UK Government, and much of the Global North, has turned a blind eye towards the suffering of millions of people. The pandemic is no excuse to close the door on refugees but rather an opportunity to demonstrate solidarity. Churches can very practically make a difference in this area by learning about the Government's Community Sponsorship Programme and exploring options to take this forward in their own areas.

The congregation of Strath and Sleat has been keeping in touch with their twinned congregation of St Paul's Episcopal Church in Amman, Jordan. Their minister, Rev Rory MacLeod, says "During the past year when we have been unable to have partners visit us, which was our plan, we have kept in touch virtually. Rev George al-Kopti, the minister, joins the Sunday morning service from time to time to share news, lead prayers and to preach. We hear that things are particularly challenging and are able to share our situation too, through this we have supported each other at this time. Like everyone, we have become convinced of the need to reduce our carbon footprint and only travel where and when necessary. Given the relational base of our twinning – building personal links and accompanying the congregation

in Amman as they take forward their work with refugees - we continue to see a place for physical exchanges. But only when the time is right. Meanwhile we have been participating in the New Scots Holidays, to support refugees in Scotland too.

4.2 Welcoming the stranger

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees is a multi-faith partnership, supported and hosted by the Church of Scotland, to co-ordinate work related to refugees and asylum seekers. The partnership has been renewed following the end of a fixed-term agreement in 2020. From October 2018 to December 2020, the Church was part of a formal project called *New Scots Integration Programme* with the Scottish Refugee Council, Bridges Programme and WEA Scotland. This work, part-funded by the European Union, included the delivery of a programme of awareness raising in local faith groups and the development of a pilot refugee holiday programme, where church hosts welcome refugee families living in other parts of Scotland. This project has now come to a successful conclusion.

Despite the warm welcome offered by faith groups to New Scots and the growing understanding of the contributions that migrants can make to our communities and society, the UK Government's policy approach has become harsher, disregarding respect for human life, dignity, or the traditions of hospitality and sanctuary that ought to be markers of a compassionate and tolerant society. Instead of supporting asylum seekers and other migrants to make safe and legal journeys from squalid and miserable conditions in France, the Home Office seeks to deter channel crossing through force and fear, as shown by the new appointment of a 'Clandestine Channel Threats Commander'. The Home Office has moved away from housing people seeking asylum in accommodation in the community and has started placing some people in former army barracks or on land adjacent to Immigration Removal Centres, where they are effectively warehoused, making access to community life, places of worship, language experience, or legal advice much harder.

The Church must speak out on what this is: the state-organised concentration of persons authorities choose to see as 'undesirable' so that they can be pressured, bullied or become resigned to easier deportation rather than taking full advantage of rights and entitlements which are inherent to them as human beings, and under International Law. The Home Office has also made its policy intention clear that, post-Brexit, it wants to establish bilateral ties with other nations to make deportations easier. As an island at the far end of Europe the only purpose for such an approach is to send away people who are seeking sanctuary. The United Kingdom, despite its wealth and experience of the benefits of migration and diversity, is now walking on the other side of the road when it comes to helping the neighbour. The Faith Impact Forum invites the General Assembly to express, on behalf of the Church, its fundamental disagreement with the current approach, which is antithetical to Christ's teaching and example.

Congregations which are partnered with Fiona Kendall, mission partner with the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy's Mediterranean Hope Programme, have been able to connect by video to know more about her work. Fiona highlighted the situation of migrants in Calabria, working hard as key workers in agricultural labour, but treated very badly in terms of human rights and dignity, and how Mediterranean Hope is supporting better living and working conditions. A groundbreaking project that Mediterranean Hope has developed is called *Humanitarian Corridors*. By working with the Italian Government, they have successfully been able to bring vulnerable refugees from conflict areas to Italy, where they are able to access rights and advice, and to be supported by local church congregations. In parts of Italy, as in parts of Scotland, depopulation is a growing challenge for authorities and communities. The arrival of new people who want to make the best of their lives, and contribute to

the society that has welcomed them, has the potential to be of great mutual benefit.

4.3 International Aid

In November 2020 the UK Chancellor announced that the UK Government would seek the power to cut the international aid budget. Currently there is primary legislation which insists that at least 0.7% of Gross National Income is spent on overseas development support. This aid spending target has been supported by the Church of Scotland for many years; indeed, it was the World Council of Churches General Assembly in 1958 which first proposed a global minimum target for rich countries to spend to support aid and development around the world. At the time of the announcement, the Convener of the Forum said: "Cutting this work is short-sighted and tarnishes the UK's international reputation. In times of global need, it is those with the broadest shoulders that need to support others. International development is not about charity; it is essential to the delivery of the vision of a Global Britain... Protecting public health, promoting human rights, tackling violence against women, mitigating against climate change. Helping to build stable economies and societies will have long-term benefits for international peace and security." At the time of writing, the Forum was coordinating with ecumenical partners to encourage the Government to reverse its proposal and return to its policy stated in the Conservative Party's 2019 General Election manifesto.

4.4 Syria

In January 2021, the civil war in Syria had been raging for 10 years. It is estimated that at least 400,000 people have died in those ten years of war, and over 5.6 million people have left the country as refugees. Whilst fighting is now sporadic, the suffering of the people continues to be great. We give thanks for our partners, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, who have, through their ministers and churches, continued to provide relief and support for so much of the population, often at great cost to themselves. The Moderator of the General Assembly was due to visit Syria in March 2021, and it was hoped that this would allow him to see the devastation caused, and to offer solidarity in presence and prayer with our Church and Christian partners. We must not lose sight of the grave injustices that continue to happen in our world, and the Syrian civil war is one which we must continue to urge the international community to work harder to come to a just and peaceful solution. And we can also offer support to the Synod to help those still very much in need.

4.5 Myanmar

Following the coup d'état on 1 February when the military seized control in Myanmar, our partner, the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar (PCM), issued its first ever public statement on a political issue. PCM called for the coup to be reversed, detained elected leaders to be released, the result of the General Election to be respected, and for no harm to be done to the participants in the peaceful Civil Disobedience Movement. Rev Ramthanga, General Secretary, commented that this marked a new era in church-state relations for PCM. This call has been backed by our own Moderator in letters to the Foreign Secretary (jointly with Presbyterian Church in Ireland) and later to the Myanmar ambassador in which he criticised "an unelected, illegitimate military government that uses lethal force against its own citizens." The World Council of Churches and Christian Conference of Asia released a joint statement on 4 March condemning the deteriorating law and order situation and violence in Myanmar, especially the killings by Myanmar security forces during protests against the military coup.

4.6 Disarmament

On 22 January 2021 the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons came into force, following its ratification by 50 countries around the world. The treaty prohibits nations from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transferring, possessing, stockpiling, using or threatening to

use nuclear weapons, or allowing nuclear weapons to be stationed on their territory. It also prohibits them from assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone to participate in any of these activities. It puts nuclear weapons in the same category as other weapons of mass destruction like chemical or biological weapons, as well as land mines and cluster munitions.

The General Assembly has supported unilateral nuclear disarmament by the United Kingdom since the 1980s and in 2018 it gave its explicit support to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and congratulated the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work towards establishing the Treaty.

One country that has ratified is Kiribati, where the UK conducted nine hydrogen bomb tests in the late 1950s. UK, French and US nuclear tests in the south Pacific have no doubt contributed to the enthusiasm of ratifications from the region, with the Cook Islands, Fiji, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu having also joined the Treaty. Cuba, at the centre of the 1962 Missile Crisis, has also ratified the Treaty. The Faith Impact Forum will continue to work with disarmament campaigners to urge the UK Government to work constructively with the Treaty process.

4.7 Racial Justice; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Faith Impact Forum welcomes the whole-Church initiative to establish a permanent committee dedicated to furthering equality, diversity and inclusion in all areas of Church life. There is more information to be found about this initiative in the report of the Assembly Trustees.

Equality has been a key area of concern this past year, especially as highlighted by the Black Lives Matter Movement. The 2020 General Assembly instructed a wide-ranging consultation on the issue of racial justice and the legacy of slavery. A group has been set up to look at the experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people within the Church of Scotland. This group will carry out research to understand how many BAME people relate with the Church of Scotland and what their experience has been. Hearing the recent painful stories of racial abuse and discrimination has emphasised the need for such a group. If we are to be a church that stands up to injustice we must have the courage, and the backing of the wider church, to truly make a meaningful change and not just to talk about change. There is a lot of work to do to ensure that we live in a society which is just and fair for all.

4.8 Violence Against Women

In 2019 the General Assembly received a report that the Church of Scotland had become the first Christian denomination in Scotland to appoint a Gender Justice officer post. At that point it was noted that the post was funded until 2023. The recent structural changes within the central church have resulted in there no longer being a dedicated Gender Justice officer, with elements of that role now exercised under a wider Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion remit. The Church of Scotland's 'Violence Against Women Task Group', which was established by a previous General Assembly, remains, under the name 'Integrity'. Integrity remains committed to working within the Church to take forward the General Assembly's previous commitments towards fighting Gender Injustice.

4.8.1 Increase in domestic violence

Covid-19 and the subsequent lockdown brought about what the UN has referred to as a 'shadow pandemic.' With over 4 billion people locked in their homes and communication limited, the opportunities to perpetrate abuse were multiplied. Women and children have been forced to spend extended periods at home with their abuser with very limited opportunities to seek help from supportive family or service providers. For women not living with their abuser, lockdown provided their abuser with the knowledge that they would

be home. This increased the opportunities for stalking, and continued online harassment. While there may have been increased opportunities and harm caused by the conditions of lockdown, it is worth noting that the stress caused by the pandemic did not directly cause the abuse or create new perpetrators, in the same way that Christmas, alcohol, poverty and sporting events, or frustrations around quarantine, are not the direct causes of domestic abuse. Abuse, in the form of patterns of behaviour to instil fear and maintain control remains a choice of the abuser.

The Church should be a place and a community in which those experiencing domestic violence are safe and supported to seek the help they need. The Church will never be a specialist or primary support service to those experiencing domestic violence, but disclosures of domestic violence are made within church communities: to friends; elders; pastoral workers; clergy. Church communities therefore need to ensure that they can be supportive.

In 2018 the results of academic research into the experiences of survivors of domestic violence who had connections with church communities gave valuable and harrowing insight into the extent of the need for churches to be better informed and trained in this area. This research was conducted across denominations in Cumbria and included a Church of Scotland congregation. The cited statistics come from the *In Churches Too* report which resulted from this research. The Church is clearly seen as a potential source of support: 42.9% of respondents said that they themselves would seek help from the church for domestic abuse, while 59.8% would signpost a friend to church.

However, the stories of those who had experience of seeking help for domestic abuse from the church are deeply concerning: 33.3% of people who had turned to the church for help reported that doing so did not make any difference to either the situation or to how they felt; 14.3% reported that turning to the church for help made things worse. The need for churches to be better equipped on issues of violence against women (in all forms, including domestic violence) is clear. For this reason, Integrity, the Church of Scotland's violence against women task group, is strengthening its efforts to provide meaningful training, resources and dialogue opportunities for congregations, office holders and pastoral care providers.

4.8.2 Training

Integrity has been working for several years to prepare training for congregations and local groups to become better informed and equipped to handle issues of violence against women. Its training covers the breadth of types of violence experienced by women, including domestic abuse and spiritual abuse. The training Integrity can now provide across the Church has been designed by Integrity group members with the invaluable help and oversight of a professional violence against women expert and trainer. A short introductory session has been prepared that covers the basic information needed by any person with any role in a congregation, in order to raise awareness, generate discussion and provide localised support service information. Further modules have also been designed to enable congregations to explore different aspects of the subject in greater depth. This training aims to help Kirk Sessions feel more confident in recognising the signs and cause of abuse, as well as safe and appropriate responses to disclosure, in order to establish congregations that are both preventing, recognising and responding to abuse within their respective communities. All congregations are urged to take advantage of this opportunity for awareness raising and training.

5. INTERFAITH

5.1 Jewish-Church of Scotland Glossary Project

Church of Scotland and Jewish community representatives were in a formal dialogue process from 2017-2019, with the objectives of furthering mutual understanding and learning.

The broader aim for this dialogue has been to find ways for the learning to be shared amongst both of our communities. This was the main subject of a meeting with the Chief Rabbi and the Convener of the Assembly Trustees along with participants of the dialogue and staff support in February 2020. The decision that was reached was for a smaller group to prepare a glossary of terms that are often used in relation to the theology and politics of land from both Jewish and Christian perspectives. The aim is for the theological significance from both traditions of the terms to sit alongside one another and shed light on how these terms are used and understood differently. The process of creating this resource will itself be an opportunity for deeper learning and dialogue and the product will be a useful and usable resource for the wider Church. The initial dialogue group, the Faith Impact Forum, and the Theological Forum are represented on this group.

6. SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

6.1 Ecumenical partnerships and collaboration on public affairs

During 2020 the Faith Impact Forum undertook a number of reviews and consultations with regard to projects and programmes that it inherited from the predecessor councils. From Church and Society in particular, a great deal of work relating to public affairs and campaigning was often done in partnership with other Churches. The Faith Impact Forum affirms its commitment to ecumenical working, and welcomes the advice and support of the Ecumenical Relations Committee; the Forum also encourages the Church to be better aware of these areas of cooperation. It is an imperative for the Church, as well as being more effective, to work with others, sharing resources and expertise. Presenting to decision-makers a united view carries more weight than acting unilaterally. In particular:

- Our relationship with the Church of England: as two of the UK's 'national' churches, where there is often an expectation of our voice being heard beyond our membership to our respective nations, and across the United Kingdom. Although there are differences in size, polity and ecclesiology, there is still much that we can and should do together to be a Christian witness in the public square. The Columba Declaration, agreed in 2016 between the two Churches, committed us to "work together on social, political and ethical issues that arise from our participation in public life and be prepared to allocate resources to joint initiatives for addressing them."
- The anticipated establishment of a new national ecumenical body in Scotland to replace Action of Churches Together in Scotland is a development that offers potential for more collaboration between Scottish Churches, to improve our relations, and create space for encounter, and the opportunities for joint work on a range of topics to emerge.
- The Forum has agreed to continue to participate in the Joint Public Issues Team. The core institutions working in partnership for mutual benefit are the Methodist Church in Britain, the United Reformed Church, and the Baptist Union of Great Britain (www.jointpublicissues.org.uk). The former Church and Society Council agreed to participate in JPIT in 2015. A principal advantage for the Church of Scotland is of avoiding duplicating work already being done, and in being able to share in a team with more policy expertise and knowledge, especially on reserved areas such as social security, defence, immigration and international affairs. As an Associate Partner of JPIT, the Church of Scotland is able to share its knowledge within the Scottish situation while leaning on the other churches when engaging with UK-wide policies.

- The Forum continues to be involved in discussions with the Vatican and Lambeth Palace on ways it can support the peace process in South Sudan.

6.2 Reset the Debt

In the Covid-19 lockdown in spring 2020, together with our partners in the Joint Public Issues Team, we undertook some research, asking people struggling against poverty what their biggest challenges were. One of the clear results was the increased level of debt that had been incurred as a direct result of the pandemic or the associated restrictions. The Church of Scotland has a tradition and history of campaigning against unjust and injurious levels of debt, perhaps most notably in the Jubilee Debt campaign work around international debt for developing countries. In the autumn the Forum supported a new JPIT report and campaign around Covid-19 debt and its impact on families in the UK, specifically calling for a new Government-supported Jubilee Debt Fund to help people deal with the impact of Covid-19 debt. The campaign, called *Reset the Debt* is also backed by Church Action on Poverty, the United Reformed Church, the Methodist Church and the Baptist Union of Great Britain.^[14]

6.3 Scottish Parliament Elections 2021

Elections for the Scottish Parliament will take place on Thursday 6 May. By the time the General Assembly meets, Scotland will have voted for a new Parliament, the sixth election since the Parliament was re-established in 1999. The challenges facing lawmakers over the next few years will be significant: the recovery from the pandemic, the climate crisis, and the impact of Brexit are all complications added to the important everyday matters of education, health, business, taxation and all the other areas of public life that is the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament.

The Faith Impact Forum will seek to work constructively with MSPs of all parties on the issues and priority concerns expressed by the General Assembly. This work of the Church in its relationships with government, and concern for the common good, are matters for all of us. To support the whole church in this endeavour we plan to share and promote the Meet Your MSP resources from the Scottish Churches Parliamentary Office so that congregations can build or strengthen a personal relationship with individual MSPs. The purpose is to ensure that representatives are aware of the activities and opinions of organisations within their constituency, but also to underline that MSPs, like Churches, should be there to serve everybody in their area, not only those who voted for a particular party or who attend Church.

Questions relating to Scottish independence, further devolution and wider constitutional reform look likely to play a part in the future deliberations of the Parliament. In the past the Church of Scotland has contributed to wider civic and community debate; from the support for the Constitutional Convention and devolution in the 1980s and 1990s to work around a vision for Scotland's future around the 2014 referendum. The Faith Impact Forum will continue to monitor and engage with such political directions and be ready to address issues that arise.

7. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI): OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE FOR THE CHURCH

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is at the heart of internet search engines, self-driving cars and speech and face recognition on mobile phones. AI algorithms underpin innovations in healthcare, assisting doctors to diagnose illness, discover new drugs, read medical images and use robots in surgical operations. The Church has many reasons to celebrate and embrace these technologies, but some difficult questions arise: is privacy adequately protected when personal data are collected by social media platforms (which, with analysis of a few hundred "likes", can demonstrate better knowledge of your personality than your spouse has of you)? How much

human supervision is required when life-changing decisions about our health or employment are based on outputs from AI algorithms? Who is held responsible when unfair or damaging decisions are made, or if self-driving cars or autonomous weapons go wrong? How do we respond to the use of sophisticated AI surveillance tools in policing, and the persecution of religious groups by governments?

The Society, Religion and Technology Group has produced a **report** which explores opportunities for the church in the use of AI technologies in areas such as pastoral care, counselling, worship, and evangelism. As we increasingly engage in our day to day life with robots and chatbots which can plausibly mimic humans in many ways, does this challenge us to reflect on what it means to be a person made in the image of God? The place of AI within a larger narrative of redemption and reconciliation, and of its role in the building of the Kingdom of God, must be of concern not just to academic theologians, but to ministers and to congregations, and the whole people of God.

8. CONCLUSION

We are a very small Church when we work on our own, but when we play our part in the worldwide movement of God's people we can share in the experience of answering our Lord's prayer for the kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven. The Forum trusts that it will be blessed by listening, learning, sharing and walking with many people from across the Church and the world joining together to pursue, in Christ's name, the dream of a fairer, more equal and more just Scotland in a fairer, more equal and more just world.

We close with the inspiring words of Amanda Gorman:

"For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it."

In the name of the Forum

VERY REV DR SUSAN BROWN, *Convener*
REV ALAN MILLER, *Vice-Convener*
REV IAN W ALEXANDER, *Interim Head*

Appendix I

The Church's commitment to protecting the earth

Following a debate about Church financial investments in fossil fuel businesses, the 2018 General Assembly agreed to '*Instruct the Church and Society Council to engage with the oil and gas companies to continue to seek alignment with the Paris Climate Agreement rather than divest from the oil and gas industry*'. A subsequent debate at the 2019 General Assembly agreed to '*Note the engagement to date with oil and gas companies and instruct the Faith Impact Forum to report on the outcome to the Assembly of 2020*'. The full report was prepared for the 2020 General Assembly but, on the advice of the Principal Clerk and the Assembly Trustees, was not presented. The General Assembly 2020 instructed, '*the Forum to report to the General Assembly of 2021 on the ethical, scientific and theological arguments for and against urgent disinvestment from oil and gas companies*'.

1.1 What is the Climate Emergency?

In 2019 and 2020 the General Assembly recognised that the world is facing a climate and ecological emergency. Research by climate scientists over forty years has demonstrated the reality of climate change; that we are causing it, principally through our continuing use of oil, gas and coal; and that it has profound implications for life on earth, both now and for generations to come.

In 2020, a coroner ruled that the cause of death of a nine-year-old girl from Lewisham, Ella Kissi-Debrah, in February 2013 was acute respiratory failure, severe asthma and air pollution exposure caused by exposure to nitrogen dioxide

and particulate matter (PM) pollution in excess of World Health Organization guidelines, the principal source of which were traffic emissions on a major arterial route near her home. Fossil fuel use in vehicles was the major factor in her death. It is estimated there are seven million deaths each year from such pollution.

In Zambia, some parts of the country have experienced flooding, and others drought, leading to failed crops and the death of livestock; because of this, communities are facing hunger and the loss of livelihoods. The United Church of Zambia has responded with a food distribution programme providing food to over 4,000 households; without this intervention many would die.

In early 2021, the Guardian^[15] reported on new studies which modelled how the earth might recover more quickly than previously understood, and the importance of slowing down the speed of climate change to allow the earth and people to transition once emissions have been driven down, with one author highlighting that an extra degree in a few hundred years is far less damaging than that extra degree in a few decades. The timescale is important.

1.2 Children and young people will feel the worst impacts and are increasingly worried

In its 'Churches' Commitment to Children' study document, the World Council Churches worked with UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund, to address the needs of children as an integral part of the ecumenical commitment to justice and peace. They found, 'Climate change is already taking a toll on children, but its consequences will be even greater in the lives of future generations, representing a threat to their very survival.' While the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss will undoubtedly impact the future of our children and young people, there is a great deal of evidence that this generation is already suffering.

Eco-anxiety is increasingly recognised as a concern, particularly as it affects children. Children born in this century will, in the years to come, feel the full impact of climate change. A survey of 8-16-year olds carried out for BBC Newsround reported that three quarters of children say they are worried about the state of the planet. One in five say it has kept them awake at night, and a similar number has had a nightmare about climate change.

After the 2019 discussion in the General Assembly, Seonaid Knox, then clerk to the National Youth Assembly, spoke out: 'It's deeply frustrating that we have yet again delayed acting on the climate emergency we face...the reality is that despite youth and international delegates stressing the urgency of the matter, our pleas fell on deaf ears. We will continue to push for divestment and for local congregations to reduce their carbon footprint.' Young people have been to the fore in raising concerns. Greta Thunberg addressed the United Nations in September 2019: 'You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words and yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction and all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth.' She has inspired a new generation of activists, especially young people, to demand action. Twenty thousand marched in Edinburgh in September 2019; around the world the number was estimated to be four million, by far the biggest global climate protest ever seen. Church members from Christian Climate Action joined with others to make three demands of governments:

- governments must tell the truth by declaring a climate and ecological emergency, working with other institutions to communicate the urgency for change;
- governments must act now to halt biodiversity loss and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2025; and
- governments must create and be led by the decisions of a Citizens' Assembly on climate and ecological justice.

A practical approach is evident in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ghana (EPCG). Although not responsible for the emissions causing climate change, they are suffering from it, as the Sahara Desert is encroaching on the arable lands. The EPCG is active with school children to act on environmental protection in Northern Ghana, where it helps the young people to understand that human actions are causing the climate to change and what they can do to reverse the trends. Some schools form Eco Clubs, and the members are trained in basic nursery management and raise tree seedlings for planting. Each year, every Eco Club plants more than 1000 seedlings to help reverse the trend of desertification and rejuvenate the environment. So far about 18 acres of land have been planted by the school children since 2015.

1.3 Government response

The Scottish Government response to the climate emergency has been positive. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Bill passed through the Scottish Parliament in 2019. It sets a legally binding net zero target for all greenhouse gases emissions by 2045. The Bill also creates a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change to make recommendations to ministers on how the net-zero transition should be achieved.

The implications of the 2045 net zero greenhouse gas emissions target for Scotland are significant. For example, most homes in Scotland are now heated by gas but to meet the net zero target gas central heating will have to be replaced by low carbon sources of heating. The same will apply to non-domestic buildings, including churches. Diesel and petrol-powered motor vehicles will have to be replaced by electric or other low carbon sources of power. Forest planting is likely to increase to capture carbon from the atmosphere and the future for farming, particularly for farming with high methane emissions, is unclear.

The UK Government has agreed to adopt a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It has also allowed the resumption of onshore wind power schemes across mainland UK, and announced a strategy for reaching its targets, many much earlier than previously imagined.

While not addressing how oil and gas production in the North Sea can be managed, reduced or phased out as part of a transition to a low carbon economy, the UK Government White Paper of Dec 2020, *Powering our Net Zero Future*, agreed with the Oil & Gas Authority that "the sector must go considerably faster in reducing its own carbon footprint or risk losing its social licence to operate."^[16]

1.4 Is this enough?

Some authorities and churches have argued that a 2050 target is inadequate to address the scale of the climate emergency and have pressed for the adoption of a 2030 target for net zero carbon emissions. Both Glasgow and Edinburgh City Councils have adopted this ambitious target. The Lutheran Church of Finland Church Council approved an energy and climate strategy in 2019 committing the Church to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. In February 2020 the Church of England's General Synod set new targets for all parts of the church to work to become carbon 'net zero' by 2030. The 2020 General Assembly also instructed a coalition within the Church of Scotland to come together 'to develop a strategy for the Church to transition both locally and nationally to net zero carbon emissions by 2030'.

1.5 Implications for the Church of Scotland:

1.5.1 Listening to young people

Responding at the time to the school climate strikes, the convener of the Church and Society Council, said 'Adults must listen to young people's concerns about climate change and try and understand why they are profoundly worried about the future. Listening and learning would help leaders respond more effectively to the climate emergency'. It is recommended that the General Assembly encourage

congregations to listen to young people to learn about their concerns and aspirations. In the BBC Newsround survey, when asked about the action being taken by grown-ups to tackle the problem, two in five responded that they do not trust adults to tackle the challenges that climate change presents, and nearly two-thirds said leaders are not listening enough to young people's views. Churches provide a safe space in which the tradition of respectful dialogue is well established. Listening to young people's concerns about the climate emergency extends this concept across the generations, encouraging young people to speak out and to be heard respectfully by all.

1.5.2 Investment in oil and gas companies

Previous reports to the General Assembly have expressed concern about the role of oil and gas companies in relation to the Paris agreement. There is growing evidence to suggest that oil and gas companies are continuing to promote exploration and extraction while claiming to be committed to the Paris agreement. There is also now clear evidence that the financial risks associated with investment in oil and gas companies are greater than was previously apparent. A report from financial analysts Carbon Tracker, *Breaking the Habit*, concludes that none of the large oil companies is "Paris-aligned". "Every oil major is betting heavily against a 1.5°C world and investing in projects that are contrary to the Paris goals." This includes the large European companies that are doing the most to reassure investors that they are responsive to climate concerns. In May 2021, the International Energy Agency will publish the first comprehensive road map for the entire global energy sector to reach net zero by 2050 by outlining the actions required for decarbonisation.

The Carbon Tracker report concludes that oil and gas projects already sanctioned will take the world past 1.5°C, unless carbon capture and storage can be brought into action at scale and very quickly. A further report from the UN Environment Programme confirms this finding. It concludes that current and planned exploration will "produce about 50% more fossil fuels by 2030 than would be consistent with a 2°C pathway and 120% more than would be consistent with a 1.5°C pathway".

Mark Carney, former Governor of the Bank of England, has warned of the risks associated with climate change and, interviewed by the BBC on 30 December 2019, said the financial sector had begun to curb investment in fossil fuels – but far too slowly. He said leading pension fund analysis "is that if you add up the policies of all of companies out there, they are consistent with warming of 3.7-3.8°C". Other finance companies are expressing similar concerns. Barclays Bank is facing increasing pressure over its environmental stance after one of its top investors, Jupiter Asset Management, supported a shareholder resolution urging the bank to stop lending to fossil fuel companies. HSBC, Europe's second-largest financier of fossil fuels after Barclays, is being urged by pension funds and individual shareholders to cut its exposure to fossil fuels. Larry Fink, CEO of Blackrock, the world's largest asset manager, in his 2021 open letter, said that he believed the world was seeing a fundamental reshaping of finance as it was now recognised that climate change was an investment risk. It is also important that he sees positive investment as useful, and that **the climate transition presents an historic investment opportunity.**

1.5.3 Engagement and Divestment

The Church of Scotland must respond to this rapidly changing context. It has previously debated investments in fossil fuel companies and has decided not to invest in companies substantially involved in tar sands and thermal coal. Engagement with oil and gas companies over many years may have made some impact at the margin but has not dented their core objectives of global exploration, extraction, and sale of oil and gas. Rather, the reverse has

been true, with major oil and gas companies continuing to expand their oil and gas operations, citing continued global demand. Oil and gas companies promote their green credentials by investing in renewable energy but at a scale that is dwarfed by their expenditure on oil and gas projects. Not one of the oil majors spends more than 5% of its capital expenditure on renewables. Iberdrola, owner of Scottish Power, is planning to spend more on low carbon renewable energy in the coming decade than the six biggest European oil companies combined.^[17]

Things may be changing. Demand for fossil fuels fell sharply with the downturn in economic activity and reduced travel around the world during the pandemic. This led to a fall in oil prices, with dramatic consequences for the share prices and asset values of oil and gas companies and a reduction in new investment. This has raised questions about the financial health of oil and gas companies alongside their environmental impact. Keith Anderson, Scottish Power Chief Executive, has said: 'The future of the world is...no longer about the future of oil and gas companies, it is about the future of renewables.'^[18] This is a timely opportunity for the Church not just to speak out but also to act on its principles.

1.5.4 Church of Scotland Investors Trust reduces its investments in oil and gas companies

The Church of Scotland Investors Trust (CoSIT) has long argued for engagement and has opposed divestment from oil and gas companies. This has led to vigorous debate at previous assemblies and much public comment. Forum representatives have met with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Investors Trust to discuss these issues, as well as this report and recommendations. It is important also to engage in further conversations on wider areas where there are ethical and theological issues to consider, such as modern slavery or finance for nuclear weapons, or investing positively for change.

Some financial analysts have suggested that oil and gas companies are uncertain long-term investments. Carbon Tracker has argued that oil and gas companies need to shrink their operations, not continually seek to grow, and that share prices could collapse if demand for oil and gas were to fall. This prediction came to pass during the pandemic.^[19] In a world increasingly concerned about the climate emergency and how to move to a low carbon economy, the business prospects for oil and gas companies are uncertain. CoSIT has noted this and, with the managers of the Growth Fund, Newton Investment Management, began "to reduce our exposure to the Oil and Gas sector" (CoSIT Annual Review 2019, p8). This is a welcome step. The CoSIT annual review makes clear that this is a financial decision and not a permanent divestment on ethical grounds.

A decision to divest from oil and gas companies, like companies involved in gambling, armaments or tobacco, is not just financial (although Newton has "long-term concerns about the sustainability of the energy industry as it exists today"^[20]) but involves important ethical considerations. In the debate at the General Assembly 2018 it was agreed that alignment with the Paris agreement was a key factor in helping us come to a view on whether to recommend continued investment in oil and gas companies; whether they are helping to reduce our dependence on oil and gas or whether they are continuing to promote oil and gas exploration. We have looked for evidence that major oil and gas companies are seeking to transform themselves into renewable energy companies but, while there is plenty of rhetoric, the evidence from the past two years is clear: oil and gas companies are still promoting exploration for oil and gas and in consequence increasing emissions of greenhouse gases.

Like Mark Carney, formerly at the Bank of England, we conclude that too little is happening; that it is time to make a break with the oil and gas economy; to commit to a low carbon future, and to align our investments accordingly. The

congregation of Dunscore has already done so. "As an Eco Congregation for many years, we have been working to ensure that we love our neighbours across the world in all we do through worship, outreach and in our lives. Our Board has recently decided that, as we were opposed to investing in fossil fuel, we have taken our funds away from the Church of Scotland (Investors Trust) Growth Fund because this currently has fossil fuel investments. We look forward to the considerable, but urgent and essential challenge, of cutting carbon use in Dunscore Church and, ultimately, reducing this to net zero."

We urge all church investing bodies to permanently exclude companies substantially involved in oil and gas exploration and development. In the Church of Scotland (Properties and Investments) Order 1994^[21], section 41 clarifies that 'It shall be lawful for the General Assembly from time to time to make byelaws and regulations to be observed by the Investors Trust in the discharge of its duties and functions.' It is therefore open to the General Assembly to offer an ethical investment policy for the Church's investments.

This does not mean an end to engagement. We have had fruitful dialogue with Oil and Gas UK and will continue to explore a just transition to a low carbon economy with them and others. We also acknowledge the continued work of CoSIT and its commitment to the Church Investors Group which engages with business on a wide range of issues. We commend this wider engagement and are ready to play our part in it. We would also welcome engagement on the possibility of being involved with impact investing – this is using money not just to make more money, but aiming to generate specific beneficial social or environmental effects in addition to financial gains. We do believe that investment in new and emerging low carbon technologies will bear fruit and urge the Assembly Trustees to review the Statement of Investment Policy of the Church to examine this possibility.

We also pay tribute to the work of the Oil and Gas Chaplain, Gordon Craig, and acknowledge the continued support of Oil and Gas UK that makes his work possible. It is essential in this transition to a low carbon economy that the Church offers support to men and women working in the industry. We question the business strategy of the major oil companies but we recognise those who are employed by them and work for a just transition on their behalf.

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IONA COMMUNITY BOARD MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Welcome the appointments of Ruth Harvey as Leader and Sarah Metcalfe as Executive Director and wish them well at this important stage in the life of the Iona Community. (Section 2.3)
3. Note with gratitude the completion of the renovation of the living quarters of Iona Abbey as a place of welcome, worship and the renewal of the common life for the whole Church. (Sections 2.5 and 4.4)
4. Rejoice with the Iona Community in the coming into force of the United Nations Nuclear Ban Treaty and affirm the call for the UK Government to join in signing it. (Section 5.2)
5. Affirm the work of the Community in supporting action towards Climate Justice. (Section 5.3)
6. Commend the Unlocked programme to Presbyteries, congregations and wider ecumenical partners. (Section 5.5)

Report

1. REFRAMING THE FAMILIAR: OUR RULE AND OUR MOVEMENT

1.1 The Iona Community Board was unable to present its report to the General Assembly of 2020. What follows in this 2021 report does not, however, simply add to what we had intended to present to the Assembly last year but seeks to reflect the Iona Community in a radically different place determined by changed circumstances and times.

1.2 The Covid-19 pandemic has, in the midst of so much pain, offered us the opportunity to reframe all that is familiar to us in the Iona Community. Our four-fold **Rule of Life**, committing us to daily prayer and reflection; to action for justice and peace; to accounting for our use of time, money and the earth's resources, and to working together for our renewal and that of the worship of the Church, continues to be the pivot around which we meet – in person and online. We have come to realise that we can indeed be community while so radically scattered. We can indeed sense God's presence guiding and inspiring us as we meet online for worship. We can indeed notice what is essential, what is true, what is good as we continue to live this 'very common life' together, gathered around our Rule.

1.3 In a service of blessing in June we welcomed 7 New Members to full **Membership of the Iona Community**. We are now a community of 253 full Members, 1,851 Associate Members and 2,738 Friends and Supporters. We are delighted that in 2020, 11 young adults made a commitment to the Rule of Life by joining our Young Adults Group.

1.4 With the whole Church we grieve the sudden loss in 2020 of our dearly beloved past Leader, Peter Macdonald. His presence, his humour, his passion and his gift in communicating the deep message of the justice and peace of Christ is sorely missed. We also grieve with the friends and family of Graham Maule, a prophetic voice in the life of this country and in the work of worship renewal with his colleagues in the Wild Goose Resource Group.

2. REFRAMING THE FAMILIAR: OUR STRUCTURES

2.1 Now in our ninth decade, the Iona Community is engaged in a process of refreshing and renewing our infrastructure and our spaces in order more fully to live out our calling, alone and in community, to respond to the call of God. It is our privilege and our pleasure to remain focussed on and committed to the work for the justice and peace of God's Kingdom. Members remain committed to our vision: 'inspired by our faith we pursue justice and peace in and through community.'

2.2 In 2019 the AGM of the Iona Community approved renewed Governance and Movement proposals. As a result, we now have two strategic committees (Community Life and Community Resources), delegating all operations to staff. In addition, a refreshed leadership model was approved, with new Trustees appointed, a Leader focussing on the life of the movement and communications and an Executive Director focussing on strategic and business planning and finance.

2.3 In this regard, the Board welcomes the appointment to these roles of Ruth Harvey and Sarah Metcalfe respectively, recognising the skills and experience they bring to the Iona Community at this time of reframing.

2.4 The movement has been refreshed with seven new **Common Concern Networks** (Environment, Faith and Spirituality, Israel/Palestine, LGBTQ+, Migration and Refugees, Poverty and Inequality and Reconciliation, Peace and Disarmament), more robust regional structure and clearer routes for Associate Members to be engaged.

2.5 With these refreshed structures, and the beautifully renovated living space at Iona Abbey, we are ready to respond to the increased call we recognise in society for spiritual renewal rooted in a life of justice and peace. In this regard, we continue to ensure that all resources at our islands centres, including the worship in Abbey Church, is accessible to the whole Church, particularly in an ecumenical context.

3. REFRAMING THE FAMILIAR: RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

3.1 Our renewed Abbey centre and refreshed governance and movement structures now need to be matched by a renovation of our infrastructure. This essential task has been long in the pipeline, and the need for it exposed by the fracturing effect of the Covid-19 pandemic. Equally, measures to address issues such as IT, communications, finding appropriate office accommodation and staff team building have been severely hampered by that same pandemic. Staff and volunteers have experienced periods of working within the furlough scheme, while trying to support as much as possible of the ongoing life of the Community and its membership.

3.2 With Iona Abbey closed to guests for a third, unexpected year, we entered 2021 with a large deficit. Council has approved a far-reaching, ambitious Deficit Reduction Plan to guide us from our current 'survive' mode, to a renewed time of thriving.

4. THE SPACES WE INHABIT

4.1 Our annual gathering of Members on Iona was cancelled in 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic. While disappointing for so many, this was also a time for us to re-gather in intentional community through a series of 19 online events during November: Community Month. This experience, of ceilidh and celebration, sharing Member stories, worship and youth events and hearing inspiring input from Rowan Williams and Kim Long, brought together over 100 people at most sessions and allowed our global movement to gather. We truly found, in the words of our daily prayer, 'new ways to touch the lives of all.'

4.2 The global dimension and reach of the Iona Community, highlighted by our connectedness electronically with a wide variety of people during this past year, continues to be stimulating for us. We reaffirm, at the same time, that this cannot take the place of deep, incarnational, human interaction, for which we long.

4.3 Our daily worship is now shared online. We meet weekly for Prayers for Healing, and monthly for our Community Worship. These are patterns of prayer and gathering into which we will continue to lean.

4.4 The living quarters of Iona Abbey, long in need of renewal and renovation, were to be reopened in April 2020. With only a few weeks of the build left to complete the site was locked down in March. A rescheduled formal opening will take place on 7th June 2021 coinciding with celebrations of the 1500th anniversary of the birth of St. Columba. This will take place alongside island celebrations on the completion of the new Iona Village Hall.

4.5 At the end of our **daily prayers** we affirm: 'Gathered and scattered, God is with us.' As an intentionally dispersed community and recognising the blight that the pandemic has been for so many millions of people across the globe, we have, in these last 12 months, discovered afresh 'how good and how lovely it is to live together in community.'

5. IONA LEARN

5.1 As we continue to emerge from the pandemic, we will, with others of good will, continue to augment our learning and our practice, our reflection and action for justice and peace in the world. Our existing programmes and learning opportunities, including our volunteer programme at our islands centres and our New Members Programme, will be brought under the umbrella of 'Iona Learn.' Working with partners we will ensure that these programmes support the flourishing of the whole people of God.

5.2 We rejoiced when on 22nd January 2021 the United Nations Nuclear Ban Treaty came into force. We continue to call, with others, for the Westminster parliament to sign this treaty.

5.3 With our Young Adults Group and their online 'Re-Act' events focussing on food poverty and on the situation of refugees, we continue to press for the end to all forms of poverty across the globe, and the fair and free treatment of all those fleeing oppression or harm. Our **Common Concern Networks** (CCNs) focus our prayers and our actions on a range of issues. In particular, our CCN on Environment is engaged with the work of Scotland's Climate Assembly, and in supporting faith communities to have a voice at COP26, calling for increased and urgent action for climate justice.

5.4 We will continue to strengthen our partnership with educational and other learning institutions, digging deep into our own story of the initial Iona Abbey re-building programme in the 1940s and 1950s which was seen by many as a 'laboratory of learning.' Our focus will remain on equipping and empowering the people of God to live their faith with passion and contemplative commitment in their communities.

5.5 When we are able to welcome guests once more to our islands centres (Iona Abbey and the Camas Centre) through our Unlocked programme, we are committed to ensuring that any spaces are offered, through our partners, to those most in need of renewal, time and space for recovery. Through this programme we will provide holiday space and space to live in community for over 100 participants in 2021.

5.6 Our New Members Programme, a two-year mutual discernment programme focussed on the Rule of Life, is being refreshed in the light of the pandemic, with elements being strengthened through online learning, blending with in-person programmes.

5.7 Our **Wild Goose Resource Group** continues to enable and equip congregations and clergy in the shaping and creation of new forms of contextual and relevant, participative worship. The limitations of this last year may have curtailed their ability to travel, but not the energy and commitment to the work.

5.8 Our publishing house, **Wild Goose Publications**, has continued to deepen and broaden access to radical, faith-filled publications in the face of the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, including staff furlough. In this last 12 months 10 books, 10 eBooks and 34 shorter downloads have been published. 'Columba: politician, penitent and pilgrim', by Ian Bradley, was produced in early 2021, a revised edition to mark the 1500th anniversary of the saint's birth.

6. REFRAMING THE FUTURE

6.1 Like so many small charities, our situation as we emerge out of the Covid-19 pandemic remains precarious. We are deeply grateful to all our supporters who continue to give generously to ensure our survival. Our gratitude also goes to our partners and to other communities of faith which continue to inspire and guide us. Our renewed infrastructure will provide a clear and open route for all who share our vision to join us:

www.iona.org.uk/membership

6.2 In the words of a Young Adult Group member, being part of the Iona Community 'helps me believe in humanity... It helps me live out an active faith focussed on justice.' Our prayer is that this same set of convictions may strengthen each one of us, and the whole Church, as together we follow Christ's call to unity, to justice and to peace.

In the name of the Committee

TOM GORDON, *Convener*

RUTH HARVEY, *Leader*

SARAH METCALFE, *Executive Director*

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL (KNOWN AS CROSSREACH BOARD) MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Commend the dedication, commitment and exceptional effort of all CrossReach staff who have worked throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and have continued to deliver high quality services, in Christ's name, to the people who rely on them for support; expressing particular appreciation and thanks to all of those who have worked on the front line. *(Section 1)*
3. Express alarm at the high rate of drugs deaths in Scotland and instruct CrossReach to work in collaboration with the Faith Impact Forum to hold the Scottish Government to account on its promise to reduce drug deaths and to ensure that the appropriate resources are put in place. *(Section 1)*
4. Celebrate the completion of the Care and Education restructure and commend those involved for working through the significant challenges it has posed. *(Section 1)*
5. Endorse the efforts being made by CrossReach to keep 'The Promise' which has been made to children who have experience of the care system; infants, children, young people, adults and their families - 'that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential'; encourage Presbyteries congregations and individuals in joining with CrossReach to commend this initiative and to do all they can to combat the discrimination and stigma which exists within the current children's care system. *(Section 1)*
6. Note the significant financial challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the additional strain this has caused to CrossReach; celebrate the generous response to the Emergency Coronavirus Appeal from local and international partners without which the organisation would have struggled to offer all that it has to the people it cares for; and encourage Presbyteries, congregations and individual members to continue to offer support through proactive and tangible means. *(Section 3)*
7. Recognise The Guild for their outstanding support of their Project Partners and commend them for working alongside CrossReach to tackle loneliness and isolation over the past three years. *(Section 3)*
8. Note the satisfactory position of the closed Church of Scotland pension scheme in regard to CrossReach and commend the Pension Trustees for their efforts. *(Section 5)*
9. Welcome the findings of the Scottish Parliament commissioned Independent Review into Adult Social Care and those of the Parliament's Health and Sport Committee; note the recommendations made which are needed to improve the current situation for supported people, the social care workforce and unpaid carers; urge Presbyteries, congregations and individuals to get involved in raising awareness of the inequalities in the current system by all possible means and to call for the necessary resources which will begin to address these. *(Section 6)*
10. (a) Note the human and financial impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on CrossReach and the steps being taken to recover;
- (b) note too, the likely future impact of the recommendations of the recent reviews into the structure and funding of the adult social care sector in Scotland; and
- (c) Instruct the Council to report to the General Assembly of 2022 outlining a way forward which takes account of both of these factors and which puts CrossReach on a sustainable footing. *(Section 8)*

Report

1. COVID -19

The emergence of COVID-19 has been significant and all-encompassing, and I am conscious that words alone cannot describe the true impact this has had on everyone, but perhaps more acutely, across our Health and Social Care services and those who work in them. The challenges that have been faced in our emergency response have been substantial and Health and Social Care staff as always have demonstrated what a valuable contribution they make in delivering good patient/client care and quality services.

*Jeanne Freeman (Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport)
(Health and Social Care - Everyone Matters pulse survey: 2020)*

1.1 CrossReach, as one of the largest and most diverse voluntary sector Social Care organisations in Scotland, has been on the frontline of Covid-19 response since the end of February 2020. Throughout that time the Board, Corporate Management Team and 1600+ strong workforce have worked to three main aims:

1.1.1 Protecting service users and staff from a virus which has proved to be most lethal to the very frail and those with complex health problems.

1.1.2 Connecting service users of all ages with the people who matter to them so that in both care homes and communities they were able to combat the worst effects of loneliness and isolation.

1.1.3 Continuing to offer quality services to those who were most in need. Shutting down services, was, in most cases, simply not an option due to the nature of the support offered.

1.1.4 The response to Covid-19 has tested the organisation in a number of ways and has had both personal and financial consequences which will continue to be felt for some time. It has required a significant, sustained and concentrated effort for all involved, but has demanded extraordinary dedication from those working on the front line. They have offered face to face support in residential care homes and supported living settings where there has also been most risk to their own health and wellbeing, and to that of their families. They are due our admiration, thanks and a huge debt of gratitude.

1.2 Protection:

1.2.1 In the very first weeks of the pandemic those working in social care, along with colleagues in health, were faced with a situation for which there was no precedence. As guidance came out it was superseded within days, sometimes hours, of issue and differed for each type of service area. It became clear that access to supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and hand sanitiser would be critical to personal protection. It was also clear that workforce planning would be equally critical to ensure that there were enough staff in services to care for service users and in corporate support roles to allow the organisation to cope. CrossReach needed to target its response and resources to 52 geographical locations from Shetland to Ayrshire, and to people of all ages from the youngest to the oldest in society; all of whom were in vulnerable situations.

1.2.2 In March 2020 the Corporate Management Team set up a contingency planning group of key operational and support staff to oversee the pandemic response. That group have worked tirelessly to interpret guidance from Scottish Government and Health Protection Services or from any other statutory partners who required them to work differently. The group were tasked to pick up on any implementation challenges the guidance posed, to agree safe systems of work across the organisation and to communicate all necessary information to staff. They were also tasked with ensuring that the appropriate resources were in place to help staff deal with the situations in which

they found themselves and that these resources were readily available when most needed.

1.2.3 The organisation was required to run two parallel processes; business as usual and a specific Covid-19 response, although, the two were, necessarily intertwined. Staff in the central support and regional offices were required to work from home wherever possible; some in support offices were redeployed to Covid-19 response specific roles.

1.2.4 Calls for hand-sanitiser and PPE were hugely successful, generously supported by a number of individuals and organisations, including the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. Thanks to the efforts of staff and volunteers they were also able to be distributed across the country without delay. Supply became less of an issue once Scottish Government provision was organised and normal supply chains were re-stocked. Volunteer drivers also helped deliver staff to and from shifts to allow them to avoid travelling on public transport, therefore providing another level of protection.

1.2.5 Over 70 bulletins pointing staff to the most up to date guidance, resources and advice have been issued and a number of e-learning modules designed to support staff in areas like infection prevention control, donning and doffing PPE and in order to support wellbeing. As understanding of the nature of the virus emerged the infection control guidance changed and this had a positive impact to help services keep the virus at bay.

1.2.6 Recruitment, always a challenge within social care, went online as did induction training and mandatory training in areas like infection prevention control, safeguarding and lifting and handling. The new systems and processes worked well, and, by the end of the year, CrossReach reported a net gain in staff overall.

1.2.7 Inspections carried out by the Care Inspectorate and Health and Social Care Partnerships were largely focussed on Infection Prevention Control, and all of the care homes had to adapt to a much more clinical regime with particular pressure on care homes for older people. This has been hard for staff and residents alike as homely settings were suddenly required to work to the same clinical standards as health settings and social distancing became a requirement for all, disrupting the normal daily routines and causing additional distress to some of the residents. However, wherever change has been called for it has been swiftly and sensitively implemented.

1.2.8 Despite all efforts, and mirroring what was happening over the whole of the UK, CrossReach Care Homes for Older People bore the brunt of infection spread in the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic between March and the end June 2020. It was with immense sadness that the board members heard the news of a number of deaths amongst residents in residential care homes at that time and reported this on to Assembly Trustees, as part of the governance procedures. The second wave, from October onwards, brought far fewer deaths of residents but saw infection rates rise amongst the community and housing support services.

1.2.9 Although many staff members also became ill, some critically, it was with deep sadness that we learned of the death of one member of staff from Threshold Edinburgh who tragically lost his life to Covid-19 in February 2021 having been admitted to hospital in December 2020. Some staff members, however, are still struggling with the effects of long Covid-19 and many with the effect on their mental health and wellbeing.

The Board extend their deepest sympathies to all in the CrossReach family who have experienced serious illness or lost a loved one at this time.

1.3 Connection:

1.3.1 Coronavirus provided a number of challenges in terms of keeping people connected to those who mattered

to them, whether family, friends or support workers. Many of the initial solutions were IT based and involved a variety of social media platforms. The change required took an immense and co-ordinated effort between the IT team and operational staff but the investment in the IT strategy and infrastructure, over the year before, paid off and allowed the shift to happen in a very short period of time.

1.3.2 A few services were initially stood down, while alternative ways of delivering them could be developed others had to react more immediately. Residents in care homes and supported living accommodation connected to loved ones by Zoom, Skype or Facetime, with huge success, despite the obvious limitations. Staff working in residential services were provided with ipads or tablets to help them in this task. Grants from overseas Church Partners in Taiwan and Westphalia, as well as from within Scotland, helped to finance these. The Board would wish to record appreciation for the support of Church partners at home and overseas, and thank the Faith Impact Forum for the part in played in supporting these relationships.

1.3.3 Three of our care homes for Older People were recognised for their particular efforts in respect of keeping people connected by the Social Services Council as part of their 'Inspiring Care Stories' series. Whinnieknowe in Nairn and St Margaret's in Polmont were recognised under the 'communication, sharing learning and ideas' category, and Cameron House in Inverness under the 'communities, connections and networks' category.

<https://www.sssc.uk.com/careers-and-education/inspiring-care-stories/#comms>

1.3.4 Day services, such as Morven Day Service which supports people with severe and enduring mental health issues to live at home, and community services, such as Heart for Art which offers support to those affected by dementia, migrated online. Additional support as needed was offered by telephone. Tayside Support Services, which runs community based projects in Dundee for people affected by drug and alcohol issues, provided two weekly online recovery groups, individual recovery support sessions and groups for women affected by addiction issues. A grant from Connecting Scotland allowed for the purchase of 21 tablets and data for those in recovery. This made a huge difference for people, enabling them to continue receiving support but also helping them in many other ways.

1.3.5 Thanks to a Scottish Government Wellbeing grant of £90K the whole counselling service migrated onto the NHS hosted platform Attend Anywhere. Over 80 counsellors were trained in cyber counselling and adapted to a new way of working. With the help of Scotland's Tech Army a new referral app was developed allowing people to manage their counselling appointments in a different way.

1.3.6 In the first wave of the pandemic the education campus at Erskine Waterfront Campus became a food assembly and distribution centre for families known to our services which were funded and delivered in partnership with the Peter Vardy Foundation. Pupils, who all have additional learning needs, adapted well to online lessons. The success of the move to online schooling was recognised by the Education Scotland National Improvement Hub as part of their sharing good practice initiative.

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/scotland-learns/what-scotland-learned/our-school-and-community/erskine-waterfront-campus/>

1.3.7 Daisy Chain, a family support service in Govanhill, and Sunflower Garden, which supports children affected by parental substance use, developed a series of educational videos and story-telling initiatives to help children come to terms with what was happening and connect them with support workers during the initial lockdown.

1.3.8 A successful application to the Scottish Government's Connecting Scotland fund resulted in

CrossReach being awarded 40 devices along with data packages to give to families who were unable to connect to the internet. CrossReach Glasgow Children's Services were able to distribute these to families who were without internet connection or relying on very old technology. The manager from Polmont Visitor Centre distributed a number of these devices to families affected by a loved one's imprisonment including to a kinship carer in Glasgow who was looking after two young children whose mother was in prison. They had not been able to visit their Mum or do a virtual visit for nearly a year and the new device provided allowed them to take up that opportunity. It was an emotional reunion for all.

1.3.9 In the housing support services staff continued to visit those who needed help to manage essential tasks for their daily living while finding other ways of connecting them to the people and activities which kept them independent and active. In Threshold Support Services supporting people with a learning disability to live independently, they were able to offer people and families alternative services, including one to one walks from home, and later developed outside Groups and an online Programme. Weekly well-being calls were offered. As community groups like ten pin bowling or gym sessions were closed a completely different programme was put together with the Drama, Creative Writing and Dance Group going online from the Day Centre, which people could access from home and which allowed this particularly vulnerable group to access support while shielding.

1.3.10 While the Covid-19 pandemic has certainly brought about many difficulties, the quick adoption of IT solutions has allowed some significant and potentially long term changes to take place, both in the way that we support people who use our services, and in the way that we conduct our business. CrossReach will continue to build on the beneficial use of IT and invest in innovative ways of working, in line with the recently approved IT strategy.

1.4 Continuing to provide quality services

1.4.1 Due to the frontline nature of the work CrossReach staff were recognised as key workers and, similar to the NHS, very few were furloughed. Staff members were required to be at their place of work or redeployed elsewhere. Emergency terms and conditions were negotiated to allow the organisation to respond to the guidance coming out from Scottish Government and staff were given access to the additional training and support needed to allow them to continue to care for others.

1.4.2 Local Authorities continued to commission services, although there was a welcome halt to competitive tendering, and services continued to be subject to inspection by the Care Inspectorate. Despite the competing pressures and challenges faced CrossReach continued to provide as many services and as much support as possible.

1.5 Older People Services

1.5.1 There has been intense and prolonged scrutiny of care homes for older people throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. They have been subject to a different inspection regime which has concentrated on onerous clinical guidance well beyond the standards usually expected of them. They have also had to adjust their routines for residents in order to support guidance around social distancing, are being subject to Covid-19 testing three times a week and have worn full PPE for many months. In the absence of family they have also provided much needed comfort and support to residents. Media interest on the running of care homes has been unprecedented and often vitriolic. The First Minister has been asked to run an Inquiry into the handling of the guidance and support to care homes in the early stages of the pandemic which she has now committed to doing at the most appropriate point. It has been a hugely difficult and anxiety provoking time for managers and staff alike.

1.5.2 However, despite the limitations and additional constraints imposed staff have continued the job of quietly looking after residents and giving them the best quality of life possible with many of the usual activities taking place, even if in a slightly different way.

1.5.3 One of the most challenging situations was facilitating family contact with the possibility of meeting indoors being severely curtailed. Essential visits were offered inside the homes throughout the pandemic and window visits or online visits had a good take up when indoor visiting was not possible. Every care home had moved to indoor visiting just prior to Christmas 2020 but had to curtail activity again with the National lockdown on 26th December. Recognising the detrimental effects for residents of being separated from their loved ones, and their right to a family life, CrossReach were pleased to contribute to and support implementation of the new visiting guidance, 'Open with Care' from 1st March.

1.5.4 Over the year residents were encouraged to take part in many different activities including indoor bowling, playlists for life, dancing, and pamper days. Birthdays and anniversaries were given particular attention with one 90th Birthday celebration making the local press in Nairn.

1.5.5 *Mrs Mackay, was treated to some birthday pampering, her favourite tea of scampi and chips and best of all, a socially distant celebration with her family in the garden. Commenting on the day, Sandy Wregg (son) said, "We didn't think we would be able to see mum, except for a Skype given the Covid-19 restrictions. The staff, however, pulled out all the stops to mark the occasion and, following the latest social distancing guidelines, arranged a rota to allow not one but three separate birthdays to be celebrated over the course of the day. It was so good to be able to see mum albeit from a safe distance with appropriate masks supplied by staff, and also to catch up with the staff themselves who have become an extended family since mum moved there.*

1.5.6 In November Heart for Art provided the exhibition for 'Elcho Artspace' a digital picture gallery hosted by Longniddry Parish Church. 30 beautiful and diverse pictures were exhibited. The Moderator, as part of his scheduled CrossReach time, previewed the exhibition and admitted to being "lost for words" at the quality of the work and the impact this service is having on the lives of the people who attend the classes and for their family members. The Moderator was introduced to artist Carol and her husband, Malcolm who shared something of their journey with dementia, and the huge benefits they have experienced through Heart for Art.

1.5.7 CrossReach was pleased also to work in collaboration with Capital Theatres on a series of short stories adapted for film for anyone who might enjoy a calming and relaxing story. The stories, written by and for people living with dementia, were delivered in a calming environment with a gentle pace and soothing tone. Three residents from the Elms, specialist dementia care home, Edinburgh were delighted to take part.

1.5.8 The aim of the project was to provide an opportunity to relax through listening to the spoken word for those suffering from anxiety / distress that can come if experiencing the phenomenon of sundowning, as the day changes to night.

<https://www.capitaltheatres.com/raise-the-curtain/sundown-stories>

1.6 Adult Care

1.6.1 It has been recognised that the pandemic posed additional challenges to those who were homeless. CrossReach supported the emergency response in a number of ways, working in partnership with other organisations to do so, while continuing to offer its regular supported accommodation and services. At Cunningham House, a supported living hostel in Edinburgh, one of the residents

spoke movingly of his journey off the streets after 14 years to a place where he could be ready to take on his own tenancy, paying particular tribute to his support worker.

<https://www.crossreach.org.uk/news/the-skys-the-limit>

1.6.2 In another first, the recovery volunteers' programme went online with a virtual graduation being held in February 2020. The programme helps those recovering from addiction or a mental health breakdown by offering bespoke advice, training and support so that they can help others going through volunteering or paid employment opportunities. This was the 11th successful year of the training programme, with 12 volunteers graduating, and a previous graduate being recognised for gaining an SVQ 2 in Social Care.

1.6.3 Among the graduates was William who now volunteers at Allarton, a residential service for adults experiencing mental health issues.

1.6.4 *"I was in addiction with alcohol for nearly two years and went through the CrossReach 12 week programme at the CrossReach Residential Recovery Service (CRRS). I went into Move On accommodation with CrossReach and am now in a flat of my own. "I heard about the programme from staff and other volunteers and asked about them how they became volunteers. They told me that I'd get a chance at the end of the 12 week programme and so when staff approached me about it I thought I'd give it a try. "I'd done social care before but I wanted to give a wee bit back as I know how much the service relied on volunteers for taking people to appointments. "There's so much about the training that stands out but the group work was really good, seeing how other people would deal with different scenarios and being with people who saw things differently. It also helped to build the confidence that I lacked. "The people I'm helping now know I've been through the programme. They know I've 'been there' and that I can relate to them - that's a good working relationship there. It also gives them encouragement as well, that there's light at the end of the tunnel."*

1.6.5 The stories of those in recovery were particularly poignant in the light of the drug death statistics published just a few weeks earlier which highlighted just how serious this issue remains for Scotland, and the importance of residential rehabilitation to recovery. CrossReach has welcomed the renewed focus on addictions services and would call on the Faith Impact Forum to collaborate with them in continuing to call for the necessary resources so that further deaths can be prevented.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-55184961>

1.6.6 A new Advocacy and Support service, covering Lewis and Harris, started in summer 2020; this provides a vital link to people with a range of support needs and augments the health and social care services in the islands. To begin such work during a period of social restrictions has been difficult but the staff have been creative and resilient enough to maintain support during the pandemic.

1.6.7 Allarton, previously a residential service for those with severe and enduring mental health issues, has also successfully implemented a new model; that of housing support to individuals in their own tenancies, in a purpose-built block of flats. A first for Mental Health services in Glasgow, Allarton has been described by commissioners as a 'flagship' service.

1.7 Children and Family Services

1.7.1 Several years of careful planning concluded in January when the move out of Ballikinrain residential school was completed and the children moved into the final two houses in Strathblane and Port Glasgow. CrossReach now provides care and education to around 30 children and young people in seven small community houses with the education campus at Erskine acting as a central hub. This restructure has taken a number of years but the aim remains the same and will lead to a greater sense of belonging and community for the children and young people entrusted to CrossReach's

care. It will allow the relational and attachment models of care, on which the service is built, to achieve better longer term outcomes for the young people by providing something more akin to a normal family life.

1.7.2 This is an important step for the Residential Care and Education services, particularly in the light of the review of the children's care system which reported in 2020 and called for the types of change which CrossReach had already been making. At the point of concluding, the Care Review has listened to over 5,500 experiences. Over half of the voices were children and young people with experience of the 'care system', adults who had lived in care, and lots of different types of families. The remaining voices came from the paid and unpaid workforce. It was their stories that guided the Care Review and it is their experiences that have shaped everything the Care Review has concluded. The Board have committed to keeping 'The Promise', which is based on the recommendations coming out of a review of the care system to which a number of care experienced children from CrossReach, contributed. The Board would call on the wider Church to think of ways that they can support children who are in the care system by signing up to 'The Promise'.

<https://thepromise.scot/>

1.7.3 Families with a loved one in prison have had a particularly challenging time throughout the Covid-19 pandemic with visits severely restricted and arrangements changing frequently. Staff at the Prison Visitors' Centres have continued to support families over this time. In only a 3 month period from September to December HMP Polmont Visitor Centre staff supported nearly 1000 families who were struggling. The introduction of virtual visits has helped families to stay in touch but it is a tricky system to navigate for families and Visitor Centre staff have been key in making sure families are able to access it.

1.7.4 HMP Polmont Visitor Centre staff accessed books from a charity called Give A Book, to enable those in custody to read the same book with their child at home over the video calls.

1.7.5 One mum in prison said "*I absolutely love reading with him on the Video Call, it's something different to do*".

1.7.5 HMP Perth Visitor Centre were pleased to receive a donation at Christmas of over 200 presents from Houston Parish Church which were distributed by centre staff to children before Christmas. The Board greatly appreciate the continuing support from churches across Scotland, without their help CrossReach would struggle to maintain the services provided by these centres.

2. STAFF WELLBEING

2.1 As the months progressed the toll on staff throughout the organisation became evident due to the relentless and critical nature of what they were being required to take on over a protracted period of time. For those working in face to face services, particularly where there had been high levels of infection amongst staff and service users, there were reports of whole staff groups experiencing trauma and exhaustion.

2.1.1 There were a number of internal and external support systems already in place, including an occupational health scheme, an employee assistance programme which offers access to counselling, and a Government led helpline where staff could be signposted to wellbeing resources. However senior staff realised that more was going to be needed to continue to be able to support staff well. The Moderator remotely joined a group of staff recounting their experiences as part of his scheduled time with CrossReach, and recognised the mental health and wellbeing issues faced by the workforce, paying tribute to their efforts.

2.1.2 A small group of staff came together to work on a wellbeing initiative which has seen the introduction of volunteer wellbeing champions in every service to be a first

port of call when people find themselves struggling. The wellbeing champions are trained and equipped with the tools and resources they need to help others. This initiative is still in its infancy but has been well received.

2.1.3 The introduction of vaccines and Covid-19 testing has introduced additional levels of protection for supported people and staff and has helped reduce anxiety. By 25th February 2021 all residents in care homes for adults had been offered the Covid-19 vaccine and the roll out into community and housing support services had begun. By the end of Feb 2021, 1033 members of staff had received their first dose of a vaccine with some having received a second.

2.1.4 The CrossReach Board welcomed the Scottish Government prioritisation of frontline social care workers, care home residents and people with Covid-19 related vulnerabilities when it came to the roll out of the vaccine programme and would commend the relative ease with which the vaccination programme has been rolled out in care home settings in particular.

2.1.5 As an additional support a new devotional resource has recently been issued by CrossReach to all services and to the senior management team. It was commissioned following a request from staff for an up to date daily devotional book as part of the 150 years anniversary project in 2019. It pulls on individual contributions from staff and Board members as well as Sanctuary First. This has been well received and the Chair of the staff representative body recently thanked the Board for supporting this initiative.

2.1.6 The Board would like to express appreciation to the Moderator for finding creative ways to link with CrossReach this year, for supporting the recent prayer share, and for his continued focus on mental health and wellbeing.

3. SUPPORTERS

3.1 The Emergency Coronavirus Appeal was given exceptional support by congregations and individuals across Scotland and from overseas. People were both generous in their giving and in the time they dedicated to various events including the 2.6 challenge, grey cake bakes, soup lunches and virtual kiltwalks.

3.1.1 The Guild pledged their support and agreed to change the focus of the Partnership Project to support the emergency appeal, realising that by doing so they were continuing to support the original aims of Join Up The Dots, by helping CrossReach to combat loneliness and isolation. An incredible total of over £57,000 has been raised over the three year period for this project and CrossReach have enjoyed all of the many benefits of being Guild Partners over that time.

3.1.2 Volunteers supported in many ways. People prayed, sewed scrubs and washing bags, delivered gifts to services, and acted as volunteer drivers to show they cared about CrossReach and its people.

3.1.3 The Assembly Trustees have been and continue to be supportive throughout, fully recognising the efforts being taken by staff in all roles throughout the organisation and offering guidance, resources and a much appreciated pandemic payment.

3.1.4 The Board wish to thank all who have come alongside CrossReach at this time and who, with generosity of spirit have done so much to ensure the work of the organisation was recognised and resourced in so many different ways.

4. COVID-19 PANDEMIC: RECOVERY AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.1 Recovery from Covid-19 will take some time. Increased insurance costs, enhanced sickness benefit arrangements and requirements for clinical waste and additional PPE and cleaning have all added to the costs of

continuing to run services, while reduced occupancy in some areas has significantly reduced income.

4.1.1 Recognising that the social care sector would experience financial difficulty during the pandemic, but that the services were going to be much needed, the Scottish Government released a number of different funding streams to support the sector as a whole. CrossReach has been able to access some of these funds.

4.1.2 This financial support has been both necessary and welcome. However, it has been slow to come in and insufficient to fully meet costs, leading to a significant financial deficit being reported at year end.

4.1.3 Prior to February 2020, when the pandemic first hit, the senior management team had set out a path to sustainability, as reported to the General Assembly in 2019.

4.1.4 The actions which were identified have been followed through in all operational service areas. The Board were pleased to note the progress made on a number of fronts, with significant improvements being reported in recruitment, a welcome corresponding decrease in agency use and the potential for increased income following a review of pricing structures. The action taken has also seen a remodelling of the fundraising department in order to diversify voluntary income streams.

5. PENSION

5.1 One of the areas which had been of long term concern to sustainability was the deficit carried in the CrossReach part of the closed Church of Scotland Pension Scheme, and the level of contributions required by CrossReach to bring that to a point where it was fully funded. The Pension Trustees have worked with CrossReach over the past couple of years to explore options for their part of the scheme and in January 2021 reported that the scheme was fully funded. This has allowed contributions to cease as long as the fund remains in that position. The Board would like to thank the Pension Trustees for their collaborative approach to this issue over the past couple of years and note their satisfaction at the current funding position some four years earlier than anticipated.

5.1.1 It now remains to be seen whether these actions together with assumptions being made about recovery from the additional impacts of Covid -19 will be enough to ensure longer term sustainability or whether further action will be necessary.

5.1.2 The Board will continue to work with Senior Managers to assess progress, identify risks to recovery and take any additional steps necessary.

6. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF SOCIAL CARE

6.1 One of the factors which will impact the future strategy and funding of CrossReach is the recently published report of the Scottish Parliament commissioned Independent Review of Adult Social Care. The review was set up in September 2020 and was chaired by Derek Feeley, a former Scottish Government Director General for Health and Social Care and Chief Executive of NHS Scotland. Mr Feeley was supported by an Advisory Panel of Scottish and international experts.

6.1.1 The principal aim of the review was to recommend improvements to adult social care in Scotland, primarily in terms of the outcomes achieved by people who use services, their carers and families, and the experience of people who work in adult social care.

6.1.2 CrossReach put forward a submission to the Inquiry in November 2020 and also supported the submissions for Scottish Care and the Coalition of Care Providers Scotland, and the social care provider representative bodies, who have lobbied hard for change and who have also been crucial in

their role as champions for the social care sector, both throughout the pandemic and over many years before.

6.1.3 While recognising that there is much to be positive about the Review, it makes 53 recommendations in total and sets out the need for the narrative about social care to be fundamentally changed.

6.1.4 *We need to start by challenging some of the prevailing narrative about social care support. It has its fair share of challenges, as this report will recognise and tackle, but it need not be unsustainable, or in crisis, or confined to the margins of society. Strong and effective social care support is foundational to the flourishing of everyone in Scotland. It is a good investment in our economy and in our citizens. (Independent Review of Adult Social Care)*

6.1.5 In particular there is a focus on moving from crisis intervention to crisis prevention and support for wellbeing. It also suggests that social care should be seen as a vehicle for independent living, so that people can live in the place they would wish to and surrounded by the people who matter to them. It recommends that a human rights based approach underpin social care for the future.

6.1.6 There is a recognition that there should be funding for grass roots initiatives in local communities, and that people who use support should be more fully involved in the design and delivery of services. It makes sweeping recommendations about how services should be commissioned by arguing against competitive tendering which is highly disruptive to supported people and staff alike, and asks for much more collaborative models of commissioning services. It also underlines the need to ensure that self-directed support, where people can hold their own budget and make their own support arrangements, is properly understood by people so that they can have more control over their own lives.

6.1.7 The Review Team called for an overhaul of the National Care Home contract which is the funding mechanism for care homes for older people, and asks some significant questions around the future care models to support older people so that they can continue to stay at home for as long as they want to or are able to.

6.1.8 Importantly the review recognised the need to value the social care workforce for the skills and expertise the staff working in it bring to supported people. Recruitment and retention of staff are key issues for CrossReach and although headway has been made over the past year there remain a significant number of vacancies. Turnover in the sector is high at nearly 30% each year, and although CrossReach has a turnover of around 12% it often means recruitment effort is expended in replacement for staff, rather than gaining ground. The Review puts this down to the way in which the workforce is valued by society and remunerated.

6.1.9 *The social care workforce in Scotland is so notably disadvantaged because it is highly gendered. The sector is about 83% female. Were it 83% male, it simply would not be marginalised and undervalued as it is. (Independent Review of Adult Social Care)*

6.1.10 It recommends that change is made by ensuring that the workforce are given better access to training, given opportunities to develop and that they are better paid. It also recommends that the findings of the Fair Work in Scotland's Social Care report, highlighted to the General Assembly in 2019, are fully implemented.

6.1.11 One of the changes recommended is around future structure and accountability for social care support. The Review team recommend that this should move from local government to Scottish Ministers, and a Minister should be appointed with specific responsibility for Social Care.

6.1.12 *A National Care Service for Scotland should be established in statute along with, on an equal footing,*

NHS Scotland, with both bodies reporting to Scottish Ministers. The National Care Service should oversee local commissioning and procurement of social care and support by reformed Integration Joint Boards, with services procured from Local Authorities and third and independent sector providers. (Independent Review of Adult Social Care)

6.1.13 The National Care Service would also oversee the conditions under which the workforce carry out their tasks and the way in which they are remunerated.

6.1.14 The report was debated by Scottish Parliament in February 2021 and was given broad support. It is too early to assess what impact it will have, particularly as the issue of how to finance the changes needed have not been settled.

6.1.15 The Board have welcomed the report and the commitments it makes to both supported people and to the workforce but recognises that there is a lot of work yet to do before change comes. In addition, while the report makes some very helpful recommendations it does not directly address the tie up with Children and Family Services, nor does it talk to homelessness or criminal justice directly, and further detail on each of these areas is being sought.

6.1.16 A compelling short film has been made outlining the need for change, which features one of our former service users now in recovery.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bEt9NwtXpE

6.1.17 The full report can be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.scot/groups/independent-review-of-adult-social-care/>

6.1.18 The Scottish Parliament's Health and Sport Committee also published their report on Adult Social Care in February. The Chief Executive has given direct evidence twice to that committee twice and care home managers have contributed through a written submission.

6.1.19 The Health and Sport Committee report makes broadly similar recommendations to the Independent Review of Adult Social Care and calls for a national conversation about the future of social care and support in Scotland.

6.1.20 *We need to increase public understanding of the role of social care and support, to increase society's value of the sector and the recruitment and retention of staff. We need to improve the status of carers and the way they are treated.*

https://www.parliament.scot/S5_HealthandSportCommittee/Reports/The_Future_of_Social_Care_and_Support_in_Scotland.pdf

7. CHILD ABUSE INQUIRY AND REDRESS SCHEME

7.1 The Chief Executive Officer of CrossReach was called to give evidence to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry in October 2021. The evidence called for concerned the Church of Scotland's participation in Child Migrant Schemes between 1948 and 1961. Over that time a small number of children between the ages of 7 and 16 were migrated from Church of Scotland homes directly to Dhurringile Farm in Australia. The Church of Scotland Social Services Council also acted as a member of the Council of Voluntary Organisations for Child Emigration between 1951 and 1959 and as such oversaw the migration of around 100 children from other voluntary organisations to Dhurringile.

7.1.1 In the late 1950s Dhurringile was identified as a place which ran a harsh and abusive regime and many years later was examined by the Australian Child Abuse Inquiry based on reports of both physical and sexual abuse it had received from former residents. While the Church of Scotland did not play a large part in child migration overall the part it did play had a significant and mainly detrimental effect on the lives of those migrated. It is now recognised

that the whole policy of child migration was flawed as it did not build in enough safeguards for young children, and many went on to be abused rather than given the opportunities which had been hoped for.

7.1.2 The Convener of the Board offered apology to all children who had been migrated either directly from homes run by the Social Services Council or through the auspices of the Church of Scotland.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-54387212>

7.1.3 The Board wish to record appreciation to the Procurator to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and to the Law Department for their significant support to the Chief Executive both prior to and during the hearing.

7.1.4 There is now a call for organisations to contribute to the redress scheme currently being set up by the Scottish Government through the Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Bill which will pass through Parliament by March 2021. The Bill seeks to establish a financial redress scheme for survivors of historical child abuse, and, where eligible, their next of kin. The purpose of the scheme is to acknowledge and provide tangible recognition of harm as a result of historical child abuse in relevant care settings in Scotland. The scheme will also provide access to some non-financial redress elements - such as acknowledgement, apology and support.

7.1.5 The scheme provides an opportunity for those bodies and organisations involved who have recognised that abuse occurred within their own settings to meaningfully participate in the national, collective endeavour to recognise the harms of the past.

7.1.6 While CrossReach fully supports the intent behind the Bill in making appropriate redress to survivors, and would wish the Church of Scotland to participate, it was recognised that there were some significant barriers to participation including that of affordability.

7.1.7 CrossReach, Aberlour and Quarriers have been working together to engage with Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament Education and Skills Committee to try to resolve challenges and to find a way to meaningfully participate, without affecting overall sustainability. They have been supported in this by The Church of Scotland Law Department and the lead officer for Parliamentary engagement within the Faith Impact Forum.

7.1.8 The Board would wish to find an appropriate way forward so that a fair and meaningful voluntary contribution can be made and appropriate apology continue to be given. They are working with the Assembly Trustees in that regard.

8. THE CROSSREACH BOARD

8.1 In June 2020 the CrossReach governing body was reconstituted as a board of 12 members, in line with the decision of the General Assembly in October 2019. CrossReach has been fortunate in retaining and attracting board members with significant relevant expertise, to support the management team and provide the standard of governance appropriate to a major charity with annual turnover of £40 million and employing 1700 staff across 70 services. The Board operates under extensive delegated authority from the Assembly Trustees. The relative responsibilities continue to be refined but there are close and productive working relationships in place with the Trustees and the Chief Officer.

8.1.1 CrossReach operates in a difficult commercial environment which has been accentuated during the pandemic. As that crisis recedes the key task of the Board is to work with the Chief Executive and her colleagues in developing longer term strategies for the organisation to prosper in the post pandemic environment. These strategies will have to be developed to respond to an environment that

is now subject to rapid change, potentially positive as well as negative. On the downside, a changing pattern of demand for residential care for older people is just one of the challenges faced in assuring sustainability. On the positive side there is a welcome recognition in the report of the Independent Inquiry that social care has been undervalued by society for many years, which raises the hope of improvements in both commissioning and funding to the benefit of the sector as a whole. As these trends play out the Church as a whole should have confidence that there is the necessary quality of both management and governance to support the "Care you can put your faith in".

9. FINANCE

9.1 CrossReach sustained a deficit of £2.4m, before historical pension costs, in 2020. This outturn was significantly affected by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and was £1.1m worse than budget, though better than initial projections at the outset of the pandemic had indicated.

9.1.1 The total income received was £44,018m against expenditure of £46,536m excluding gain/loss from property sale, pension deficit payment, and investment unrealised gains/losses.

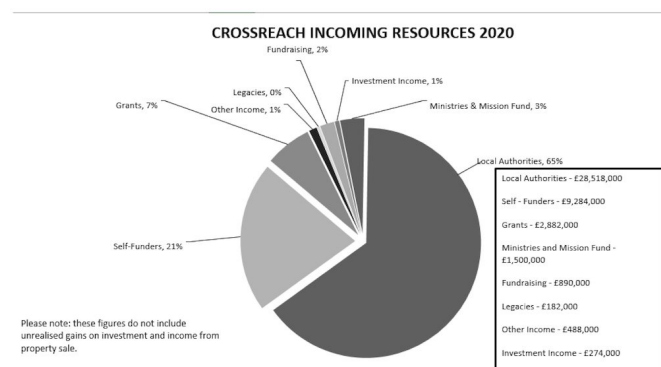
9.1.2 In Older People Services occupancy, and consequently income, was severely reduced. While there were some supports from Government in this regard, they were not sufficient to bridge the gap, and delays in payment put pressure on cashflow.

9.1.3 In addition, the pandemic led to increased costs in relation to PPE, cleaning and infection control materials, and staffing. The latter related to cover for increased sickness absence arising from required isolation or positive tests. Again, promised support from Government was difficult to access, and was slow to arrive.

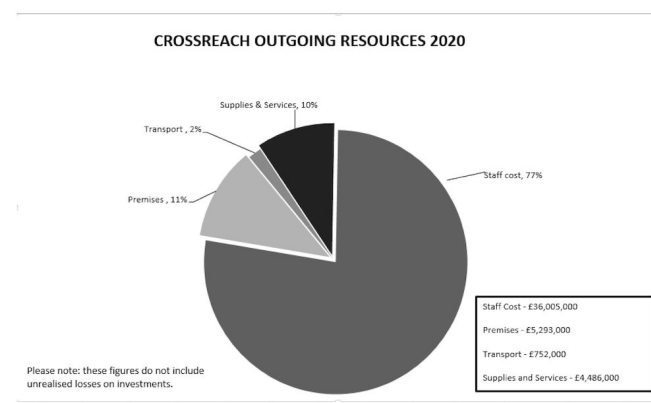
9.1.4 By the end of 2020 Older People Services, which was worst hit financially, had sustained an increased deficit. The other operational areas were broadly in line with budget, although the late exit from Ballikinrain, which was not Covid-19 related, did have an adverse effect on Children and Family Services.

9.1.5 The graphs below show the profile of income and expenditure in 2020, with income showing a reduction in reliance on self-funders and an increase in grant income which compensates for a fall in legacies. The expenditure graph shows an increase in the level of staff costs from 74% of expenditure in 2019 to 77% in 2020.

9.1.6 CrossReach Incoming Resources



9.1.7 CrossReach Outgoing Resources



10. QUALITY

10.1 Care Inspectorate

10.1.1 CrossReach has 56 services which are inspected by the Care Inspectorate.

10.1.2 As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, initially some inspections were suspended but subsequently some services were inspected on the following new theme:-

10.1.3 How Good is our Care and Support during Covid-19 Pandemic

10.1.4 A total of 5 services were inspected on this theme and one service was graded Good, 3 services were graded adequate and one service was graded weak

10.1.5 Existing framework

10.1.6 The new inspection methodology which reflects the new Health and Social Care Standards still continues to be rolled out on a phased basis. It commenced with Older People's Services and continues to be rolled out to Adult Care and now Children & Family Services. Currently, 26 of our services have been inspected under the new methodology. The remaining services will continue to be inspected under the current framework until inspected under the new methodology.

10.1.7 Grades are awarded for each inspection theme and range from 1 – unsatisfactory through to 6 – Excellent.

10.1.8 The Care Inspectorate grades have again been split between the new methodology and not new methodology. To simplify the results, for the purposes of this report and on a transitional basis only please find below the themes which have been covered in inspections across both methodology - these are set out below as at 31 January 2021:-

10.1.9 Not new Inspection Methodology

10.1.10 Quality of Care and Support

100% of our registered services inspected on this theme achieved a grade of at least 4 = Good, with 65% receiving Very Good (5) or Excellent (6).

10.1.11 Quality of Management and Leadership

91% of our registered services inspected on this theme achieved a grade of at least 4 – Good, with 61% achieving Very Good (5).

10.1.12 New Inspection Methodology

10.1.13 How well do we support people's wellbeing

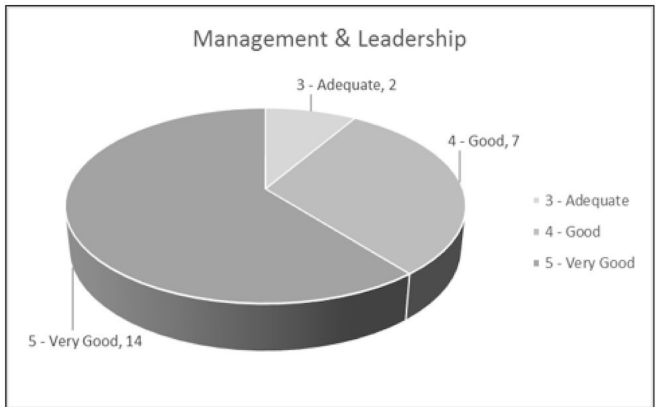
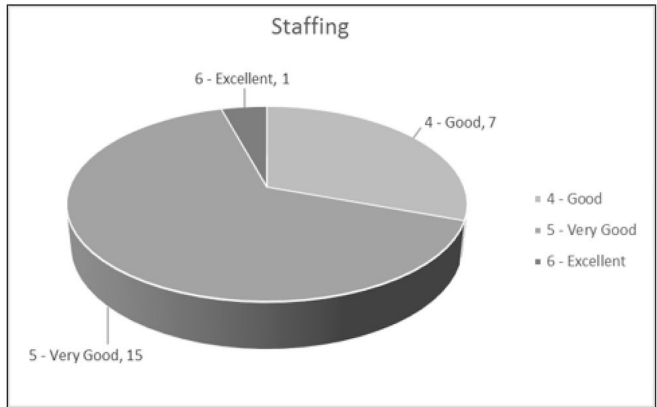
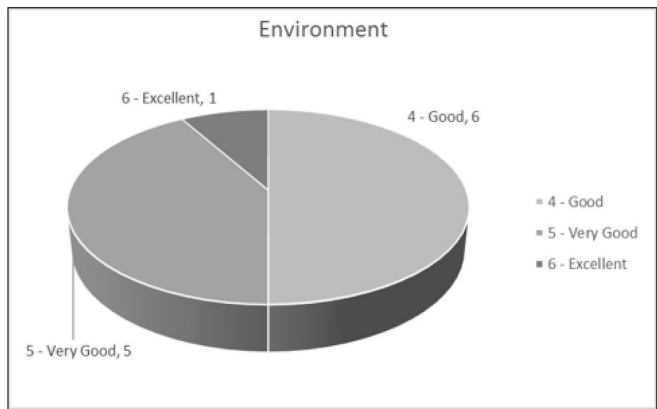
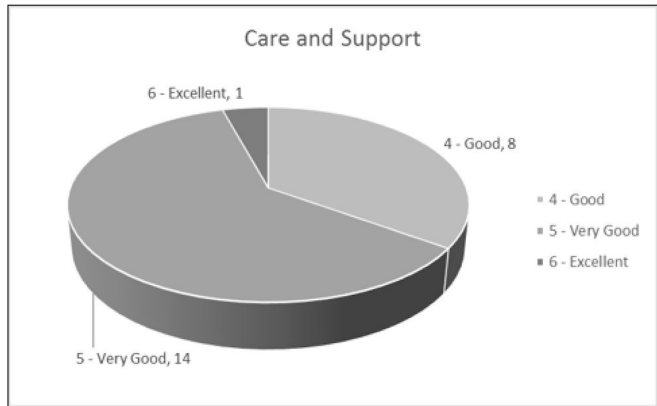
85% of our registered services inspected on this key question achieved a grade of at least 4 – Good, with 58% achieving Very Good (5)

10.1.14 How well is our care and support planned

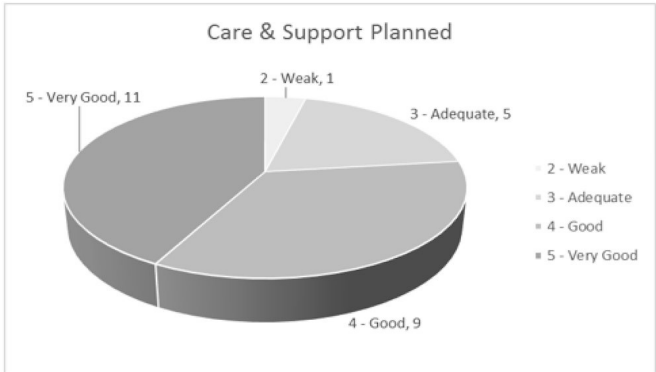
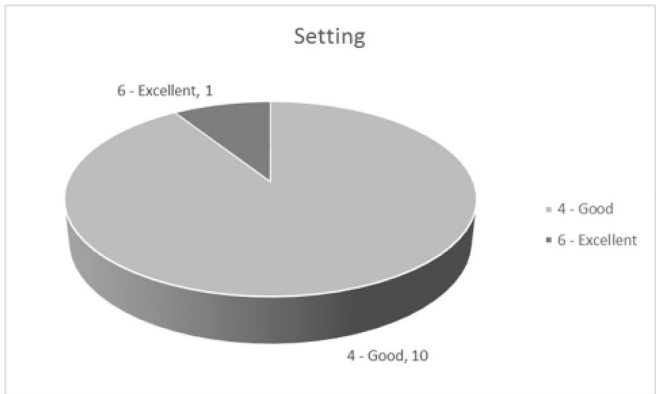
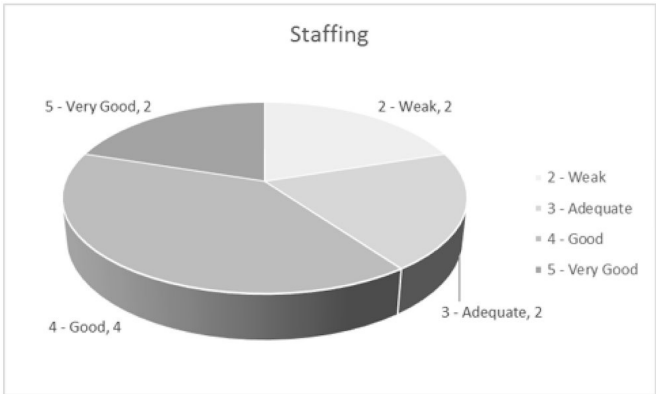
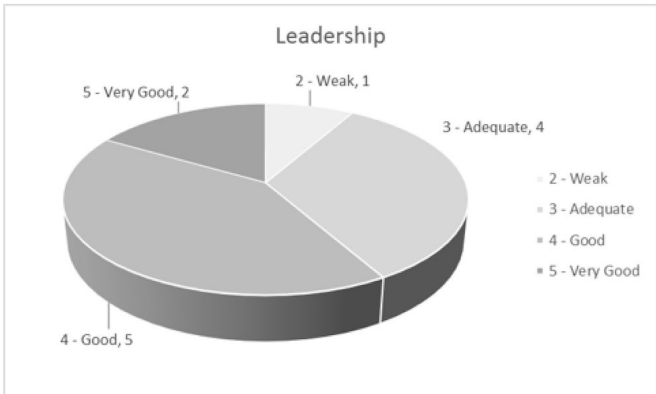
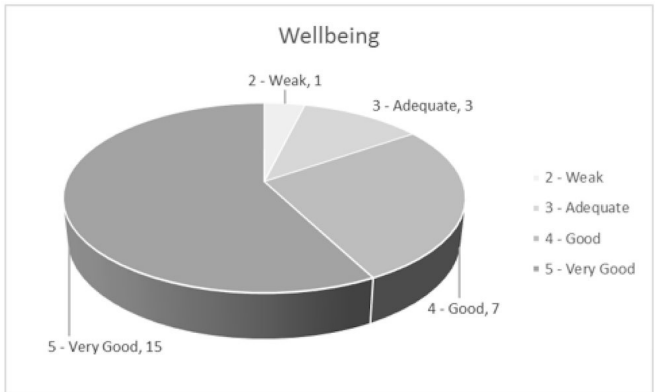
77% of our registered services inspected on this key question achieved a grade of at least 4 – Good, with 42% achieving Very Good (5)

10.1.15 There are a very small number of services where the Care Inspectorate have reviewed against all inspection themes however for the most part this is not deemed necessary.

10.1.16 CARE INSPECTORATE GRADES – NOT NEW METHODOLOGY



10.1.17 CARE INSPECTORATE GRADES - NEW METHODOLOGY



10.2 Comparison of Employee numbers between 2019 and 2020

| | Comparison of Employee Numbers between 2019 and February 2020 | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------|-----------|------|-------|------|----------------------|---------|
| | Full Time | | Part Time | | Total | | Full Time Equivalent | |
| | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | 2020 | 2019 | 2020 |
| Operations Staff | 397 | 408 | 765 | 755 | 1162 | 1163 | 897.34 | 904.7 |
| Relief Staff | | | 435 | 439 | 435 | 439 | 100.32* | 98.60* |
| Executive, Office Support Staff | 65 | 63 | 33 | 31 | 98 | 94 | 84.13 | 81.49 |
| Total | 462 | 471 | 1233 | 1225 | 1695 | 1696 | 1081.79 | 1084.78 |

* Figure calculated as average FTE per month

10.3 People Development Training

10.3.1 Personal and Professional development is one of the key pillars of the quality assurance at CrossReach and previous investment in on line training was hugely beneficial during the pandemic. The online learning platform very successfully supported remote learning in facilitated groups to take place. A very successful online induction process means that new recruits now join services having met the standard required in areas of infection control, safeguarding and data protection. Throughout 2020 247 staff were inducted and this has become our preferred way of delivering this training, welcomed by new employees and managers alike.

10.3.2 A wide range of training opportunities are available from induction, moving and handling to the administration of medicines. We currently offer 43 different e-learning courses.

10.4 Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) Statistics

10.4.1 Of the current workforce 98% of those who require to be registered are. 78% of those registered are fully qualified with the remaining 22% working towards achieving their relevant qualification.

10.5 Staff Qualifications achieved

| 2020 | | |
|---------|------------------------------------|-------|
| Award | Title | Total |
| PDA | Administration of Medication | 13 |
| PDA | Health and Social Care Supervision | 5 |
| Diploma | Business Studies | 1 |
| HNC | Childcare | 1 |
| SVQ | Social Services and Health Care L2 | 7 |
| SVQ | Social Services and Health Care L3 | 15 |
| SVQ | Health and Social Care L4 | 1 |
| BA | Education and Social Services | 1 |
| SVQ | Management | 1 |
| SVQ | Social Care | 2 |
| Total | | 47 |

10.5.1 In 2019, a total of 59 qualifications were achieved. In 2020 the pandemic has considerably affected the organisation's ability to assess and internally verify qualifications. However the 47 gained is a significant achievement given that many other organisations simply stopped assessing.

10.5.2 Regrettably, the pandemic meant that CrossReach were unable to recognise our staff achievements at our annual awards ceremony. A revised format is being explored for 2021 to recognise staff achievements over this year and last year.

10.6. Narrative

10.6.1 Human Resources and Organisational Development staff quickly responded to different ways of working and revised systems and processes in order to maximise support to operational services during these difficult times. Some of the changes implemented in late 2019 assisted in the

transition to remote working such as the introduction of staff email accounts and the move to issuing contracts of employment electronically.

10.6.2 In March with the unknown impact on staff absence by Covid-19, urgent steps were taken to expand the workforce through the advertisement of relief and voluntary workers through social media campaigns. Communications were issued to:

- staff who had recently retired,
- additional hours offered to current part time and relief staff
- direct contact with industries impacted by the pandemic e.g. hospitality
- colleges and universities with nursing, health care and social work students
- congregations who had people who could help in a voluntary capacity.

10.6.3 HR provided additional support to operational services in the screening and shortlisting of candidates. Interviews were held virtually or in outdoor locations to avoid unnecessary visitors in services.

10.6.4 HR and Organisational Development staff have assisted the operational services by minimising operational input and supporting them to bring staff and volunteers on board quickly and safely. Central processes were streamlined while still maintaining standards and ensuring safer recruitment as well as well trained and informed staff.

10.6.5 Many of the changes which were implemented in response to the needs of the pandemic have been well received and will be embedded into systems and processes in the longer term.

In the name of the CrossReach Board

THOM RIDDELL, *Convener*
SARAH WOOD, *Vice Convener*
VIV DICKENSON, *Chief Executive Officer*

Appendix 1

CrossReach Services

Adult Services

Criminal Justice

- Dick Stewart Service (Glasgow)

Homeless People

- Cale House (Inverness)
- Cunningham House (Edinburgh)
- Kirkhaven Project (Glasgow)
- Lewis Street (Stornoway)

Learning Disabilities

- Eskmills (Edinburgh)
- The Bungalow (Stonehaven)
- Threshold Edinburgh
- Threshold Glasgow
- Threshold Support Services (Larkhall)

Mental Health

- Allarton (Glasgow)
- Gaberston House (Alloa)
- Morven Day Services (Kilmarnock)

Substance Misuse

- 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)
- Fanniescroft Farm (Lennoxton)
- Mill Muir Farm House (Gargunnock)
- Mount Pleasant (Dalry)
- Rockwood House (Beith)
- The Old Lodge (Stirlingshire)
- After Care and Housing Support Service
- Erskine School 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
- HMYOI Polmont
- Sunflower Garden (Edinburgh)

Counselling, Support & Training

- Bluebell Perinatal Counselling Services (Glasgow)
- Edinburgh (Lothians)
- Burnside Court (Moray & Inverness)

- COSCA Counselling Training (Glasgow)
- Employee Assistance Programme (Glasgow, Edinburgh)
- Aldhammer House (Prestonpans)
- Simpson House (Edinburgh)
- Palmerston Place (Edinburgh)
- Tom Allan Centre (Glasgow)

Services to Older People

- Adams House (Elderslie) – *Dementia*
- Balmedie House (Balmedie)
- Bellfield (Banchory)
- Budhmer House (Portree)
- Cameron House (Inverness) – *Dementia*
- Clashfarquhar House (Stonehaven)
- Cumnor Hall (Ayr) – *Dementia*
- Glasgow Day Opportunities
- Heart for Heart, Bankfoot
- Heart for Art, Broughty Ferry
- Heart for Art, Carlisle
- Heart for Art, Edinburgh
- Heart for Art, Galashiels
- Heart for Art, Garelochhead
- Heart for Art, Glasgow (Stamperland and Broomhill)
- Heart for Art, Kirkcudbright
- Heart for Art, Musselburgh
- Heart for Art, Stonehaven
- Morlich House (Edinburgh)
- Oversteps (Dornoch)
- Queen's Bay Lodge (Edinburgh)
- South Beach House (Ardrossan)
- St Margaret's House (Polmont) – *Dementia*
- The Elms Care Home (Edinburgh) – *Dementia*
- The Oasis Bankfoot Day Service
- The Oasis Garelochhead Day Service
- The Oasis The Tryst Day Service (Pitlochry)
- Walter & Joan Gray Care Home (Shetland)
- Well Hall (Hamilton)
- Whinnieknowe (Nairn)
- Williamwood House (Glasgow) – *Dementia*

Further information on our services can be found on our website www.Crossreach.org.uk

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Note the Safeguarding Service Annual Statistical Report. (*Section 2*)
3. Encourage congregations to mark 'Safeguarding Sunday' with those of other denominations on Sunday 10th October 2021 or on any other suitable day in October. (*Section 4*)
4. Note the work being undertaken by the Safeguarding Committee to better understand the needs and experiences of survivors of abuse. (*Section 5*)
5. Direct that advice given by the Safeguarding Service, when framed as an instruction, must be followed by all Agencies of the General Assembly and by all Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Safeguarding Co-ordinators, office-holders, staff and volunteers involved in work with Vulnerable Groups (as defined in the Safeguarding Act), and pass an Act amending the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018) accordingly as set out in Appendix A (*and Section 6.3*).
6. Note the good, ongoing working relationships with CrossReach, the Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade and the United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland. (*Section 7*)
7. Note the ongoing work in relation to International Development issues and the development of overseas protocols. (*Section 8*)
8. Note that work is ongoing to implement an online solution for the Congregational Register (SG7), Audit Checklist (SG11), and Presbytery Register. (*Section 10*)
9. Instruct the Safeguarding Service in collaboration with the Faith Nurture Forum to undertake work to scope out a mandatory advanced safeguarding training programme for ministers, and report to the General Assembly of 2022. In the interim, instruct ministers to attend local Introductory Safeguarding Training and record attendance on the Presbytery Register if they have not attended such a course in the last three years. (*Section 11*).
10. Instruct Presbyteries to co-operate with the Safeguarding Service in a compliance audit of Safeguarding data in readiness for the implementation of the Disclosure Act. (*Section 12*)
11. Thank all the volunteers who give of their time to promote and embed good safeguarding practices across the Church and express gratitude for the excellent work they undertake.

Report

1. SAFEGUARDING – A THEOLOGICAL IMPERATIVE

Life has changed considerably for all of us since March 2020. From shopping to worship, we have had to embrace many new patterns and habits, and technology has brought new meaning to words like "zoom" and "teams." There have been parts of our life, which we had previously taken for granted, which have been furloughed, albeit temporarily. Some parts of the Church and its constituent organisations have been unable to meet and function, while other parts have been identified in pandemic parlance, as "essential" and new, imaginative ways of working have been found. In the midst of all of this, the need to safeguard the Church, and create a safe Church for all has been absolutely vital.

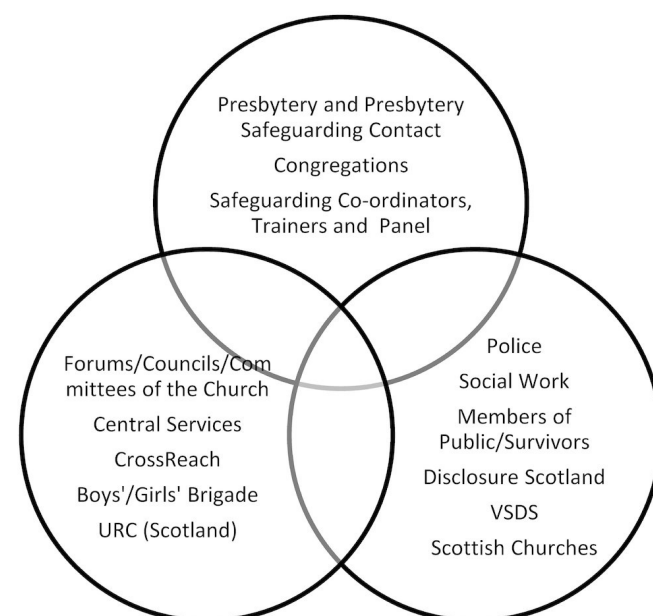
2. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

2.1 The Safeguarding Service has a number of Overarching Objectives:

- To act as a first point of contact in matters relating to safeguarding
- To assess child and adult protection and wellbeing concerns and provide professional advice as appropriate
- To take steps to prevent harm or abuse from occurring

2.2 The Safeguarding Service interacts with a number of internal and external stakeholders to progress a number of areas of work i.e. processing PVG applications, responding to enquiries and referrals, providing appropriate safeguarding training, risk assessing conviction and vetting information and managing covenants of responsibilities.

Figure 1 Internal and External Stakeholder



2.3 In March 2020, the Safeguarding Service reduced its workload to critical functions for a short period of time as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been reflected in the following statistical output for the year 1st November 2019-31st October 2020. The number of referrals into the service was down from the previous year to **463**, enquiries down to **544**, PVG applications down to **1,095** and face to face training suspended.

During the Covid-19 pandemic Safeguarding Trainers have been working hard to adapt to new ways of working with some Presbyteries now delivering training online.

The previous year's statistical information has been included in this report as it reflects more accurately the breadth of work undertaken by congregations, Presbyteries and the Safeguarding Service.

2.4 PVG Applications

The Service processes PVG applications on behalf of congregations, the Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade and the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums.

From 1st November 2018- 31st October 2019 the service processed a total of **2,372** applications. The largest numbers of applications were processed for volunteers in congregations.

Figure 2 PVG Applications by Group

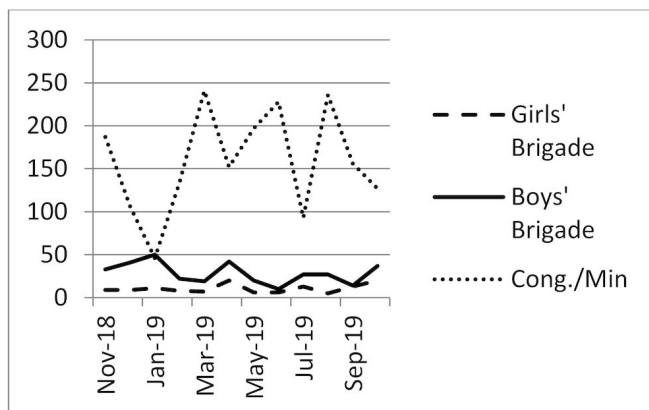
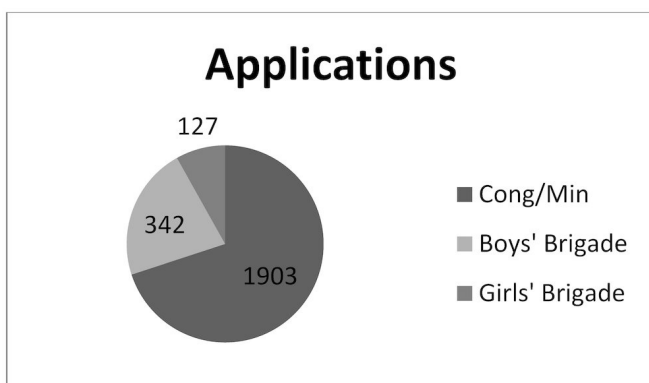


Figure 3 Total Number of Applications 1st Nov 18-31st Oct 19

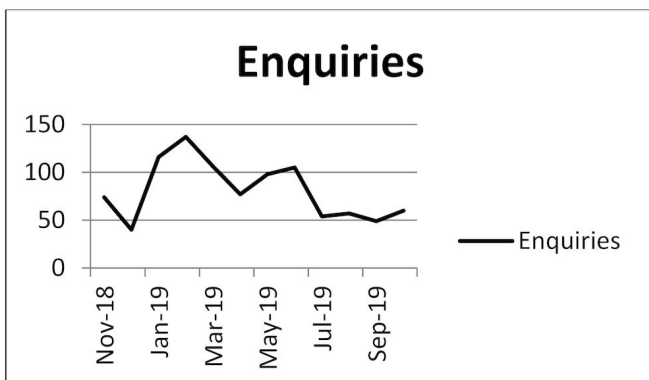


2.5 Enquiries

The Service receives a large number of enquiries on an annual basis. Most of these enquiries relate to policy, procedure, safe working practices, safe recruitment practices and PVG. Enquiries range from the simplest of queries to more complex advice such as the setting up of a new project or initiative.

The total number of Enquiries for the year was **973**.

Figure 4 Total Number of Enquiries 1st Nov 18-31st Oct 19



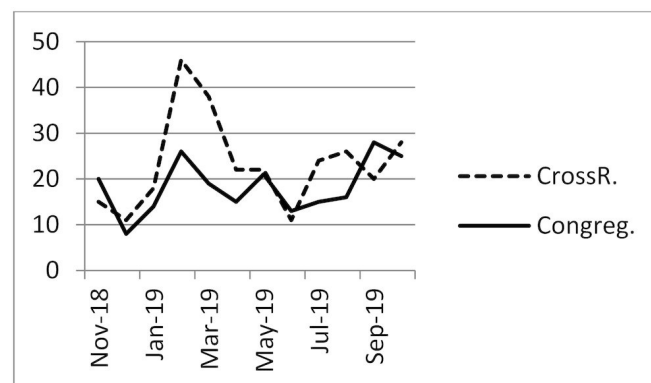
2.6 Referrals

Referrals come to the Service via telephone, e-mail or someone visiting the office in person. The vast majority of referrals are received from congregations and CrossReach services, with lower numbers received from Boys' Brigade and Girls' Brigade.

Referrals usually relate to matters of physical, sexual, emotional, psychological and financial harm and neglect. Fictionalised scenarios are discussed in more detail further in this report.

The total number of Referrals for the year was **501**.

Figure 5 Referrals received from congregations and CrossReach Services 1st Nov 18-31st Oct 19.



2.7 Training

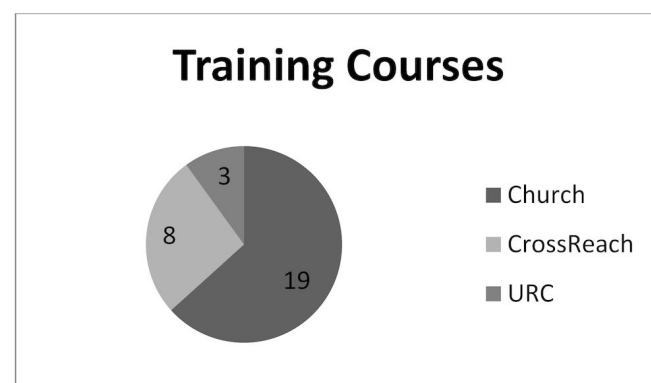
In the same period the Safeguarding Service has supported a number of different training courses e.g. Child and Adult Protection Training for CrossReach, Church of Scotland congregations and staff of the National Offices, Training for Ministries Candidates and the United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland (URC).

Congregations, staff of the National Offices and CrossReach services are the largest recipients of support.

Safeguarding training has been delivered to Assembly Trustees, Senior Managers and Heads of Department. The focus of this training was on Trustee, Senior Managers and Heads of Department responsibilities for keeping vulnerable beneficiaries, volunteers and staff safe.

The total number of training courses delivered over the course of 2019 and early 2020 was **30**.

Figure 6 Training Courses Supported/Delivered by the Safeguarding Service

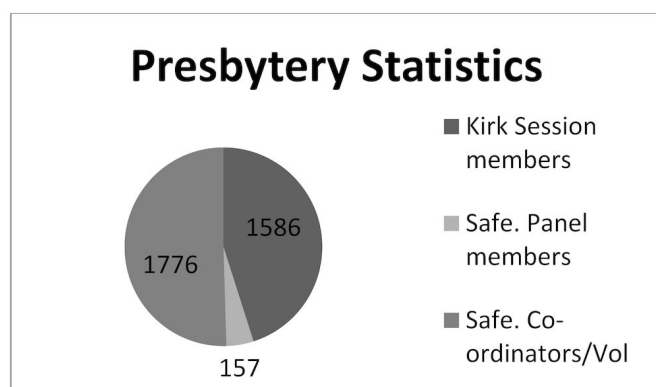


The Safeguarding Service Training Officer has utilised and developed bespoke training solutions for different audiences e.g. E-learning package for staff in 121 and MDS employees, Kirk Session video presentation and a webinar for Safeguarding Co-ordinators in the International Presbytery. All of these digital solutions have been well received. Work continues to progress online learning opportunities further.

By March 2020, **33** of **46** Presbyteries had returned their training statistics to the Safeguarding Service for 2019. The

statistics reflect that **3519** people had been trained by Volunteer Safeguarding Trainers throughout the year.

Figure 7 Training Courses Delivered by Volunteer Safeguarding Trainers



2.8 Covenants of Responsibilities

A Covenant of Responsibilities is a written agreement between an individual and the Parish Church that they attend or have a connection with. The individual is a convicted or unconvicted sex offender who may or may not be managed by Police or Criminal Justice Social Work professionals. A Covenant of Responsibilities is akin to a behavioural agreement which lays down the expectations of how such a person will behave when attending Church or a Church led event. Failure to abide by the agreement means that the individual is in effect, deciding not to worship or be involved in Church activity.

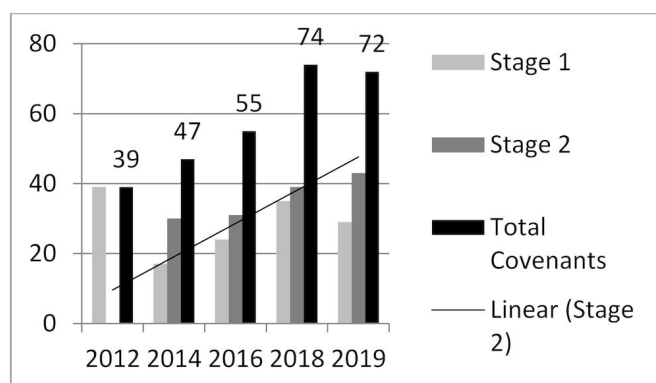
Covenants are managed as Stage 1 or Stage 2 covenants.

Stage 1-means that there is regular face to face meetings between the Safeguarding Officer of the Church, the Safeguarding Panel, Police and Social Work services as well as the individual to agree arrangements.

Stage 2-means that arrangements have been in place for at least a year, at least one face to face review has been carried out and where it is agreed by all that further face to face meetings are no longer necessary. Individuals may move back and forth depending on the level of assessed risk.

The total number of Covenants in place at the end of October 2019 is slightly lower than 2018 but the figures saw a steady increase from 2012 to 2018. Growing awareness of those who pose a risk in congregations and the fact that individuals are subject to a lifetime Covenant will most likely see a continuing upward trajectory for the future.

Figure 8 Stage 1 and Stage 2 Covenants at end of October 2019



3. EXAMPLES OF SAFEGUARDING REFERRALS

3.1 The work of the Safeguarding Service is diverse. The following examples give an indication of the range and type of safeguarding referrals received by the Safeguarding Service. For the avoidance of doubt, these are fictionalised scenarios.

3.2 A safeguarding referral is defined as information that is shared with the Safeguarding Service that indicates that harm or abuse is *suspected*, reported or witnessed.

3.3 The role of the Church is to **prevent** harm and abuse of children and adults at risk. And when abuse is disclosed it is the role of Church volunteers and paid staff to '**recognise and report**' to their Safeguarding Coordinator, who must then seek verbal and written advice from the Safeguarding Service.

3.4 Scenario 1: A person was advised by Police Scotland to tell their minister that they had been arrested, were on bail and had been told 'not to go near children'. The person has a designated role in the congregation that involves contact with vulnerable groups.

Reported type of harm: Person posing a risk of harm, possible sex offender.

National Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements are in place to ensure the successful management of violent and sexual offenders. These set out the responsibilities of the police, criminal justice social work and prison service. When it becomes known to the Safeguarding Service that a relevant individual wishes to attend worship or other Church led or based activity; the Safeguarding Officer in partnership with the Safeguarding Panel will facilitate all the arrangements at Church level. This usually includes the setting up of a Covenant of Responsibilities. See Safeguarding Handbook 5 for more information.

Outcome of this scenario: Administrative suspension from Church role; Covenant of Responsibilities required; Joint work with Police Scotland, social work criminal justice services and prison services; Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

3.5 Scenario 2: Comment made in-passing by a father that his daughter had been sexually abused by an older child in the community.

Reported type of harm: Sexual abuse is any act that involves the child in any activity for the sexual gratification of another person whether or not it is claimed that the child either consented or assented. Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child is aware of what is happening

Some children and young people can develop harmful sexual behaviour which harms others and themselves. Indications of abuse include a lack of consent between the young people involved, inequalities of age, development age or size; and the use of force or threats. Within the UK, it is thought that over a third of child sexual abuse is committed by children and young people under the age of 18.^[1]

Outcome: reported criminal act therefore referral to Police Scotland for further investigation; pastoral support offered.

3.6 Scenario 3: A manager received a complaint about the conduct of a member of staff toward an adult at risk: the report stated that the staff member presented as very aggressive towards the adult at risk, causing the person alarm and distress.

Reported type of harm: Psychological or emotional harm: threats, abandonment, humiliation, intimidation, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse, controlling behaviour, name-calling, insults, preventing the person from seeing others, misuse of authority or power over the adult at risk

Outcome: Reported to social work as an adult protection referral; Care Inspectorate informed; Internal disciplinary process undertaken which resulted in a referral to the Scottish Social Services Council and Disclosure Scotland (due to the person being a member of the PVG scheme).

3.7 Scenario 4: Inappropriate sexualised contact via social media by an older person in a position of trust and responsibility to a young person in the congregation.

Reported type of harm: Non-contact abuse is where a child is abused without being touched by the abuser. This can be in person or online and includes: exposing or flashing, showing pornography, exposing a child to sexual acts, forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos, making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos and/or forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.

Grooming is a criminal offence. It is when someone builds a relationship, trust and emotional connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate, exploit and potentially sexually abuse them. Children and young people can be groomed online, in person or both – by a stranger or someone they know.

Outcome: Referral to Police Scotland for further investigation; parents of young person informed; pastoral support offered; person in position of trust and responsibility suspended pending investigation and potential referral to Disclosure Scotland and OSCR following police investigation and internal disciplinary process.

3.8 Scenario 5: Person reported historical sexual abuse from over 20 years ago by a person in their congregation who remains in a position of trust and responsibility.

Reported type of harm: Non-recent abuse (also known as historical abuse) is an allegation of neglect, physical, sexual or emotional abuse made by or on behalf of someone who is now 18 years or over, relating to an incident which took place when the alleged victim was under 18 years old. The complainant may be an adult but could be an older young person making reports of abuse in early childhood. The reports may relate to an individual's experience in the family home, community or while they were a looked after and accommodated child in a residential, kinship or foster care setting. See the Historical Abuse Policy, Safeguarding Handbook 1, Appendix 4 on the Church of Scotland website for more information.

Outcome: Meeting with Safeguarding Service offered; potential Police Scotland referral for further investigation; potential Church internal disciplinary procedure instigated and referral to Disclosure Scotland if the person who remains in a position of trust and responsibility is doing 'regulated work' with children or protected adults as per for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007.

3.9 Scenario 6: A member of the congregation disclosed that he lashed out and hit his mother on the left cheek causing bruising and a cut on her nose. His mother has dementia and has separately told her visiting elder that she had been unable to access any money but trusts her son who is her Power of Attorney.

Reported type of harm: Physical: hitting, slapping, pushing, inappropriate touching, kicking, being threatened with a weapon, burned, scalded or bitten, inappropriate sanctions or holding the person down. It can include inappropriate restraint that is not part of an agreed plan. Restraint can be chemical (medication) or physical.

Financial or material: theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure to hand over or sign over property or money, misuse of property, possessions or welfare benefits.

Outcome: Reported criminal act so Police Scotland Referral for further investigation; Adult Protection Referral to Social Work; pastoral support offered.

4. SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY

This year the Safeguarding Committee seeks to raise awareness of safeguarding in our churches. Congregations are encouraged to mark 'Safeguarding Sunday' with congregations of other denominations on Sunday 10th October 2021, or on any other suitable Sunday throughout the month of October. 'Safeguarding Sunday' offers an opportunity for us to commit together as a Church to create

safe spaces for all, explain why safeguarding is so important, demonstrate how safeguarding is integral to the Christian message and talk about what you have in place to safeguard vulnerable people. It also offers the opportunity to thank and acknowledge all of those people who are working to ensure a safe Church for all.

5. SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF ABUSE

The Safeguarding Service is currently working with members of the Safeguarding Committee, representatives from CrossReach, Place for Hope and the Violence Against Women Task Group to better understand the needs and experiences of survivors of abuse. Though the group is in the early stages of its work it is anticipated that there will be an emphasis on survivor engagement and that subsequent learning will be incorporated into Church policy, procedure and practice. The group will report on progress to the General Assembly of 2022.

6. SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

6.1 Under the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018) all General Assembly Agencies, Presbyteries and congregational Safeguarding Co-ordinators "*must report promptly to the Safeguarding Service on action taken after advice from the Service has been given in relation to reports of Safeguarding Concerns*" (as defined in that Act).

6.2 The Safeguarding Service is committed to reviewing practice and procedure in line with changing legislation and/or best practice in the context of safeguarding in a faith setting, and has considered whether this legislative provision requires to be adjusted in the light of the recommendations of the Investigation Report on Safeguarding in the Church of England and the Church in Wales, published by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in October 2020. This followed on from an Investigation Report into Case Studies published in May 2019.

Both Reports concluded that the Church of England had not resolved the need for safeguarding to function at a diocesan level with the requirement for sufficient accountability to and oversight from the national safeguarding team to ensure consistency of decision-making; and that it was essential that operational decisions about safeguarding were made by safeguarding professionals, who were best placed to decide what action should be taken to keep children safe.

Noting that clergy had an important role to play in ensuring that safeguarding was a priority which was intrinsic to the beliefs of the Church, it was nevertheless recommended that they should not hold operational responsibility for safeguarding, and that professional safeguarding staff should have the authority to make decisions in respect of key safeguarding tasks, including risk assessments and associated plans. It was explicitly recommended that "*it should be enshrined in policy that those who are volunteers and who do not follow the directions of diocesan safeguarding officers should be removed from responsibility of working with children*".

The Report's recommendations were welcomed and have been implemented by the Church of England, with policy documents being amended to make compliance with guidance on safeguarding matters compulsory, rather than voluntary.

6.3 In the light of these authoritative developments in best practice, the Committee considers that an amendment to the Safeguarding Act is required to provide that where advice given by the Safeguarding Service in relation to Safeguarding concerns is framed as an instruction, this must be followed. Section 5 of the deliverance refers and the amending Act is set out in Appendix A.

7. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

7.1 Boys' Brigade - Following successful completion of the Service Level Agreement negotiations with the Boys' Brigade, the Safeguarding Service is committed to ensuring that the safeguarding of members of the Boys' Brigade is constantly reviewed to ensure best practice. Work is ongoing, with the new appointment of a Safeguarding Manager within the Boys' Brigade, who brings a wealth of experience in Safeguarding. Regular meetings between the Boys' Brigade and the Safeguarding Service are aimed at ensuring open lines of communication and best practice at all levels within the organisation.

7.2 Girls' Brigade - It is hoped that by the time of the General Assembly, the Service Level Agreement between the Church of Scotland Safeguarding Service and the Girls' Brigade will have been finalised.

7.3 United Reformed Church - The Safeguarding Service continues to provide support for the URC. URC congregations receive the same level of support from the Service as our own congregations, and training and support is offered on a rolling programme.

7.4 CrossReach and the Safeguarding Service have an open and positive working relationship supported by a Service Level Agreement which sets out the responsibility of each party. The Safeguarding Service works closely with CrossReach to develop and deliver adult support and child protection training. As stated in CrossReach's Child and Adult Protection Handbooks, all child and adult protection issues are referred to the safeguarding service for advice. CrossReach view the Recruitment Sub-Committee (RSC) as a valuable step in their safer recruitment process in risk assessing candidates with conviction information prior to them commencing in post. Regular contact meetings allow ongoing areas of work to be monitored and discussions to take place on plans for the coming months.

8. OVERSEAS PROTOCOLS

8.1 The General Assembly of 2019 instructed Councils to have clear Safeguarding protocols in place for overseas projects.

8.2 The Safeguarding Service has since been working closely with Scotland's International Development Alliance (the Alliance). The Alliance is the membership body in Scotland for everyone committed to creating a fairer world, free from poverty, injustice and environmental threats. Their membership brings together a diverse range of organisations and individuals including NGO's, businesses, academic institutions and public sector bodies that operate in over 100 countries. The Church is a member of the Alliance.

8.3 In collaboration with the Scottish Government, the Alliance has taken steps to ensure that organisations working overseas are supported in their development and implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures following abuses that have taken place in international development and humanitarian work.

The Safeguarding Service has been invited to join the safeguarding work stream of the Alliance to strengthen reciprocal learning in this area of work. It is anticipated that the Safeguarding Service will have revised Church policies and procedures in place in the coming months for those who work with or support partners overseas.

9. MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING

The General Assembly of 2019 instructed the Safeguarding Committee to negotiate memoranda of understanding with what are now the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums, CrossReach, Human Resources, Communications, and Law Departments with a view to indicating the reciprocal expectations, reporting mechanisms and lines of communication to be adopted when a safeguarding issue

arises. This is in progress and it is anticipated that appropriate memoranda will be in place by May 2021.

10. SG7/SG11 AND PRESBYTERY REGISTER

10.1 The Safeguarding Service continues to work with colleagues in the IT department to bring an online solution to the congregational register (SG7) and the audit checklist (SG11). The Service has been given approval by the Assembly Trustees to enter into a procurement process to secure a suitable IT application for this purpose and also one which will strengthen the recording of safeguarding concerns.

10.2 A Presbytery Register will also be included in the ongoing work.

11. TRAINING

11.1 The Safeguarding Service continues to support congregations and CrossReach services with appropriate training.

11.2 The new Disclosure Act has prompted a review of best practice for training. As a result, the Safeguarding Service is currently reviewing the training strategy with a view to introducing a tiered approach to learning which is commensurate with a person's role in the Church. During this process training for ministers has been identified as a gap. Discussions have taken place with Faith Nurture to help resolve this issue. To this end the Safeguarding Service is proposing to introduce a mandatory advanced safeguarding course for ministers in collaboration with Faith Nurture, bringing back a report to the General Assembly of 2022.

11.3 In the interim, the Safeguarding Committee recommends that all ministers be instructed to attend local Introductory Safeguarding Training if they have not attended training in the last three years and that Presbytery keep a record of their attendance. If ministers experience any issues sourcing local safeguarding training they should contact the Safeguarding Service for assistance.

11.4 In addition, there appears to be a lack of clarity more generally about refresher safeguarding training for those undertaking regulated work. In line with best practice the Safeguarding Committee would recommend attending training every 3 years.

12. DISCLOSURE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2020

12.1 The Disclosure (Scotland) Act received Royal assent on 14th July 2020. The key proposals of the Bill are to ensure a correct balance between protecting vulnerable groups, providing information for appointment to sensitive roles, respecting individuals' rights to privacy and allowing individuals to move on from offending behaviour. The Act seeks to ensure that the system is user friendly for both organisations and individuals.

12.2 Some of the changes in the Act that will have an impact on those working for the Church include

- Using digital services to make employment checks quicker and to reduce the burden on employers and applicants
- More clarity on who qualifies for the PVG Scheme
- Requiring everyone who works with vulnerable groups to become a member of the PVG Scheme (this includes overseas work through Scottish organisations)
- Requiring PVG membership to be renewed every five years
- Scottish Ministers can impose conditions on those who are under consideration for listing
- Instead of focussing on job titles, the focus is on people who have power over children or protected adults, to decide if they need to join the PVG Scheme

12.3 Disclosure Scotland will continue to work with stakeholders (of which Church of Scotland is one), as they put the new law into practice. The changes will not come into effect straight away. There will be a careful implementation period so that Disclosure Scotland can make the necessary changes to online and paper processes and organisations can prepare for their new responsibilities.

12.4 Amendments have already been made to the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018) (as amended), Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003) and Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) which will align with the changes in the Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020.

12.5 In light of the delay to the online tool process, and the need to ensure our data is compliant, the Safeguarding Service continues to work on the audit of the congregational registers (SG7's) which began last year. This will assist us going forward with the implementation of the Act.

13. DISCLOSURE AND BARRING SERVICE (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service criminal record checking system used in England and the Channel Islands is different to the PVG system in Scotland in that it does not continually monitor members records for vetting information including criminal convictions that may affect their suitability to work with vulnerable groups. In light of this, it has been agreed by the Safeguarding Committee that the policy for re-checking workers in the Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands should be at 2 yearly intervals.

14.

It is imperative that throughout this change, Safeguarding remains the constant presence, and that the same, robust measures continue to exist throughout the organisation. The Safeguarding Service will be working hard over the next year to prepare Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Forums, Task Groups and Committees for the implementation of the Disclosure Act.

In the name of the Committee

ADAM DILLON, Convener
CAROLINE DEERIN, Vice Convener
JULIE MAIN, Safeguarding Service Manager

Addendum

Caroline Deerin joined the Safeguarding Committee in 2014 and brought to us a wealth of experience from her career in Social Care. Caroline is also Safeguarding Coordinator in Biggar Kirk and is a Safeguarding Presbytery Contact and Safeguarding Trainer.

She became Vice Convener in 2017 and has taken responsibility for Safeguarding Training. She has guided the Training Sub-Committee with grace, patience and wisdom. Caroline has always been generous with her time and her attention to detail and practical knowledge of Safeguarding in the life of the Church have ensured that many training tasks have been fulfilled.

We offer Caroline our thanks for all she has done in and through the Safeguarding Committee and we wish her well for her continuing retirement.

Appendix A

[] ACT AMENDING THE SAFEGUARDING ACT (ACT XVI 2018)

Edinburgh, [] May 2021, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. Add a new section 16(4) as follows and renumber accordingly thereafter:
 - (4) Advice given by the Safeguarding Service, when framed as an instruction, must be followed by all Employing Agencies and by all Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Safeguarding Co-ordinators, office-holders, staff and volunteers involved in work with Vulnerable Groups.

Reference

- [1] Hackett, S, Holmes, D & Branigan, P., 2016

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HM FORCES MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank those who serve in Her Majesty's Forces as Chaplains for their service to Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel, their families and the wider military community.
3. Recognise the particular service of those Chaplains who have served in support of the contribution of the Armed Services to efforts relating to Covid-19 in the past year and give thanks for the support of their families.
4. Commend to the prayers of the Church all Chaplains, and all those whom they serve.
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. SCOPE OF REPORT

1.1 Since the Committee did not report to the abbreviated General Assembly of 2020, this very short Report covers some topics that have exercised us over the last two years.

1.2 Chaplains and the Covid-19 emergency

1.2.1 The Committee is sure that the whole Church is grateful to our Chaplains, as to all Service personnel, who have so willingly, flexibly and courageously assisted civilian authorities during the Covid-19 emergency. The have been involved in the effort to provide testing, to construct treatment facilities and to support complex Health Service logistics, all at the same time as providing the routine of exercises and deployments which has continued in all three Services.

2. CHAPLAINS AND THE CHURCH

2.1 Tri-Service Conferences 2019 and 2020

2.1.1 As part of each Chaplain's Continuing Professional Development requirement each year, the Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland host a joint three-day conference at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre, arranged by a serving Chaplain (on a rota that circulates round the three Services and between the two Churches).

2.1.2 In 2019 the principal speaker was the immediate past Moderator of the PCI, Very Rev Dr Charles McMullen. In 2020 (the conference being on-line) the principal speaker was the immediate past Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Very Rev Colin Sinclair. The Committee, and the PCI's equivalent 'Panel', are delighted to have this very constructive and easy working relationship for such an important part of the continuing development of our Chaplains.

2.2 Denominational Contact

2.2.1 The Committee's offer to Chaplains of individual pastoral contacts was not really taken up by Chaplains, and so the effort of the past year has been to produce forms of support that brought Chaplains together with representatives of the wider Church.

2.2.2 The retiring Moderator Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair, at the same time as he was providing pastoral support to parish ministers, did not forget the needs of military Chaplains. He hosted an on-line coffee and Bible Study for them at Pentecost 2020, led worship in the Tri-Service conference mentioned above, and co-operated with the production of the Committee's Easter card to all serving Chaplains. The Committee, and all the Chaplains, are greatly in his debt for such a striking pastoral concern at such a stressful time.

2.2.3 Meanwhile, the Committee has used the on-line nature of its meetings to begin to develop more general links with the Chaplains; and at its meeting in January of this year welcomed a number of Chaplains for part of the meeting and a presentation on Chaplaincy in the Royal Air Force.

2.3. Moderators' Visits

2.3.1 In 2020 Colin and Ruth Sinclair and the Convener spent a week visiting the Army in Scotland, following on from the successful Scottish focus of Dr Brown's visit to the Royal Navy in Scotland in 2019. In 2021 Martin Fair spent a day undertaking a very compressed on-line visit to the RAF. In 2022 the Committee hopes that Lord Wallace will be able to undertake a more conventional visit to the Royal Navy.

3. RECRUITMENT

3.1 Much of the work of the Committee takes place behind the scenes, through the Convener's membership of the Tri-Service Advisory Group on Chaplaincy, and in conversations with the various heads of Chaplaincies on individual cases of need. One of the most satisfying of these background tasks is the work of the Convener, Vice-Convener and Secretary in interviewing potential Chaplains in order to decide whether to endorse their applications. In recent years there has been a marked flexibility in movement between Regular and Reservist Chaplaincy, and even the movement of Chaplains between different Services. It is particularly heartening to see Reservist Chaplains smoothly transition into full-time service, and the Committee is always delighted to help to make that happen.

In the name of the Committee

MARJORY A MACLEAN, *Convener*
JOHN C DUNCAN MBE, *Vice-Convener*
DARAN GOLBY, *Secretary*

Appendix 1

ROYAL NAVY

The world's trade routes always need to be maintained and protected, even during a pandemic, and Naval Chaplains were at sea throughout the year in support of this essential national commitment. In a strange twist, families at home seemed under greater threat than those deployed at sea in their ready-made, COVID-free, isolated environment. Chaplains were able to offer spiritual and pastoral care to sailors and marines, as many learnt of their parents or grandparents catching coronavirus at home.

The operational output of the RN has not stopped and neither did the Chaplains caring for individuals and communities, afloat and ashore. The newly restructured Royal Marines, currently in Norway on exercise, with 3 Chaplains offering support in those challenging arctic conditions, are adapting to a new way of operating in smaller groups and with better equipment, as part of their bold modernisation. New sailors now join the RN at 3 different locations, as usual HMS RALEIGH, but also Junior Rates join and train alongside Officers at BRNC and at HMS COLLINGWOOD, as the RN seeks to grow its numbers. The RN's Transformation Programme is now in its 'Year of Delivery' having streamlined the RN's HQ making it more flexible and efficient, while the NCS has also focused its energies on the frontline, extremely challenging under recent conditions. Nevertheless, training establishments have remained open, as have the Naval Bases, where their dedicated Chaplains have shown amazing initiative in how to minister to a threatened community despite the restrictions enforced by COVID.

The NCS welcomes a new Chaplain of the Fleet in July, the Reverend Andrew Hillier and it bids farewell to the Venerable Martyn Gough. The Church of Scotland unfortunately remains underrepresented in the NCS as we drop to just 3 Chaplains this year, but our ministers are all engaged in ministering to the women of men of the RN at the front line. We always welcome applications from a vibrant and diverse group of Church of Scotland ministers to serve the Fleet and the Royal Marines. In conclusion, while the world looks vastly different compared to the last time we gathered, the RN has continued its work, keeping our island nation safe, and her Chaplains have been at the forefront of caring for those who protect us in tempestuous seas.

The newest Church of Scotland Regular Chaplain in the Royal Navy, Rev Stephen Ashley-Emery RN, spent the first quarter of 2020 developing alongside-support for HMSs DRAGON, DIAMOND, and LANCASTER and accompanying HMS NORTHUMBERLAND's crew on Basic Operational Sea Training, was deployed aboard HMS KENT last summer, and was otherwise heavily involved in the Navy's contribution to the Covid emergency.

Rev Mark Dalton RN has spent the last year as Chaplaincy Team Leader at RNAS Culdrose, where he has enabled the provision of pastoral care to personnel and their families, whilst also providing worship and Spiritual Development to a small congregation which has continued to meet virtually during the pandemic. Mark moves back to Scotland in early summer to take up an assignment looking after Scottish based Royal Marines.

Rev Dr Mark Davidson RN continued in his role as Chaplaincy Team Leader at HMNB CLYDE until Nov 2020. In addition, Mark served as Staff Chaplain (Operations) from January 2020 through to Jan 2021. In this role, he was responsible for choreographing the deployment of more than twenty-five RN Chaplains (representing more than 40% of the regular Naval Chaplaincy Service) across the Fleet. In December 2020, Mark was appointed Chaplain to HMS PRINCE OF WALES, the UK's newest and largest aircraft carrier.

Rev Dr Scott Shackleton RN continued in his role as the Director: Naval Service Ethics Programme which delivered the new RN Conduct & Culture Cell. He retires this year and intends to return to full time ministry in the Kirk. The Committee is grateful to him for his extensive service to its work in the last few years as the Church's senior Naval Chaplain.

For Rev David Young RNR, the past 12 months have been largely about providing pastoral support to the Ship's company of HMS DALRIADA and their families. He successfully passed the Accelerated Officer Programme at Britannia Royal Naval College, passing out in September 2020.

Appendix 2

ARMY

In the last year it has been an unexpected privilege as Chaplains to support our Service Personnel as they were able to deploy in unprecedented numbers to support the response to Covid-19 here in Scotland and in the wider United Kingdom. Chaplains are walking with, praying for and caring for our military flock as they assist on the front line against an enemy who was truly invisible. Chaplains were able to support soldiers locked down in barracks away from family and friends, sometimes in very remote locations in order to protect the Force against need. The Army is very used to "hurry up and wait" and "on the bus ... off the bus ... change bus" and this last year has tested that resiliency, but thanks to the Church's support in prayer we continue to serve.

It continues to be a busy time on Operations. As the Assembly sits, two Church of Scotland Chaplains are on Operations in Cyprus and Afghanistan. At the time of writing the Committee hopes that one, with the aid of modern communications and despite the time difference, will serve a Commissioner to the Assembly this year. Training continues at pace as the commitments for the military at home and overseas remain complex and raise significant pastoral issues amongst those who serve. Your prayerful support is deeply appreciated.

As you may be able to decipher from the list below, no fewer than eight Presbyterian Chaplains serve in leadership roles currently. Whilst this speaks of the generosity of the Church in sharing her talent, it also suggests that as a cohort we are getting long in the tooth. As it stands, the Call to new Regular Chaplaincy has not been heard from the Church since 2016. May I encourage the reader to listen carefully for that still, small voice to Regular, Reserve, ACF or OCM Chaplaincy - all have vacancies. May I call particular attention to Rev Seoras Mackenzie's nearly 23 years of Service as a Unit Chaplain as it drew to a close in March this year.

List of Church of Scotland and Presbyterian Church in Ireland Regular and Reserve Chaplains

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| HQ ARITC | Paul Swinn | Upavon |
| HQ 1 Arty Bde | Heather Rendell | Tidworth |
| HQ 1 st STRIKE Bde | Nicola Frail | Tidworth |
| HQ 12 Armd Inf Bde | Chris Kellock | Bulford |
| HQ 20 Armd Inf Bde | Alan Cobain | Bulford |
| HQ 38 (Irish) Bde | Jim Francis | Lisburn |
| HQ 51 Inf Bde & HQ Scot | Duncan Macpherson | Stirling |
| 3 RHA | David Thom | Newcastle-Upon-Tyne |
| QRH | Graeme McConville | Tidworth |
| 5 Regt RA | Hector MacKenzie | Catterick Garrison |
| 32 Engr Regt | Paul Van Sittert | Catterick Garrison |
| 29 EOD & S SGU | Richard Begg | Wimbish |
| 1 WG | Colin Jones | Windsor |
| 1 SCOTS | Graeme McConville | Belfast |
| 3 SCOTS | Geoff Berry | Fort George |
| 2 PWRR | Ivan Linton | Aldershot |
| 2 LANCS | Stewart MacKay | Preston |
| 1 YORKS | Mike Goodison | Catterick Garrison |
| 1 MERCIAN | Mark Henderson | Bulford |
| 1 R WELSH | Neil McLay | Tidworth |
| ITC (C) - S Chap | David Anderson | Catterick Garrison |
| ATR (W) | Norman McDowell | Winchester |
| 32 Sig Regt | Mike Mair | Glasgow |
| 2 R IRISH | Mark Donald | Lisburn |
| 154 Regt RLC | Rory MacLeod | Edinburgh |
| 5 MI Bn | Christopher Rowe | Edinburgh |

List of Church of Scotland ACF Chaplains

| UNIT | CHAPLAIN |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Bn The Highlanders, ACF | Rev Fraser Stewart |
| 1 Bn The Highlanders, ACF | Rev Alen McCulloch |
| 2 Bn The Highlanders, ACF | Rev Shuna Dicks |
| 2 Bn The Highlanders, ACF | Rev Keith Blackwood |
| West Lowland, ACF | Rev Fiona Wilson |
| Glasgow & Lanarkshire, ACF | Rev Ecilo Selemani |
| Lothian & Borders, ACF | Rev Cameron McKenzie |

Rev D J MACPHERSON CF Senior Chaplain Scotland and 51 Infantry Brigade

Appendix 3

ROYAL AIR FORCE

RAF Chaplaincy has continued to seek to serve the Royal Air Force community through prayer, presence and proclamation throughout a turbulent year. The pandemic has seen many personnel continue in their role as essential workers and indeed yet more have been deployed in order to provide assistance to civil authorities in their response to covid-19. Ministering effectively to those personnel and their families has (like in so many other spheres) prompted Chaplains to engage in innovative ways of connecting and sharing. To put it in terms of the Branch's intent, we remind people of their value, encourage them to hope and explore with them their reason for being.

Rev Sheila Munro retired as Chaplain to the Royal Air Force in January of this year having served faithfully for many years on bases throughout the United Kingdom and deployments throughout the world. She has the thanks of the Chaplains Branch and the Service for her valuable ministry. Gratitude is also extended to the Kirk for allowing her to exercise that ministry among the personnel for whom she cared so diligently.

Rev Craig Lancaster has moved on promotion to Reverend (Wing Commander) from RAF Honington in Suffolk to serve as senior Chaplain at RAF Lossiemouth in Moray. The base is home to a number of Typhoon Squadrons including Quick Reaction Alert and the newly arrived Poseidon aircraft. More importantly it is home to the people who protect, maintain and fly the aircraft whom he looks forward to getting to know and serve. Padre Lancaster remains grateful for the prayerful support of the Kirk as it continues to allow him to fulfil a challenging yet incredibly rewarding ministry.

GENERAL TRUSTEES MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and the 2019 and 2020 Accounts of the General Trustees (Section 1.2).
2. Welcome progress on the Land & Buildings Plan in respect of: -
 - (a) the Presbytery Planning Toolkit for Land & Buildings (Section 2.1.2)
 - (b) the appointment of a Presbytery Buildings Officer (Section 2.3.2)
 - (c) the creation of a Historic Property Portfolio and associated Fund. (Section 2.5.1 and Section 3.4.2)
3. Welcome the intention to consult on proposed changes to Parliamentary Acts and General Assembly Acts and Regulations. (Section 3.1 and Appendix 1)
4. Welcome organisational changes including the adoption of a quorum of five for meetings of the Trustees' Board. (Sections 3.2 and 3.3)
5.
 - (a) Appoint Mr Ian T Townsend as Chair and Rev Fiona M Mathieson as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year (Section 3.2.3)
 - (b) Authorise payment of £1,900 to each of Mr Raymond K Young as Chair and Mr Ian T Townsend as Vice-Chair for their services over the past year (Section 3.2.3)
6. Note the revised investment policy in respect of the Consolidated Stipend Fund. (Section 3.6.5)

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-fourth report since their incorporation under the Church of Scotland (Property & Endowments) Act 1925 and their Annual Report & Accounts for 2019 and 2020.

1.3 Since March 2020, the impact of the disruption resulting from Covid-19 on all aspects of the congregational, regional and national life of the Church has been immense. Church buildings have not been immune, with sanctuaries closed to worship and then partially reopened and closed again; with halls empty of congregational and community activities except where they are used to support essential projects such as Foodbanks. The Trustees' Safe Buildings Team has played a prominent role in giving advice to congregations, and the Trustees wish to record their thanks to them, and to Presbytery and congregational Fabric Conveners and others who have worked tirelessly through the pandemic.

1.4 The full impact of the year on the future of the Church's land and building estate will only become clear as the restrictions are lifted. However, there are already indications that digital services have changed the way in which worship is offered. Some sanctuaries may need to be reconfigured for 'blended worship'; some may not open again and for others Presbytery Planning may speed up closure. There can no longer be an assumption that any building can survive without a critical assessment of its contribution to the future mission of the Church.

1.5 For the Trustees, initially only essential and emergency matters in relation to land and buildings could be dealt with by the staff due to a combination of lockdown and furlough working. Trustees and staff alike had to learn new ways of conducting digital business with the attendant frustrations of IT, home-schooling and restrictions on interaction with family and friends, both congregational and social.

1.6 Despite this, the Trustees have established new routines and processes. They have been able to progress the delivery of key elements of the Land & Buildings Plan, to lay the ground for a new legislative framework, to contribute to the development of an Act to replace the existing appraisal and adjustment legislation and to establish new organisational and governance structures to ensure that they and their staff can better support, resource and encourage congregations and Presbyteries in the challenging years ahead.

1.7 Constituted as a statutory corporation by the Church of Scotland (General Trustees) Order Confirmation Act 1921, the Trustees have now entered their centenary year. They celebrate not just the achievements of the past but welcome the opportunity to play their part in a re-invigorated Church in Scotland.

1.8 The Trustees wish to take this opportunity to express their thanks and appreciation to their staff team who have worked from home in sometimes trying circumstances to support all that has been achieved over 2020.

2. LAND AND BUILDINGS PLAN UPDATE

2.1 The Presbytery Planning Toolkit for Land & Buildings

2.1.1 At last October's Assembly, the Trustees reported on the outcome of the Land & Buildings Plan Consultation in the latter half of 2019 and set out their response which took into account the picture for the post-Covid future of the Church which had begun to emerge in 2020. The Trustees identified that their priority should be to strengthen the planning role of Presbyteries in relation to land and buildings; first with the introduction of a Toolkit.

2.1.2 The Toolkit was issued at the beginning of January this year to a limited number of Presbyteries in a pilot capacity but, after positive feedback, it has been made available to all Presbytery Clerks. The Toolkit contains advice on minimum standards for churches, halls and manses, on location and on the management of surplus buildings.

2.2 A New Buildings Assessment System

2.2.1 A later phase in support of Planning was to have been the introduction of a new building assessment system focussing on long-term sustainability of usage, projected maintenance and management resources and financial costs. However, the proposal by the Faith Nurture Forum to introduce a new Act to replace Act 7 2003 dealing with appraisal and adjustment has required the Trustees to bring forward plans as the relevant information on buildings will need to be available to Presbyteries as close as possible to the start of the new planning process. The details require to be fully worked out but may involve assessment being undertaken as a desktop exercise where appropriate or by a simplified version of a 5-yearly inspection. The process will complement the Toolkit and will be co-ordinated by the Trustees.

2.2.2 The Trustees report every year on how Presbyteries fulfil the Assembly's requirement for churches, halls and manses to be professionally inspected on a regular basis. The Covid-19 lockdown and other restrictions has meant that the schedule of inspection reports has been interrupted so that the statistics are meaningless. Nonetheless, Presbyteries have been asked to make available to the Trustees all 5-yearly reports where these have been carried out but not yet forwarded to the Trustees.

2.3. Pilot Presbytery Buildings Officer

2.3.1 In October 2021 the Trustees reported that they were developing the appointment of a pilot Regional Buildings Officer with the North-east Presbytery cluster (Aberdeen & Shetland, Buchan, Gordon and Kincardine & Deeside). The funding arrangements for the post began to look in doubt as the restrictions on worship began to impact on congregational income. In view of the potential importance of this pilot to the Land & Buildings Plan, the Trustees agreed to meet half of the cost, and the appointment should be made by the time of the Assembly.

2.3.2 The Officer will be employed by the Trustees through the Central Services Committee but deployed locally. The post will involve assisting with the newly-prioritised buildings assessment system described above and will also undertake more detailed property inspection reports where it is agreed that this is appropriate. A key feature of the post will be following up with the Congregational Board or Kirk Session any matters identified by these reports.

2.4 New Procedures for Approving Work at Buildings and Financial Assistance

2.4.1 The introduction of revised policies and protocols in relation to the awarding of grants and loans was also reported last year. The Trustees are pleased to report that these appear to be working well although it is recognised that, given the considerable reduction in applications for financial assistance in 2020 as a result of the health crisis,

the number of cases requiring the submission of detailed business and finance plans has been relatively small.

2.4.2 Apart from the first two months of 2020, the Trustees had suspended the processing of applications for work at buildings other than emergency and essential works and manse replacement. In considering whether to continue the suspension, the Trustees are aware of possible changes to the Presbytery Planning process under the proposed Presbytery Mission Plan Act. Pending the introduction of new Mission Plans and a simpler categorisation between buildings to be retained and those to be disposed of, the Trustees will maintain a cautious approach to approving applications. Nevertheless, they will consider sensible development proposals so long as a Presbytery can demonstrate why a particular church or hall is to be retained in the longer term.

2.4.3 With the transfer of the Art and Architecture advice and staff from Faith Nurture Forum on 1 January 2021, there will be further amendments to the application form and processing arrangements later this year, which will also tie in with the new Presbytery Planning proposals.

2.5 Historic Properties following dissolution

2.5.1 One of the key principles of the Land and Buildings plan is that the Church of Scotland is not a buildings conservation body. However, buildings that are no longer required for regular public worship need to be treated with respect – particularly as they play an important part of the story of local communities and, in many cases, the story of Scotland. Recognising this, the Trustees are developing an Historic Property Portfolio as a vehicle to hold properties which fall under their administrative responsibility following the dissolution of a congregation, but which are unlikely to be sold, or otherwise disposed of, in the short to medium term. It is intended that the Bases of Dissolution of these congregations will also provide for their financial assets to be deposited in the Fund. Buildings which will be placed in the fund will typically be large, Category A listed, have significant architectural heritage and will offer little, if any, scope for redevelopment or for alternative uses. The Trustees are investigating the potential number of buildings which could fall into this category and the potential resource implications which could be significant.

2.5.2 The first building in this category was the Kirk of St Nicholas, Aberdeen which was transferred to the General Trustees on 31 December 2020. The building fell vacant following the dissolution of the former Kirk of St Nicholas Uniting, a Local Ecumenical Partnership (LEP) with the United Reformed Church, and the dissolution of the former Church of Scotland congregation element of the LEP. Financial assets held by the congregation were also transferred to the Trustees. Considerable time and effort will be required in identifying and developing partnership opportunities either with a view to eventual disposal or to limiting the ownership liabilities for the Trustees and the wider Church. In the meantime, the Trustees are faced with the major challenge of the upkeep of the building well beyond the usual period.

2.6 Safe Buildings

2.6.1 As mentioned in the Introduction, the Safe Buildings Team experienced an exceptionally heavy workload during 2020. The Head of Building Safety contributed significantly to the Church's Covid-19 Working Group and to the publication of guidance on checking closed buildings for insurance purposes and a template for a Risk Assessment for the re-opening of church buildings for public worship.

2.6.2 In contrast to 2019 when the team dealt with fewer than 500 enquiries, during 2020 the team including the Fire Safety and Health Safety Officers responded to over 6,000 safe building enquiries most of which related to Covid-19 issues.

2.6.3 Training to the accredited Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland standards continued to be

delivered to congregational and Presbytery representatives covering the Introductory and Elementary Courses in Food Hygiene with a total of 459 persons participating. Webinars relating to foodbanks and to cleaning and disinfection of buildings were attended by a total of 520 people and 733 downloads of the materials were made.

2.6.4 During the course of 2021, the Trustees should conclude their review of fire safety arrangements of all A-Listed congregational buildings in their ownership. At the time of writing this report, it is disappointing to note that the Fire safety Officer is still awaiting replies to his questionnaire from almost 70 Kirk Sessions.

2.7 Glebes

2.7.1 The Trustees report that income from agricultural, grazing and amenity lets had fallen by 5.6% by the end of 2020 against the previous year which reflects the sale of glebeland in 2019 rather than the impact of Covid-19. Nonetheless, this income source continues to assist congregations in meeting their share of the cost of ministry posts approved under Presbytery Plans. In addition, the sale of the Orwell glebe at Kinross for housing development in a joint venture with a neighbouring proprietor was completed just at the end of 2020 after many years of false starts and extensive negotiations. The capital from glebe sales is credited to the Consolidated Stipend Fund and, as with glebe rents, the income accruing thereon is also applied towards ministry costs.

2.7.2 Although on a smaller financial scale than at Orwell, the sale of the glebe at Kilmarnock, Dunbartonshire in February this year was a critical element in the sale of the former church to a community trust. At the request of the Trustees' Board, the Glebes Committee will be considering the preparation of guidance on the different future uses to which glebeland can be put upon disposal and the benefits which can accrue to congregations.

2.8 Carbon Reduction

2.8.1 The Church's Estate

2.8.1.1 For a number of years, the Trustees have been encouraging congregations to reduce the carbon footprint of congregational buildings primarily through the energy procurement scheme and the energy advisory service. A number of Kirk Sessions have, with the support of the Trustees, invested in renewables when developing new buildings or when modernising sanctuaries and halls. Both the "Well-Equipped Spaces in the Right Places" Plan and the Land & Buildings Presbytery Planning Toolkit encourage congregations to ensure that they have the most energy-efficient buildings possible, given the particular design and construction constraints. The Trustees are committed to encouraging the maximum possible reduction in carbon footprint.

2.8.2 Energy Procurement

2.8.2.1 As reported last year, the Trustees introduced a new "green energy" scheme and a record number of 905 congregations are reducing their carbon footprint enjoying the benefit of price stability. However, the introduction on 1 April 2020 of the 4-year fixed price gas supply contract with SSE plc through its trading arm, Scottish Hydro, and the 3^{1/2}-year fixed price green electricity supply contract with Opus Energy Ltd did not go smoothly. This was the result of a combination of the transfer of the electricity contract from Scottish Hydro to Opus, a change to the administrative arrangements within SSE plc and Automatic Meter Reading problems within Opus at the same time as both companies were furloughing staff. A significant effort has been made by the Trustees' staff to minimise and resolve the difficulties experienced by congregational treasurers. Although arrangements are improving, a small number of treasurers are still facing problems which the Trustees are continuing to push the suppliers to sort out.

2.8.3 Energy Advisory Service

2.8.3.1 The main way in which the Trustees provide energy advice is through the Trustees Heating Consultant, Mr Andrew W MacOwan, who carries out independent surveys of heating systems at churches, halls and manse and gives advice on improving standards of energy efficiency, lowering carbon footprint and reducing costs. Despite the difficulties posed by lockdown during 2020, Mr MacOwan undertook 28 surveys which comprised 19 initial and 8 repeat surveys of churches and/or halls and 1 manse. Two of the surveys were of Scottish Episcopal Church buildings. The Trustees cover about one-third of the cost of surveys in respect of Church of Scotland premises.

2.8.3.2 The Trustees will consider providing financial assistance through the Central Fabric Fund towards the cost of installing renewable and sustainable energy sources (subject to the usual criteria of Presbytery approval and financial need, etc) but will require energy use and performance to be monitored after installation.

2.8.3.3 Mr MacOwan can further assist congregations by checking specifications for heating repairs and replacement provided by local contractors and answering questions on a range of heating issues and problems. Congregations can also appoint Mr MacOwan as a consultant to repair or to design and commission heating systems. Contact should be made through gentrustees@churchofscotland.org.uk.

2.8.4 Net Zero 2030

2.8.4.1 The Trustees were invited by Faith Impact Forum to join the Forum's Group to consider Net Zero 2030. In addition to the "green tariff" and advice services, the Trustees' new Buildings Assessment System could be used to establish baseline information about energy supply and use, and to confirm what renewables are already in operation. This will enable a strategic approach to carbon reduction in the estate and will identify what action might be appropriate taking into account that congregations are primarily responsible for energy management and for carbon reduction.

3. WHAT IS NEEDED TO DELIVER AND DEVELOP THE PLAN?

3.1 Legislative Reform

3.1.1 The Church of Scotland is facing significant challenges which have been acknowledged and talked about for many years. 2020 has seen the forced closure of churches for public worship and a collapse in the income from hall lets. Ministers, Kirk Sessions and congregations have had to grapple with developing different forms of fellowship, worship and mission. The limited re-opening of churches for worship has exposed the challenges around use of buildings faced by many congregations exacerbated by the small number of active members and restricted finances. The Trustees have also had to react to the changing circumstances and the Report which they presented to the October Assembly was different to the one which had been prepared for the cancelled May Assembly.

3.1.2 A combination of the approach of their centenary year, the response to the Land & Buildings Plan Consultation and the shifting of the ground on which the Church stands prompted the Trustees to review the Parliamentary legislation under which they are constituted and given administrative powers as well as Assembly Acts and Regulations which affect their work. The review has identified that changes are required if the Trustees are to address the difficulties and challenges in supporting congregations and Presbyteries over the next years ahead.

3.1.3 The Trustees are keen to consult not just with the Solicitor of the Church and the Principal Clerk but also with those who will be most affected including Faith Nurture Forum, Presbytery Clerks and congregational representatives.

3.1.4 Most of the legislation reviewed had originally been promoted by the Trustees but they also had in their sights the Act 7 2003 on Appraisal and Adjustment given the focus that much of the Trustees' work is in support of effective Presbytery Planning. They were therefore pleased to be involved in the scrutiny of the draft Presbytery Mission Plan Act, which will have a huge impact on the future direction of the Church and will provide a core framework for the Trustees as they support the Presbytery Planning process. At the time of the writing of this Report, the Trustees were continuing to engage with Faith Nurture Forum about some of the practical and resourcing aspects of draft Act.

3.1.5 Appendix 1 sets out a table of the legislation comprising the Parliamentary Acts and General Assembly Acts and Regulations with recommendations for a variety of changes and suggestions as to consultation partners. The Trustees intend to bring to the 2022 Assembly detailed proposals for the legislative reform.

3.2 People Resources - Trustees Re-structuring

3.2.1 The October 2020 Assembly noted that with effect from 5 October, the Trustees had dispensed with the requirement for a Trustee to retire at the Assembly following his or her 75th birthday and had adopted fixed terms of service up to maximum of 12 years for both Trustees and Advisory Members. Under this new arrangement, the Trustees are pleased to report that they have co-opted Mrs Isobel W Gray and Ms Deborah J Nicol as Advisory Members.

3.2.2 Two Trustees, Dr J Kenneth Macaldowie and Raymond K Young, and Advisory Member Mr Roger S Trueman are retiring under the former 75-year age rule at this Assembly. Rev Janet S Mathieson is resigning with effect from this Assembly. Mr William L Gill resigned as an Advisory Member with effect from 18 December 2020. Further details are included in Appendix 2.

3.2.3 The Trustees recommend that Mr Ian T Townsend be appointed as Chair and Rev Fiona M Mathieson be appointed as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year and that for their services as Chair and Vice-Chair over the past year Mr Raymond K Young and Mr Ian T Townsend should each receive £1,900 as authorised under S.38 of the 1925 Act.

3.2.4 As reported to the Assembly last year, the Trustees have conducted a review of their governance and structure. The Committee structure has been simplified and modern Terms of Reference for all the Trustees' Committees have been introduced. The Board is in the process of finalising its Terms of Reference including a Scheme of Delegation. As part of this process, the Trustees would ask the Assembly to note that the Board has set a quorum of 5 for its meetings.

3.3 People Resources – Staff Re-structuring

3.3.1 As the work of the Trustees changes and develops, so the organisational structure has to change to reflect future requirements. An organisational review was begun in late 2019 by the then Secretary Mr David D Robertson and carried through by Mr Barri S Millar who took over as Chief Executive on 9 March 2021. Mr Millar's appointment marks a shift by the Trustees towards a staff team with an appropriate range of professional, technical and administrative skills so that the Trustees can serve the Church as its Land & Buildings Division.

3.3.2 The re-organisation has recognised administrative support as critical to the ability of the senior staff to exercise their professional and technical expertise. Mrs Eva Elder has been appointed as Head of Administration and her team will be further strengthened by the appointment of a Senior Administrator. The executive staff has been strengthened by the appointments of Mr Mo D'Souli as Health & Safety Officer and by Mr Robert Lee, Buildings Officer. The Trustees hope to announce the appointment of the Pilot Presbytery Buildings Officer before the Assembly meets. Finally, the Art and Architecture function has been absorbed into the Trustees' remit and they have been delighted to welcome Ms

Fiona Skellet, Senior Administrator, and Mrs Judith Roebuck, Development Worker (Sanctuary Works) into the staff team.

3.3.3 The Trustees wish to place on record their thanks to Mr David Robertson who has retired after 24 years of service with the General Trustees. A qualified solicitor, David joined the Trustees as Assistant Secretary (Ecclesiastical Buildings) in 1997 from a private legal practice. He became Secretary and Clerk in 2003. For the last 18 years he has led the Trustees staff and provided wise advice and counsel to the Trustees Board. Well known throughout the Church as very approachable and as a walking encyclopedia of Church law and practice in relation to land and buildings, his ability to remember people and cases meant that he was seen as the 'go to' person for Presbytery and congregational Fabric Conveners.

We thank David for his enthusiastic commitment and leadership over these many years and wish him God's blessing as he moves into retirement, enjoying more opportunity for sailing, cycling and other pastimes than he has been able to do over the last few years.

3.4 Financial Resources

3.4.1 Central Fabric Fund

3.4.1.1 The Fund is administered by the Trustees to provide loan and grant assistance to congregations towards the costs of repairs, improvement and new-build of churches and halls as well as the purchase, improvement and repair of manse all of which are buildings in use for local mission, ministry and worship. Loans totalling £1,609,386 and grants totalling £804,176 were awarded during 2020. Further detailed information is contained in Appendices 3 and 4.

3.4.1.2 The revised protocols identified in the October 2020 report have been working smoothly although the number of cases requiring the submission of detailed business and finance plans has been relatively small given the considerable reduction in applications for financial assistance in 2020 as a result of the health crisis.

3.4.2 Historic Properties Fund

3.4.2.1 In terms of Regulations 5 1995, proceeds arising from the sale of buildings of dissolved congregations are credited to the Central Fabric Fund unless the Trustees and Faith Nurture Forum (as successor to the Ministries Council) agree otherwise. As reported earlier, the Trustees are developing ways of managing buildings following dissolution cases where the church buildings are substantial and have architectural, historic, religious and civic significance. Unlike the vast majority of surplus churches, these buildings have no market value and the prospect of disposal in the short-term for conservation or community use is not realistic.

3.4.2.2 The Central Fabric Fund is focussed on buildings in use and it would be detrimental to other congregations for it to be the source of funding for the upkeep of a redundant building.

3.4.2.3 The Trustees have therefore set up the new Historic Property Fund which in accounting terms will have the building recognised as a capital asset. Cash assets derived from the sale of a share in a manse and from former congregation's reserves are credited to the new Fund and will be applied towards the costs of upkeep. The Trustees would like to thank the Presbytery of Aberdeen & Shetland and the Faith Nurture Forum for readily approving the allocation of the monies in respect of the first building to the new Fund.

3.4.2.4 Further cases are likely to arise shortly once a date for dissolution has been agreed by the Presbyteries concerned. The Trustees would emphasise that the Fund is designated for a specific purpose and is not a source of grants for congregations.

3.5 Consolidated Fabric Fund

3.5.1 The Fund has two elements:

(a) The capitalised value of heritable assets comprising glebes, churches, halls and manses is required by charity accounting regulations to be shown in the Trustees' accounts. As at the end of 2020, the capitalised value amounted to £520,115,000 which the Trustees believe is a fair and reasonable assessment of the value of land and buildings vested in them on the basis detailed in their Annual Report and Financial Statements. The Trustees wish to emphasise that this amount does not represent money in the bank nor is it an indication of market value. Appendix 5 contains further information.

(b) Capital and accrued revenue derived principally from the sale of surplus buildings and from the transfer from time to time of monies from congregations' holdings in the Consolidated Stipend Fund. Both capital and revenue are available to congregations to meet a wide variety of fabric-related costs in relation to churches, halls and manses. At the end of 2020, the value of these holdings amounted to £71,496,000.

3.6 Consolidated Stipend Fund

3.6.1 The Fund is largely derived from sale of glebeland since 1925 as well as transfers of surplus capital out of the Consolidated Fabric Fund and the investment of new monies from individual congregations. Virtually all congregations have a holding in the Fund. At the end of 2020 the Fund had a capital value of £100,223,000. With the concurrence of the Faith Nurture Forum, the Trustees have agreed a dividend rate of 11.25p per share for 2021 (15.215p for 2020).

3.6.2 The Trustees have engaged with Faith Nurture Forum who wished to consider how to mitigate the impact on congregations of the significant reduction in distributions from the Fund in 2020 arising from a corresponding reduction in dividend distributions that the Fund received from the Church of Scotland Investors Trust (CoSIT) Growth Fund.

3.6.3 The Fund has hitherto been invested by the Trustees almost wholly in the Growth Fund as this was in line with the Fund investment policy ratified by the General Assembly to the effect that the Fund was to be invested for the very long term with the aim of producing as high an annual income as is consistent with the need to sustain "progressive growth" (identified as at least matching inflation) and sustaining that growth resulting in the need to maintain the capital value of the Fund in real terms. As a result, the Trustees have never sold units in the Growth Fund to top up the level of income as this would have contravened the policy. They do however have the power to do so.

3.6.4 The Trustees have agreed with the Forum that they will exercise their power to sell capital of the Fund to enable distributions from the Fund to revert to pre-Covid-19 levels for at least the next five years. This will be achieved by topping up distributions to that level by selling units in the Growth Fund. This requires a modification to the investment policy. The Trustees therefore invite the Assembly to note that:

3.6.5 The Consolidated Stipend Fund will continue to be invested for the very long term in the CoSIT Growth Fund with the aim of distributing around £3.2m each year from 2021 to 2025 inclusive, comprising dividend income and the sale proceeds of units. The objective will otherwise be to maximise the long-term capital value of the Fund to benefit future levels of income and capital.

3.7 Church of Scotland Insurance Company

3.7.1 The Church of Scotland Insurance Services Ltd is wholly owned by the General Trustees and is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The Company arranges a comprehensive package of insurance cover appropriate for Church of Scotland congregations and also for congregations of other denominations. For information

regarding the insurance scheme, please visit the Company's website at www.cosic.co.uk.

3.7.2 The Trustees reported last year on the decision by the Company to take advantage of a good claims record and low premium rates across the insurance industry by renewing the congregational insurance scheme a year early on 1 January 2020. Over the last year, the Trustees have been very grateful for this decision as otherwise the scheme renewal would have seen a significant increase in premium rates. It also meant that the challenges of lockdown and home-working for both the Company and its insurance partners were tackled in the context of a stable working relationship.

3.7.3 Unoccupancy due to Covid-19 also impacted on the cover provided under the scheme, reaching a peak at the point when congregations were allowed to begin the process of reopening church buildings for public worship. The Company and the Trustees are grateful to Presbyteries for their assistance in ensuring that the maximum number of congregations benefited from the widest possible cover during this period of rapid change. At the time of writing this report, the vast majority of places of worship are again closed due to government restrictions but with the benefit of additional cover, beyond that provided by the contract wording, delivered by insurers using unconventional solutions. The Company is hopeful that some elements of standard service, including the reinstatement of a manned telephone line, will resume later this year.

3.7.4 The Trustees are pleased to advise that the proposed insurance re-valuation mentioned in last year's report will undergo its first large-scale test later this year when the properties in Lanark Presbytery will be used to help refine the model created by our proposed valuation partners. It is hoped that the output from this will allow us to move forward to a larger test with improved data before finally making the facility more widely available.

3.7.5 During 2020, the Company transferred £1,493,855 under Gift Aid to the Trustees who wish to express their appreciation of the significant financial contribution to the work of the Trustees. One of the Directors of the Company who is a member of the Trustees receives no remuneration for his services.

3.7.6 In accordance with current accounting requirements, the 2019 and 2020 Annual Accounts of the Company have been consolidated with those of the Trustees.

3.8 Services from the Assembly Trustees

3.8.1 Under an arrangement that enables the General Trustees to be part of the whole Church family, the members of staff who work for the General Trustees along with other support services, including legal, financial, IT, HR and media, are all provided by the Assembly Trustees through the employing agency of the Central Services Committee. The cost of the staff working directly for the General Trustees as well as the services provided by the Support Services Departments are re-charged to the General Trustees who meet all their staff costs from their own funds and not from the M&M budget. The 2019 Assembly decided that the Trustees' Chair should also serve as an Assembly Trustee to provide a link between the two sets of trustees. As part of the General Trustees' organisational review, the Trustees are keen to ensure both parties are clear about mutual responsibilities at an operational level and are proposing that these are clarified in a series of Service Level Agreements.

3.8.2 The first Service Level Agreement between the Assembly Trustees and the General Trustees was approved in relation to the Stewardship & Finance Department. During 2020, the Trustees engaged with the Church's General Treasurer who, in terms of the 1921 Act, also serves as the Trustees' Treasurer and is responsible for the provision of financial, accounting and auditing services to enable the Trustees to fulfil their obligations as a registered Scottish

charity. The discussions took place in the context of the Treasurer re-organising the Stewardship & Finance Department.

4. GENERAL MATTERS

4.1 Voluntary Registration of Title

4.1.1 The Trustees have reported since 2015 on their work to support the Scottish Government's stated aim of moving all titles to land in Scotland onto the Land Register by 2024. The Trustees have continued to instruct the Law Department to apply for voluntary registration of title of their properties, prioritising Glebes where the Trustees have identified that there might be development potential. The Trustees have also made applications (for Glebes and other properties) when potential or actual encroachment has been identified or brought to the Trustees' attention. Although Covid-19 had a significant impact on progress due to home working and the closure of the Registers' application record nevertheless the work continued during 2020. In addition to the foregoing, the titles of all new properties acquired are automatically registered in the Land Register.

4.2 The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 (Register of Persons Holding a Controlled Interest in Land) Regulations 2021

4.2.1 The Trustees reported last year on the impact which this Register would have on them and congregations. The aim of the Register is to identify those who have control over partnerships, trusts, unincorporated associations and other entities where these bodies own land or buildings. The Regulations introduce new duties on property owners and those who are "associates" of owners to notify the Keeper of the Register of certain personal details. This will affect congregational office-bearers in particular. The Regulations will come into force on 1 April 2022 and there will be a 12-month transitional period for submission of the relevant information, after which criminal penalties will be imposed for non-compliance. The Trustees intend to provide detailed compliance advice in their 2022 Report to the General Assembly and the Law Department will also be engaging with congregations and Presbyteries on this and ensuring that practical advice and guidance is available via the Church website.

4.3 Determinations under Regulations 5 1995

4.3.1 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 re-allocations were made during 2020.

4.4 Determinations made under Act 7 1995

4.4.1 The Trustees report that under the powers delegated to them by the General Assembly by Act 7 1995 (as amended by Act 13 1996), they have made 43 Determinations as set out in Appendix 6.

In the name of the General Trustees

RAYMOND K YOUNG, *Chair*
IAN T TOWNSEND, *Vice-Chair*
BARRI S MILLAR, *Chief Executive & Clerk*

Addendum

Raymond K Young was appointed Chair of the General Trustees at the 2017 Assembly having served on the Board since 2010. After qualifying as an Architect in 1970, Raymond's interests led him to look at the role of housing in social regeneration initially involving rehabilitation of Glasgow tenement stock and then the development of the Housing Association movement in Scotland first with the Housing Corporation and latterly with Scottish Homes, retiring as Director of Research & Innovation in 1997. He then became a well-respected Regeneration and Housing Consultant with clients including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, various universities and the Scottish Executive. Raymond's wider interests included serving as a non-executive director of Historic Scotland and as Convener of the Iona Community Council.

Alongside this experience, Raymond brought to his work with the Trustees a deep faith as well as tremendous energy and enthusiasm in leading and encouraging his colleagues and staff to develop new ways of meeting new challenges facing the Church in a period of change.

The Trustees and Staff wish Raymond every blessing as he finds more time to spend with his wife, Jean, his grandchildren and various hobbies.

In the name of the General Trustees

IAN T TOWNSEND, *Vice-Chair*
BARRI S MILLAR, *Chief Executive & Clerk*

Appendix 1**Part 1**

| Legislative Reform – UK Parliamentary Legislation | | | |
|--|----------------|--|--|
| Act | Section | Relevant Wording and Comment | Recommendations |
| 1. Church of Scotland (General Trustees) Order Confirmation Act 1921 | 5 | Each of the members of the Corporation shall be either a Minister or an Elder of the Church... | Remove the qualification and replace it with a requirement for each member of the Corporation to be a member of the Church of Scotland with consequent amendment to cessation of membership. <i>Consultation: Solicitor</i> |
| 2. Church of Scotland (Property and Endowments) Act 1925 | 37 | In addition to any powers which they already enjoy, the Trustees shall have power to <i>hold, maintain, administer</i> , and dispose of any property ... transferred to, or received by, or vested in them... subject to...the directions of the General Assembly | No change but Trustees to seek GA approval to a "direction" providing a modern interpretation of the words in bold italics to include <i>in extremis</i> power to close any congregational building owned by the Trustees on health and safety grounds. Consider extending the power in respect of congregational buildings not vested in the trustees. <i>Consultation: Solicitor, Procurator, Legal Questions Committee and Principal Clerk, Presbytery Clerks</i> |
| | 38 | Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman... | Delete references to "man" throughout |

Part 2

| Legislative Reform – General Assembly Acts | | | |
|---|----------------|--|---|
| Act | Section | Relevant Wording and Comment | Recommendations |
| 1. Act 26 1933 – Proceeds of Sale | 1 | <u>enjoining</u> (instructing) Presbyteries upon dissolution or union to (1) raise with the affected congregations the importance of applying sale proceeds of surplus buildings towards church extension purposes in neighbouring districts, or for the provision of church hall accommodation for neighbouring congregations which are not fully equipped; (2) remind congregations of the liberality of former members of the church, and upon disposal of surplus buildings, to keep in view the general needs of the church, and to consider whether to support plans for church extension or for the provision of manse or hall accommodation which have been approved of by the Presbytery. | Consider repeal as it is a product of its time but await clarity on new legislation on Presbytery resourcing and financing. <i>Consultation: Principal Clerk</i> |

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| 2. Act 7 1995 (as amended) - General Trustees (Delegated Powers) | 1 | The Assembly delegates to the General Trustees its powers under the 1925, 1933, 1978 and 1995 Acts including determining the sale of land and buildings owned by the Trustees or with an Assembly control clause in the titles or conferred by legislation. | No amendment as such but re-write of the Section to make it comprehensible and also a general up-date to reflect feudal reform legislation. <i>Consultation: Solicitor and Principal Clerk</i> |
| | 2 (1) | With regard to buildings, the Trustees' determinations can only proceed following an application from the Congregational Board and/or Kirk Session stating reasons for disposal and including approvals from the Board and/or Session <i>(and from the congregation in respect of a church or hall)</i> and the Presbytery. | Amend to remove requirement for a congregational vote in respect of the sale of churches and halls. <i>Consultation: Solicitor, Legal Questions Committee and Principal Clerk</i> |
| | 3 | The Trustees have discretionary power to modify the terms of determinations where in their opinion special circumstances apply. The section is little used as it relates to the occasional amendment of the purposes of Individual Funds. | Retain but amend to require the Trustees to consult with the Presbytery in all cases. <i>Consultation: Principal Clerk and Presbytery Clerks</i> |
| | 4 (a) | The Trustees have delegated power to determine a sale or other disposal (a) with regard to Glebe land subject only to their consulting with the minister of the Parish and the Presbytery; | Retain <u>consultation</u> but amend to include "Financial Board and/or Kirk Session" along with Minister to reflect the long-standing practice of the Glebes Committee <i>Consultation: Principal Clerk</i> |
| 3. Act 12 2007 – Care of Ecclesiastical Properties | 1 to 12 | It sets out detailed provisions regarding three elements of the regime for the care of churches, halls and manses and other functional buildings used by congregations within the UK (except New Charges) – the annual Property Register, the Manse Condition Schedule and the 5-yearly Property Inspection Report based on an external "Professional Reporter". | The Fabric Committee to set up an executive-led review of the Act and bring proposals for amendment or replacement to GA 2022. See specific suggestions below: |
| | 3 (c) | Manse Condition Schedule with required information | Consider inserting a requirement to submit annually to Presbytery Property Committee, The Regulations 7 2007 anent Manses (see Part 3 below) will require consequential amendment. |
| | 5 (b) | Requires Financial Boards to undertake a 10-year cycle of revaluation of buildings for insurance purposes. | Delete as responsibility for re-valuation should rest with The Trustees following 2013 Assembly instruction that all congregations must place insurance covers through CoSIS <i>Consultation: Principal Clerk and Presbytery Clerks</i> |

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| | 9 and 10 | Sets out the process for 5-yearly professional inspection reports and Interim non-professional reports by Presbytery Property Committees | While still relevant for most Presbyteries, the introduction of Presbytery Buildings Officers will need to be reflected in amended legislation. Introduction of new Buildings Assessment System requires to be reflected in the legislation Amend to require Presbyteries to instruct Congregations to undertake urgent and essential repairs. <i>Consultation: Principal Clerk and Presbytery Clerks</i> |
| | 11 | Requires each Presbytery to prepare and transmit to the Trustees by 31.12 annually a report on its diligence in carrying out the provisions of this Act; and requires the Trustees to report to the following Assembly. | Consider sanction in the event of non-compliance. <i>Consultation: Principal Clerk and Presbytery Clerks</i> |
| 4. Act 7 2003 Appraisal and Adjustment/ Draft Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021 | | <p>The proposed replacement of the 2003 Act by a new Presbytery Mission Plan Act is broadly welcomed by the Trustees as it should complement the Presbytery Planning Toolkit for Land & Buildings.</p> <p>The Trustees have concerns over</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) the timescale for and the resourcing required for a new buildings assessment system which regard as critical to the successful integration of the mission and buildings elements of Presbytery Planning; and (2) details of some elements of the draft legislation. | The Trustees should broadly support the introduction of the new Act and will continue to engage with the Legal Scrutiny group to ensure that their concerns are properly addressed. |

Part 3

| Legislative Reform – General Assembly Regulations | | | |
|---|---------|---|---|
| | Section | Relevant Wording and Comment | Recommendations |
| Glebes Regulations 1 1972 | 7 | <p>Before selling or leasing glebeland, the Trustees shall consult with the Minister, or if a vacant charge with the Financial Board of the congregation and (except in the case of seasonal grazing or other lets of less than 5 years' duration) with the Presbytery.</p> <p>See also section 4(a) Act 7 1995</p> | <p>Amend by substituting “and” for “or, if the Charge is vacant” so as to require consultation in all sale cases to reflect the long-standing practice of the Glebes Committee.</p> <p><i>Consultation: Principal Clerk and Presbytery Clerks</i></p> |
| Central Fabric Fund 7 1979 | | The Regulations set out the procedural requirements for applications by congregations for financial assistance from the Central Fabric Fund. | <p>Last amended in 2003, the Fabric Committee should set up an executive-led review of amendments to reflect</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the recent adoption of new policies and protocols in dealing with applications as referred to in the October 2020 Assembly Report; (b) the introduction of the Presbytery Planning Toolkit for Land & Buildings; and (c) the requirement under the draft Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021 for Presbyteries to prepare new Mission Plans <p><i>Consultation: Principal Clerk, Presbytery Clerks and Faith Nurture Forum</i></p> |

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| Application of Stipend & Fabric Endowments 5 1995 + Guidelines | | <p>The Regulations flow from Act 7 1995 and set out the protocols to be followed in cases where there is scope to re-allocate surplus monies between the Consolidated Fabric and Stipend Funds.</p> <p>Transfers out of the Stipend Fund require the concurrence of Faith Nurture Forum and the Regulations also enable the Trustees to continue to create Individual Funds and alter existing Fund arrangements. It is proposed this should continue.</p> | <p>The Regulations and associated Guidelines should be generally up-dated. Also consider incorporating up-dated Guidelines as part of the Regulations thus avoiding the need for a separate link.</p> <p>Re-allocations between the Funds are uncommon and are essentially a one-off process usually triggered by the sale of buildings or glebeland for substantial sums. Consideration should be given to enabling reverse transfers albeit this will be restricted by the practicalities - eg if Stipend monies have been transferred to the Consolidated Fabric Fund to meet the cost of a building project then the scope for re-allocating the monies back to Stipend are limited.</p> <p><i>Particular consultation with Presbytery Clerks to identify barriers to re-allocation</i></p> |
| | (B) 4. and (B) 5. | <p>These refer to a formula agreed between the Trustees and Faith Nurture Forum to determine whether a capital holding in the Stipend Fund is in surplus: a holding is in surplus if it generates endowment income equivalent to one-half of a congregation's annual contribution to a Year 5 parish ministry stipend and associated costs. The Forum has already queried if this is still appropriate.</p> | <p>Amend to remove the Requirement for the Trustees to consult with Faith Nurture Forum on post-dissolution building sales.</p> <p><i>Consultation: Principal Clerk, Presbytery Clerks and Faith Nurture Forum</i></p> |
| | (C) 6. | <p>One specific issue is the requirement that the net proceeds arising from the sale of the buildings of dissolved congregations to be credited to the Central Fabric Fund <u>unless the Trustees and Faith Nurture Forum agree some other arrangement.</u></p> <p>As referred to in the Trustees' Report to the 2021 Assembly, there are likely to be several substantial post-dissolution buildings with significant architectural, historic, religious and civic elements which will be held as capital assets in a new, designated Historic Property Fund along with the moveable cash assets. The cash assets will enable the Trustees to look after these buildings during what is likely to be a significant timescale pending eventual disposal. In the first of these cases, Faith Nurture Forum has readily agreed to the Trustees' request that the monies be credited to the Historic Property Fund. Nevertheless, it suggested that the consultation requirement be deleted as the Forum has no specific locus with disposal of buildings under any other legislation.</p> | |

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| Consolidated Fabric Fund 7 1995 (as amended) + Guidelines | | The Regulations set out technical arrangements for the creation and financial administration of the Fund. | <p>No change is proposed for the Regulations but the Guidelines require to be up-dated to incorporate the amendments agreed by the October 2020 Assembly (see Appendix 6 of the Assembly Report).</p> <p>The Guidelines then need to be generally reviewed and up-dated where required with proposals being brought to the Assembly of 2022.</p> <p><i>Consultation: Stewardship & Finance, Principal Clerk</i></p> |
| Proceeds of Sale of Heritable Properties 2 1996 | | <p>The principal thrust is to ensure that outstanding M&M contributions are the first charge upon the sale proceeds of surplus buildings:</p> <p>(a) upon dissolution; and</p> <p>(b) where the sale is in implement of a union or linking - ie the Basis of Adjustment specifies the disposal of the building.</p> <p>b (i) see recommendation b(ii) is an attempt to ensure that where net sale proceeds arise post-union or linking from the sale of locally-owned buildings with no Assembly Control clause in the title, the Presbytery and the congregation collaborate on determining a distribution which best suits the congregation's circumstances.</p> | <p>The Regulations require amendment in (b) (i) to delete the erroneous reference to the <u>Central</u> Fabric Fund and to replace it with <u>Consolidated</u> Fabric Fund. In terms of Regulations 5 1995 + Guidelines, sale proceeds of buildings owned by the Trustees or under Assembly control (outwith dissolution) are credited to the Consolidated Fabric Fund.</p> <p>As part of the foregoing review, the Trustees should consider if the wording of (b) (ii) requires to be updated.</p> <p><i>Consultation: Solicitor, Principal Clerk</i></p> |
| Work At Ecclesiastical Buildings (as amended) 1 1998 | | <p>One of the most significant Regulations in support of the Trustees' operations but last amended in 2000 and now in need of substantial review. The main issues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general up-date • overly complicated especially in relation to operation of the Financial Review • interaction with the proposed Presbytery Mission Plan Act 2021 • interaction with Presbytery Planning Toolkit | <p>The Trustees to set up an executive-led review of the Regulations with a view to reporting to the 2022 Assembly.</p> <p><i>Consultation: Presbytery Clerks/Property Committee Conveners, Principal Clerk, Faith Nurture Forum</i></p> |
| Further Endowment for Stipend 3 2001 | | Sets limits on investment in Further Endowment for stipend. This is not the Trustees' legislation but clarity required on whether the investment limits affect the Trustees' administration of the Consolidated Stipend Fund. | Trustees to seek discussion with Stewardship & Finance Department. |
| Consolidated Stipend Fund 4 2001 | | Sets out the protocols and procedures for the internal administration of the Fund. | General up-dating required following discussion with Stewardship & Finance Department. |

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| Manse 7 2007 | | Introduced at the same Assembly as Act 12 2007, the Regulations attempt to set out basic criteria and best practice for manse standards. Although manse occupied by Parish Ministers are not subject to private residential tenancy legislation, the Tolerable Standard for residential accommodation is relevant. | The Board should set up an executive-led review to ensure that the Regulations reflect current standards and best practice. |
| Application of a Levy (as amended) 8 2008 | | The Regulations were amended by the Assembly of October 2020 and no further change is proposed. | No change |
| Manse Adjudication Committee 3 2013 | | The Regulations codified practice first approved by GA 2006 on light of experience. Technically introduced by the then Ministries Council, the Faith Nurture Forum has drafted proposed amendments with a view to simplifying the administration of the Committee. | Secretary to respond to FNF with concerns over aspects of draft amendments. <i>Action: DDR</i> |

Appendix 2

Dr J Kenneth Macaldowie (2005 – 2021)

A Chartered Accountant with a strong commercial audit background and an expert witness in audit matters, Ken became the first Convener of the Trustees' Audit Committee and was instrumental in developing the Trustees' understanding of good governance. He also served as the Trustees' representative on the Church's Main Audit Committee. He played a full part in the work of the Chairman's and Business Committees and the Board. He retires under the age rule at this Assembly.

Rev Janet S Mathieson (2014-2021)

Jan's wide experience of parish ministry, of service on different Presbyteries and a spell on the Assembly Arrangements Committee including the convenership coupled with her ability to cut to the heart of an issue enabled her to play an active part in the work of the Trustees' Board. She also represented the Trustees on the Scottish Churches Committee. Her resignation has been prompted by growing pressure of her Presbytery commitments on her time and energies.

Mr William Gill (2018-2020)

A well-known farmer at Carnbreck, Rosskeen, Invergordon, Willie was co-opted as an Advisory Member of the Trustees' Glebes Committee. He served as Director of the Royal Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland being elected Chairman in 2014, a two-year post, before acting as Honorary Secretary. A Deacon and a keen sportsman, he resigned as an Advisory Member with effect from 18 December 2020.

Mr Roger S Trueman (2016-2021)

Broad professional experience as an architect and planning consultant including projects for Housing Associations followed by various posts with Trust (formerly Kirk Care) Housing Association culminating in Chief Executive Officer enabled Roger to contribute hugely to the Trustees' Fabric Committee. He was an effective member of Trustee deputations combining a non-nonsense approach with encouragement of good ideas. Roger retires under the age rule at this Assembly.

Appendix 3

CENTRAL FABRIC FUND

Comparative figures for loans and grants voted over the past three years:

| | 2020 £ | 2019 £ | 2018 £ |
|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Interest-bearing Loans | 1,391,386 | 697,150 | 1,576,453 |
| Interest-free Loans | 218,000 | 1,271,210 | 2,031,500 |
| | 1,609,386 | 1,968,360 | 3,607,953 |
| Standard Grants | 589,101 | 835,680 | 574,492 |
| Priority Grants | 215,075 | 723,596 | 986,496 |
| | 804,176 | 1,559,276 | 1,560,988 |

Appendix 4**SYNOPSIS OF CENTRAL FABRIC FUND GRANTS AND LOANS VOTED IN 2020**

| | Churches/Halls | | Manse | | Total | |
|------------------|----------------|----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|
| | Number | Amount £ | Number | Amount £ | Number | Amount £ |
| Grants: Standard | 32 | 274,839 | 12 | 314,262 | 44 | 589,101 |
| Grants: Priority | 16 | 180,075 | 2 | 35,000 | 18 | 215,075 |
| Loans: 5% | 11 | 554,836 | 4 | 837,000 | 6 | 343,000 |
| Loans: 3% | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Interest free | 1 | 38,000 | 1 | 180,000 | 2 | 218,000 |

Appendix 5**VALUE OF HERITABLE ASSETS VESTED IN THE GENERAL TRUSTEES**

| | Unit | 2020 £ | | 2019 £ | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|
| | | Quantity | Value £ | Quantity | Value £ |
| Glebeland | Acres | 12,382 | 34,848,833 | 12,407 | 37,004,844 |
| Land Other | Item | 1 | 285,000 | 1 | 285,000 |
| Churches including integral halls | Properties | 1,301 | 196,096,046 | 1,314 | 200,056,060 |
| Halls | Properties | 195 | 19,897,537 | 195 | 20,098,524 |
| Manse | Properties | 791 | 268,987,488 | 805 | 265,424,361 |
| TOTAL | | | 520,114,904 | | 522,868,789 |

Appendix 6**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:

Aberdalgie & Forteviot with Aberuthven & Dunning – Retirement House; Airdrie: New Wellwynd – Manse; Applecross, Lochcarron & Torridon – Church at Shieldaig; Ardler, Kettins & Meigle – Retirement House; Ardnamurchan – Kilchoan Church; Barry – West Church Hall; Coatbridge: New St Andrew's – Retirement House; Cross Ness – Mission Station; Edinburgh: Bristo Memorial Craigmillar – Manse; Edinburgh: Leith North – Manse; Firth – Manse; Leven – Manse; Fraserburgh South – Manse; Howe of Fife – Church at Collessie; Howe of Fife – Church at Kirkton of Cults; Glasgow: St James' (Pollok) – Manse; Kelso Country Churches – Roxburgh Church; Kelso Country Churches – Smailholm Church; Kirkconnel – St Mark's Hall; Kirkcaldy: St Bryce's Kirk – Manse; Lomond – Jamestown Church; North West Lochaber – Isle of Eigg Church; Paisley Abbey – Manse; Paisley: St Columba Foxbar – Manse; Port Glasgow: New – St Martin's Church and Hall; Portsoy – Church and Hall; Shetland Churches – Church at Fair Isle; Shetland Churches – Sandsting & Aisting – Church at Sand; Shetland Churches – Sandwick, Cunningsburgh & Quarff – Church at Quarff; Shetland Churches – Sandwick, Cunningsburgh & Quarff – Manse; Shetland Churches – Sullom Church; Shetland Churches – St Magnus Church; Shetland Churches – St Ninian's Church; Shetland Churches – Weisdale Church; Shetland Churches – West Church, Fetlar; Tayport – Manse; Thurso: St Peter's & St Andrew's – Manse; Tundergarth – Tundergarth Church

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:

Barra; Blackmount; Dores & Boleskine; Noth; Penpont, Keir & Tyron

Miscellaneous Sales:

The General Trustees made the following miscellaneous determinations:

Lochwinnoch sale of manse and proceeds credited to the Central Fabric Fund; St Fergus – sale of land adjacent to church and proceeds credited to the Central Fabric Fund

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND PENSION TRUSTEES MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.

Report**1. BACKGROUND & STATISTICS**

As at 31 December 2020, 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 nearly 5000 members. This Report is made by the Trustees of each of those Schemes (the **"Trustees"**). As at 31 December 2020 the Trustees held, in aggregate, total assets of approximately £524 million for the purposes of the Schemes.

1.1 Scheme funding

1.1.1 A summary of the respective funding positions of the Schemes at 31 December 2020 and the change since the triennial valuation as at 31 December 2018 is set out here:

| Scheme | Funding level at 31/12/20 | Change since 31/12/18 | Surplus/ (Deficit) | Change since 31/12/18 |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ministers Scheme, Main Pension Fund | 117% | -2.4%* | £49.7m | £-1.4m |
| Ministers Scheme, Widows & Orphans Fund | 111% | 3.9% | £3.8m | £1.8m |
| Ministers Scheme, Contributors Fund | 112% | 5.4% | £0.5m | £0.2m |
| Staff Scheme (CSC Section) | 108% | 2.8% | £2.1m | £1.4m |
| Staff Scheme (SCC Section) | 100% | 8% | £(0.2m) | £5m |
| MDS Scheme | 103% | 3% | £0.6m | £0.5m |

The improvements in funding levels largely reflect excess investment returns as well as in the case of the SCC (CrossReach) Section, additional cash contributions up to and including January 2021, paid by the Employing Agency in line with agreements to reduce funding deficits.

*As noted in 1.2.2 discretionary increases were awarded to increase members' benefits the impact of which is to reduce the funding level.

The Trustees record thanks to the Assembly Trustees and each Employing Agency for their past and continued support for the Schemes.

CrossReach achieves full funding

1.1.2 The Annual Actuarial Report as at 31 December 2020 confirmed the funding level of the CrossReach Section of the Staff Scheme reached 100%. This is a major milestone for the members of the Scheme, and is achieved after significant financial support from CrossReach. The Scheme Trustees agreed that with the funding level of the CrossReach Section at 100% they could implement a revised Schedule of Contributions (SoC).

This allowed for the immediate cessation of Deficit Reduction Contributions.

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 2021, were 0.5% in respect of benefits accrued between 6 April 1997 and 5 April 2005 and 0.5% 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 0.5%.

1.2.2 Discretionary increases in the Ministers Scheme

The Trustees of the Ministers Scheme have the unilateral power to award discretionary increases to benefits in the Ministers Scheme.

In September 2020 the Trustees applied a one-off uplift to members' pre-1997 benefits to bring them in line with the benefits that would be in payment, had full inflationary increases applied since their date of retirement. This was a one-off levelling up exercise to make up for previous years when there were insufficient funds to allow discretionary increases to benefits.

2021 pension increases

The Trustees of the Ministers' Scheme decided to implement increases as follows

- Ministers Main Fund: 0.5% increase on pre-1997 pensionable service for all pensions in payment as at 1 January 2021
- Widows and Orphans Fund: 8% increase on benefits as at 1 January 2021 for all deferred and pensioner members' benefits
- Contributors Fund: 10% increase on benefits as at 1 January 2021 for all deferred and pensioner members' benefits.

1.3 Investment Strategy

The investment strategy employed by the Trustees reflects the strong funding levels and their desire with the support of the Employing Agencies 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. The objective is to reduce any unwanted investment risk due to the assets not matching the interest rate and inflation sensitivities of the liabilities.

Adopting a low risk investment strategy means the volatility of the funding position of the Schemes is reduced, providing improved security of member benefits and more certainty for the employer around the requirement for future contributions.

During the year, the Trustees agreed the investment strategy of each Scheme, to target a return from assets of 0.3% per annum above the matching gilt yield. This is achieved by investing in a diversified manner in a variety of low risk assets, whilst still maintaining a full hedge against interest rate and inflation movements. 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 will be implemented in the first quarter of 2021.

The Trustees continue to consider the nature, disposition, marketability, security and valuation of the Scheme's investments and their appropriateness relative to the reasons for holding each class of investment

1.4 Changes in Staff and Trustees

We are delighted to record a full complement of 15 Trustees. 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.

1.4.1 Staff

Ruth Farquharson joined in February 2020 and Connor MacFadyen left in August 2020.

1.4.2 Trustees

Pension Scheme for Staff

John Thomson retired as a Member Nominated Trustee (MNT) of the Pension Scheme for Staff in May 2020. Anne-Marie Gillon and Stuart Stephen joined as MNTs in August 2020 and John Montgomery joined as a MNT in November 2020.

Pension Scheme for MDS

Neil Campbell resigned as a MNT in January 2021 and Ian Gray was appointed as a MNT in February 2021.

Andrew Sutherland retired as an Employer Nominated Trustee (ENT) of all three Schemes with effect from the 2020 General Assembly and Ray Martin and Lin Macmillan were appointed as ENTs for all three Schemes at the General Assembly in 2020.

1.4.3 The Trustees wish to record thanks to Andrew Sutherland, John Thomson and Neil Campbell for their dedicated service and contribution to the work of the Trustees.

2. SCHEME ADMINISTRATION

2.1 The General Assembly of 2018 invited the Trustees to deliver a Report to the 2019 General Assembly with recommendations on the most efficient means of administration of the closed funds (the "Scheme Administration").

The Trustees reported to the 2019 General Assembly 2019 that:

the current administration provisions be maintained, with further consideration given to this after the decision on buy-out is taken

The Trustees, having decided that buy-out was either unaffordable or did not offer best value for money, returned to Scheme Administration, concluding that existing arrangements be maintained.

The decision not to buy-out was part of a broader strategic review, summarised as:

Over the last two years the Trustees have considered the various options available, including the status quo. Our conclusion is that the members are best served by us not pursuing a buy-in, buy-out etc at this stage. Nor is it likely to be in the foreseeable future but we remain open to market developments.

A further piece of work reviewing practices, policies and procedures will be completed during 2021.

3. GOVERNANCE

3.1 The Trustees are conducting a formal review process for each of the key adviser roles of Scheme Actuary and Investment Consultant for the Schemes. This will be concluded in 2021.

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 two-day course covering the syllabus of the Pensions Management Institute part 1 exam in Professional Trusteeship.

3.3 The Trustees are conducting a regular review of the policies, practices and procedures used by the in-house administration team. This will be completed during 2021.

In the name of the Pension Trustees

GRAEME R. CAUGHEY, *Chair*
LIN MACMILLAN, *Vice-Chair*

NOMINATION COMMITTEE MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank those who responded to the call for nominations and encourage members, Elders, Deacons and Ministers to consider nomination for the 2021-22 process.
3. Invite each of the Standing Committees to reconsider its constitution and confirm the appropriate number of General Assembly appointed members which is required. *(Section 1.4)*
4. Note that Candidates in Training, Probationers and Ministers in their first year after ordination will not normally be nominated to serve on Standing Committees. *(Section 1.4.3)*
5. Make alterations to the Unincorporated Entities of the Church as set forth in the Report. *(Section 8)*
6. Appoint James Drummond Young as a Convener of the Judicial Commission. *(Section 8.2)*
7. Appoint Shona Haldane as a Convener of the Discipline Tribunal. *(Section 8.3)*
8. Appoint Hazel Hastie as Convener of the Registration of Ministries Committee. *(Section 8.4)*
9. Appoint Liam Fraser as Convener of the Theological Forum. *(Section 8.4)*

Report

1. COMMITTEE REMIT AND PROCESSES

1.1 Preamble

1.1.1 It has long been the practice that nominations to all the Standing Committees are sought throughout the year. In previous years a nomination form has been physically issued to Commissioners of the General Assembly on the Nomination Committee reporting day. The main appeal for nominations is made in the autumn with a deadline of the end of November. However, the Committee has often found that nominations are received right through to the New Year and the Committee would meet mid-January to consider the nominees and match them up with the vacancies.

1.1.2 During the summer months each of the Standing Committees is asked to provide an information sheet for potential new members and this is made available on the Nomination Committee webpage. This is an opportunity to invite the Convener to confirm which areas of expertise will be sought in new members and to consider succession planning. Where vacancies occur during the year, the relevant Committee, after consultation with the Convener of the Nomination Committee, may appoint a replacement member. Conveners are therefore encouraged to discuss mid-term vacancies at the earliest opportunity.

1.2 The Year 2020

1.2.1 The invitations to seek nominations were sent out in October 2020, sadly this did not elicit a speedy or adequate response and a reminder message was sent a few weeks prior to the initial deadline of November 30. Although more nominations were received it was soon clear that we did not have enough names to fill the anticipated vacancies. The deadline was extended, and a further request sent out at the start of the New Year. This in turn meant delaying the Committee meeting trusting that more nomination forms would be received.

1.2.2 It is believed that the lockdown, with the extra stress of working and living within new restrictions coupled to uncertainty about the Church of the future, contributed to the shortfall. This year feedback indicates that many people found they did not have energy to add a new commitment. However, several of those who did put their names forward specifically expressed a desire to help because of the impact of the pandemic which is a positive.

1.2.3 The Committee met in February 2021, by which time a good pool of nominations had been received for consideration resulting in the proposed nominations as set out within Section 8.

1.2.4 Following the February Committee meeting one of the proposed Forum nominees was ruled as ineligible due to being an employee of the Church. The Convener, under delegated authority, chose another person for nomination to serve on the Forum. The name is reported within Section 8.

1.3 Nomination to Legal Bodies

1.3.1 The Committee received names at its February meeting as agreed by the Legal Questions Committee, Principal Clerk and Solicitor. It was once again noted that in receiving the names for reappointments, the people involved had not been asked to submit a Nomination Form when that had been done within the past four years.

1.4 Going Forward

1.4.1 The time of the pandemic has caused every area of Church life to be examined; the way we recruit our volunteers; the way we meet; and the numbers involved in each Standing Committee all have the potential to be considered for adjustment. In recent years the numbers of vacancies and the demands expected from them have changed significantly; the move from four Councils with a

combined number of more than 140 members, to two Forums with just 15 members each; has consequently led to expecting more from those volunteers. The nature of what we do has changed.

1.4.2 If we are to be realistic about time and financial commitments, then now is the time to review committee membership. Also, some Standing Committees have a specialist remit; others have a wide-ranging set of tasks to perform. Some committees recognise that they could work well with fewer members whilst others express a need to add to their number. In light of these observations, the Committee invites each of the Standing Committees to reconsider its constitution and membership numbers.

1.4.3 While it is encouraging to receive good numbers of nominations, the Committee has adopted a policy of not accepting nominations of Candidates in Training, Probationers or Ministers in their first year following ordination. It is felt that the high expectations that are placed upon this stage of formation are enough without adding service on a Standing Committee.

2. COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE THE MODERATOR

2.1 As reported at the General Assembly in October 2020, the Commission of the General Assembly in May 2020 instructed the Nomination Committee to appoint members to the Committee to Nominate the Moderator of the General Assembly 2021. In terms of *Regulation I 2013 Nomination of the Moderator (as amended in 2020)* the Nomination Committee will make recommendations for membership of the Committee to Nominate the Moderator for General Assembly which is incorporated as part of the nominations process. The Committee Convener worked with the Moderator to create a short video on the task of the Committee to Nominate the Moderator and found this elicited a very positive response. It is hoped that in future years there may be a similar campaign and that those with recent experience of General Assembly may feel inspired to be nominated.

3. APPOINTMENT OF ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

3.1 The Vice-Convener was invited to comment on a mid-term vacancy for an Assembly Trustee and an appointment was made in December 2020. Details are provided in the report from the Assembly Trustees to the General Assembly in May 2021.

3.2 The Committee Vice-Convener was also consulted as to any comments which he wished to make on the Trustees' interview panel's recommendations for appointment of Trustees in May 2021.

4. PERSONNEL APPEAL GROUP

4.1 A review of procedures by the Solicitor of the Church led to proposals to increase the number of people which sit on the Personnel Appeal Group; to introduce a limit on the term of service to four years, with the option of appointment for a further four-year term; and that powers should be given to the Convener and Vice-Convener of the Nomination Committee to approve the co-option of individuals to the Panel as would be agreed with the Solicitor of the Church, as Secretary to the Group. These proposals are set out in the Assembly Trustees Report to the General Assembly 2021.

4.2 Subject to General Assembly approval to an increase in numbers, the Committee is content that the Convener and Vice-Convener should act under delegated authority to appoint members.

4.3 The Convener will act under delegated authority to fill the two current vacancies should suitable persons be identified in conversation with the Solicitor of the Church.

5. CHAPLAINS TO HER MAJESTY'S FORCES COMMITTEE

5.1 The Committee noted that over the coming year the Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces Committee would look to review their constitution in consultation with the Assembly Trustees and the Nomination Committee. The outcomes of discussions will be reported to the General Assembly in 2022 and it was anticipated by the Convener of the Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces Committee that this would include a proposal to reduce the number of members.

5.2 One nomination is reported meaning that the Committee will run with six vacancies unfilled during this coming year.

6. CHURCH OF SCOTLAND EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION GROUP

6.1 The Convener and Vice-Convener were involved, on behalf of the Committee, in decisions on the initial membership of a newly established group.

7. FACTS AND FIGURES

7.1 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.

7.2 A total of 97 proposed nominees were considered with some individuals proposed for more than one committee.

7.2.1 15 names were received for the nomination process to legal bodies.

7.2.2 82 nomination forms were considered for the Standing Committees (the Unincorporated Entities). In addition, 1 nominee withdrew due to personal reasons prior to the February meeting and is not included in the totals or below breakdown:

- 34 nominations from Ministers (compared with 58 in 2020 and 56 in 2019), with 17 being approached;
- 13 nominations from Kirk Sessions (compared with 14 in 2020 and 9 in 2019), with 8 being approached;
- 4 nominations from Presbyteries (compared with 16 in 2020 and 24 in 2019), with 2 being approached;
- 1 nomination from The Guild (compared with 1 in 2020 and 4 in 2019), with 1 being approached;
- 4 nominations from Nomination Committee members (compared with 2 in 2020 and 15 in 2019), with 3 being approached;
- 26 nominations from the Unincorporated Entities (compared with 41 in 2020 and 76 in 2019), with 21 being approached.
- A total of 69 vacancies were considered this year for the Unincorporated Entities. 2 of those approached are nominated to serve on 2 Standing Committees. 15 vacancies remain unfilled and the Committee may act under delegated authority to fill some of these.

7.2.3 Subsequent to the above details, one of the proposed nominees has become ineligible due to accepting nomination to be an Assembly Trustee. The vacancy created will be considered with the 15 mentioned above.

8. NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE UNINCORPORATED ENTITIES

8.1 The following appointment will require the General Assembly to suspend Standing Order 122. It is anticipated that the Business Convener will arrange for that question to be put to the General Assembly at the appropriate point in the proceedings.

8.1.1 The Committee wishes to nominate The Very Rev William Hewitt for a further term, for three years, as one of the Vice-Conveners of the Judicial Commission.

8.2 The Committee wishes to nominate the Hon Lord Drummond Young as an additional Convener of the Judicial Commission. The Judicial Commission would then have three Conveners and two Vice-Conveners.

8.3 Noting the elevated professional status of one of the current Vice-Conveners of the Discipline Tribunal, as a Senator of the College of Justice, the Committee wishes to nominate the Hon Lady Haldane as a Convener for a term of four years. The Discipline Tribunal would then have four Conveners and two Vice-Conveners.

8.4 The Committee recommends the following appointments:

** denotes a reappointment*

Assembly Business Committee

Ministers Retiring Michael Mair, Gillian Paterson
Ministers Appointed John Ferguson (Peterculter), Michael Mair* (Edinburgh: St David's Broomhouse)

Audit Committee

Minister Retiring Graeme Glover
Minister Appointed Graeme Glover* (Jersey: St Columba's)

Chaplains to HM Forces Committee

Minister Resigned Daniel Connolly Jan 2021
Ministers Retiring Fiona Ogg, Lisa-Jane Rankin
Member Retiring Ethne Brown
Members Appointed Andrew Tait (London Crown Court)

Church Art & Architecture Committee (CARTA) Discharged Dec 2020

Committee to Nominate the Moderator

Ministers and Deacons Appointed Stephen Blakey (Isla Parishes), Alison Burnside (The Bengairn Parishes linked with Castle Douglas), Robert Craig (Breich Valley), Dorothy Getliffe DCS (Inverness: Old High St Stephen's), Graeme Glover (Jersey: St Columba's), Alison Meikle (Grangemouth: Zetland), Anne Mulligan DCS (Edinburgh: Mayfield Salisbury), Christine Murdoch (Craigownie linked with Garelochhead linked with Rosneath St Modan's)
Elders Appointed Alison Armstrong (Laggan and Newtonmore), Angus Grant (Edinburgh: St Catherine's Argyle), Jean Hunter (Shiskine), Stuart Kelly (Cheviot Churches), John McCafferty (Maryculter Trinity), Norma Rolls (Edinburgh: Palmerston Place), Colin Russell (Wishaw: Old)

Ecumenical Relations Committee

Minister Deceased Sally Russell Nov 2020
Member Retiring Gemma King
Members Appointed Gemma King* (Edinburgh: Colinton), Ian Russell (Torphichen) (2yrs)

Faith Impact Forum

Members Resigned Caroline Cowan Nov 2020, Barry Watson Jan 2021
Members Retiring Maureen Jack, Mary Sweetland
Minister Appointed Alistair Drummond (Kilmuir & Logie Easter)
Members Appointed Martin Ashing (Edinburgh: Palmerston Place), Marian Macintyre (Shetland), Gordon Sharp (Dundee: West)

Faith Nurture Forum

Ministers Retiring Michael Goss, Fraser Macnaughton, Hanneke Marshall
Ministers Appointed Catherine Beattie (Giffnock: South), Robert Hamilton (Airdrie: New Wellwynd), Grant MacLaughlan (Perth: North), Robin McAlpine (Kirkcaldy: Bennochty)
Member Retiring Sue Thomson

Legal Questions Committee

Vice-Convener Retiring Barbara Finlayson
Vice-Convener Appointed Victoria Linford (Stow: St Mary of Wedale and Heriot)
Minister Resigned Victoria Linford
Minister Retiring Adam Dillon
Minister Appointed Adam Dillon* (Kirkintilloch: St David's Memorial Park)
Member Retiring James McLean*
Member Appointed John Ritchie (Edinburgh: Barclay Viewforth)

Appointment to Legal Bodies

Discipline Tribunal

Vice-Conveners Resigning Shona Haldane, Keith Stewart
Convener Appointed Shona Haldane (Edinburgh: Wardie)

Judicial Commission

Convener Appointed James Drummond Young
Vice-Convener Retiring William Hewitt
Vice-Convener Appointed William Hewitt* (Kilmarnock: St Andrew's and St Marnock's) (3yrs)

Judicial Panel

Ministers Retiring Marian Cowie, Gordon McCracken, Jan Mathieson, MaryAnn Rennie
Ministers Appointed Gordon McCracken* (Hamilton Presbytery), Ian McLean (Montrose: Old and St Andrew's), Jan Mathieson* (Williamwood), MaryAnn Rennie* (Dunfermline Abbey)
Elders Retiring Steuart Dey, Chris Dunn, Douglas Hamill, Pauline Weibye
Elders Appointed Fiona Drysdale (Bearsden: New Kilpatrick), Chris Dunn* (Cumbernauld: Kildrum), Douglas Hamill* (Kirkcaldy Linktown), Pauline Weibye* (Edinburgh: Craigmillar Park)

Judicial Proceedings Panel

Ministers Retiring Dorothy Anderson*, George Cowie, William Hewitt, Gary Peacock, Thomas Pollock, Thomas Riddell*
Elders and Deacons Retiring Morag Crawford DCS*, Alan Dewar*, Grant Gordon, Richard Henderson*, Patricia Kingston, Nigel Lawrie*, Anne Mulligan DCS*, Katherine Taylor
The Discipline of Ministry Act (Act III 2001) provides that anyone who has an active case remains on the Judicial Proceedings Panel until their case is complete.
The following Minister is retained: Thomas Pollock* (Glasgow: Sherbrooke Mossspark)
The following Elder and Deacon are Retained: Richard Henderson* (Balerno), Anne Mulligan DCS* (Edinburgh: Mayfield Salisbury)

Ministries Appeal Panel

Member Retiring Isabell Montgomerie
Member Appointed Isabell Montgomerie* (Ochiltree)

Life & Work Advisory Committee

Ministers Appointed Jane Barron (Ceres, Kemback and Springfield)
Member Retiring Andrew Nicoll
Member Appointed Jane Robson (Edinburgh: Cramond)

Nomination Committee

Ministers Retiring Catherine Buchan, Karen Harbison, Ian Murray, Andrew Philip, Colin Sutherland
Ministers Appointed Donald Campbell, (Dumfries: St George's), Bryan Kerr (Lanark: Greyfriars), Alison Meikle (Grangemouth: Zetland)
Member Resigned Robin Downie Dec 2020
Members Retiring Barbara Leppard, Kay McIntosh DCS
Andrew MacPherson, Elspeth McPheat DCS, John Stewart
Members Appointed Fiona Blair DCS (Beith), Jonathan Buchan (Glasgow: King's Park), Connor MacFadyen (Tranent)

Personnel Appeal Group

Member Deceased Alistair McGregor

Member Resigning David McClements is now disqualified as he has joined the Legal Questions Committee

Registration of Ministries Committee

Convener Retiring Neil Dougall

Convener Appointed Hazel Hastie (Edinburgh: Drylaw)

Vice-Convener Retiring Hazel Hastie

Vice-Convener Appointed Fiona Smith (Inverness: Ness Bank)

Safeguarding Committee

Vice-Convener Retiring Caroline Deerin

Vice-Convener Appointed Fiona Reynolds (Monifieth)

Minister Resigning Fiona Reynolds

Minister Retiring Julia Wiley

Ministers Appointed Sonia Blakesley (Paisley: St Mark's Oldhall), Elspeth McKay (Cumbernauld: Old) (3yrs)

Member Resigned Alison MacVie Jan 2021

Member Appointed Judy Wilson (Cardross)

Social Care Council - CrossReach Board

Member Retiring Amy Reid

Member Appointed Amy Reid* (Cumbernauld: Old)

Theological Forum

Convener Retiring Donald MacEwan

Convener Appointed Liam Fraser (Linlithgow: St Michael's)

Vice-Convener Resigning Liam Fraser

Vice-Convener Appointed Susan Hardman Moore (Comrie)

Minister Resigning Susan Hardman Moore

Ministers Retiring Jean Kirkwood, Paul Middleton, Alastair Symington

Ministers Appointed John Carswell (Hamilton: Cadzow), Paul Middleton* (Edinburgh: St Cuthbert's)

Members Appointed Joshua Ralston (Edinburgh: Portobello and Joppa), Jennifer Stark (Edinburgh: St Andrew's and St George's West) (2yrs)

In the name of the Committee

JULIE RENNICK, *Convener*
BILL WISHART, *Vice-Convener*
DAVE KENDALL, *Secretary*

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 2020

| Proposed Deliverance | Report |
|---|--|
| <p>The General Assembly:</p> <p>1. Receive the Report.</p> | <p>1. CHURCH HYMNARY 4TH EDITION</p> <p>1.1 In the year to 30 September 2020 the sales of the various editions were as follows: -</p> <p>Words: 285 copies compared with 501 (2019) Full Music Edition: 308 copies compared with 415 (2019) Melody Edition: 113 copies compared with 197 (2019) Large Print Edition: 251 copies compared with 529 (2019) CD-Rom: 24 copies compared with 20 (2019)</p> <p>1.2 The commission due to the Trust calculated in respect of the year to 30 September 2020 in respect of CH4 was £1,614.90 compared to with £3693.58 in the previous year. From this, royalties were payable to the authors of £1,337.75, the first £2,000 of which is met by the publishers, with the net commission due to the Trust £1,614.90.</p> <p>1.3 In addition sales of the Hymnary under the title Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise amounted to 313 copies in all. The net commission payable to the Trust was £199.81.</p> <hr/> <p>2. FUTURE WORK</p> <p>The Trust are aware of the Assembly request from 2019 for consideration of a supplement to CH4. The Trust would be keen to support an appropriate request for funding, expect it would support any such proposal for a supplemental hymn book or similar resource and its use in the Church, and had indicated to the Faith Nurture Forum the funding available to the Trust for appropriate projects.</p> <hr/> <p>3. FUNDING FOR PROJECTS</p> <p>The trustees continue to be keen to encourage more applications for trust funds, particularly for local training projects and which might include alleviating the cost to organists by subsidising SCOTS training days. The trust purposes include:</p> <p>“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”.</p> <p><i>In the name of the trustees</i></p> <p>PHILIP H BRODIE, <i>Chairman</i> HUGH ANGUS, <i>Secretary and Treasurer</i></p> |

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND TRUST MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank the members of the Trust for their diligence.
3. Re-appoint Mrs Morag Angus and Mr Leon Marshall as members of the Trust from 1 June 2021.

Report

The Church of Scotland Trust, which was established by Act of Parliament in 1932, submits its Eighty ninth 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. Following the death of Mrs Jennifer M Hamilton in October 2019 the Trust has appointed Mrs Madelaine Sproule as Secretary and Clerk. Matters of particular significance are noted hereafter.

1.2 Third Party Trusts

1.2.1 The Trust is currently trustee of 50 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 and September/October Trust meetings.

1.3 Pakistan

1.3.1 The new Succession Trust which will accept title to the Church's property interests in Pakistan and which was signed on behalf of the Trust, Faith Impact Forum and local trustees in Pakistan is still in the process of being registered in Pakistan. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in delays to the registration of the deed.

1.3.2 The Trust regrets that Forman Christian College are no longer in a position to take over Murray Christian College in Sialkot. Representatives of the Trust will continue to seek an alternative option for the college which would ensure its future use as a Christian College.

1.3.3 Representatives of the Trust and the Faith Impact Forum continue to meet with their attorney for Pakistan, Dr Peter David regularly to monitor developments and agree future strategy. The Trust will continue to endeavour to achieve its objective of transferring all its property interests to an appropriate body in terms of the Church of Scotland Trust Order Confirmation Act 1958 with the help of Dr David and his many contacts in Pakistan.

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 have been found in favour of the Trust but 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 1.4.1 The Trust continues to be consulted by Faith Impact Forum regarding ongoing and future developments relating to property in Israel.

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.

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. The Trust is required to give consent to any extensive alterations to property in the International Presbytery and reviews the Property Reports on an annual basis.

2. ACCOUNTS FOR 2019 AND 2020

2.1 The Trust's Accounts for the years 2019 and 2020 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 2021 but are eligible for re-appointment: Mrs Morag Angus and Mr Leon Marshall. It is suggested to the General Assembly Mrs Morag Angus and Mr Leon Marshall be re-appointed as members of the Trust from 1 June 2021.

3.2 Mr Hugo Allan intimated his resignation from the Trust in February 2020 and members would like to record their appreciation for his contribution to the work of the Trust since 2017.

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

THOMAS C WATSON, *Chairman*
W F STUART LYNCH, *Vice Chairman*
MADELAINE SPROULE, *Secretary & Clerk*

Addendum

It is with great sadness that the Trust note the death of Mrs Jennifer Margaret Hamilton on 23 October 2019. Jennifer was appointed Secretary and Clerk of the Trust in 1995 and her knowledge of charity and trust law were second to none. Jennifer's encyclopaedic grasp of the Church of Scotland Trust helped steer a succession of Chairs through the numerous complex issues facing the Trust over the years. The Trust remember with gratitude Jennifer's dedicated service, and a full tribute to Jennifer can be found here:-

May 2020 Update Report and Webinar | The Church of Scotland

THOMAS C WATSON, *Chairman*
MADELAINE SPROULE, *Secretary & Clerk*

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND INVESTORS TRUST MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the reappointment of Mr R H Nisbet as a member of the Investors Trust from 1 June 2021.
3. Approve the appointment of Mr J G L Millar and Mrs J McKeown from 1 June 2021.
4. Receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Investors Trust for 2019 and 2020.

Report**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, spread 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 decrease in the capital value of investments does not necessarily have a corresponding effect on income distributed to investors.

1.3. Ethical considerations form an integral part of the investment management process and the Trustees have given instructions to the investment managers, taking full account of 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. Furthermore, the screening service used alerts us to any turnover above 10% from unacceptable activities so that we can be confident that the 15% limit is observed in dynamic circumstances. In general, investment is sought in companies which demonstrate responsible employment, good corporate governance practices, have proper regard to environmental performance (particularly Climate Change), recognise human rights and act with sensitivity to the communities in which they operate.

1.4 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 other church-linked organisations, and with links to a growing number of international churches. 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 (environmental, social and governance) organisations and on its own, CIG is able to exert significant influence on corporate behaviour. The Investors Trust Chairman is a member of the CIG Board.

2. DELIVERANCE

2.1 In 2018 and 2019 debates were held at the General Assemblies on the issue of whether the Church of Scotland Investors Trust should be urged to divest indiscriminately from Oil and Gas companies. These debates were initiated by recommendations made in the Reports from the Church and Society Council. In the event, the votes taken showed that opinion was divided but on both occasions the majority were in favour of no change. The minutes of the 2019 GA noted the following:

Caring for Creation

8. Note with concern that progress towards implementing the Paris climate agreement is falling far short of expectations and call upon the Scottish and UK governments to make the rapid transition to a low carbon economy a priority.

9. Urge all congregations to become eco-congregations and to consider what transformative actions they can take to help the transition to a low carbon economy in their lives, their finances, communities and worship.

10. Note the engagement to date with oil and gas companies and instruct the Council to report on the outcome to the Assembly of 2020.

11. Urge the Council of Assembly and Investors Trust to further prioritise work agreed in 2018 to 'welcome the proposal from the Investors Trust to promote stronger Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance in the Church's investments.

The 2020 General Assembly was deferred to October due to the lockdown situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and due to the limited time available the General Assembly did not receive the 2020 report of the Church and Society Council or Church of Scotland Investors Trust. However, following the appointment of the Faith Impact Forum in early 2020, which assumed the responsibilities of the Church and Society Council, Investors Trust continued discussions on Oil and Gas investment with it. In the meantime, our investment managers were reducing the exposure to Oil and Gas companies for financial reasons to the point that no shares in the sector are held as at February 2021.

With the support of the Assembly Trustees, a Deliverance was agreed between Investors Trust and the Faith Impact Forum which is published in the Forum's Report to the 2021 General Assembly, and is as follows:

2.2 Welcome the agreement with the Church of Scotland Investors Trust that, as a matter of principle, the portfolios of investments managed should align with the UN Paris Agreement in pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.

2.3 Welcome the fact that no oil and gas company shares are currently held and note that any future investment in oil and gas would only follow agreement between the Church of Scotland Investors Trust and the Faith Impact Forum that there was good evidence that its strategy and implementation was aligned with the stringent targets set by the Paris Agreement.

2.4 a. 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.

b. Instruct the Selection Committee to consider carefully the range of skills and diversity of backgrounds required for this task and present the names for this Special Committee on ethical investment practice to a later session of this General Assembly.

2.5 The importance of ethical considerations in investment management has been increasingly recognised in recent years, not just for church investments. While Climate Change is one of the most important considerations, other issues need to be taken into account as well. The Trustees do not select companies for investment, but appoint fund managers for this purpose and agree mandates with them which are contractual. Consequently, the terms under which fund managers operate need to be clear in respect of ethical matters and a close working relationship between the Trustees and the managers is needed to ensure the practical application of general requirements in a way which is fully

acceptable and verifiable. The Trustees strongly welcome a review of how ethical considerations should be applied in future for church investments, recognising that the issues have become more complex and that practical ways of working are needed. The Trustees also appreciate that investments which have a positive impact on social or environmental issues may be important components of the Funds, provided they also meet the requirements of the investors whose interests are being served.

The Trustees have issued more frequent communications to investors in recent years, to inform on both financial and ethical developments. They recognise their obligation to investors in this respect, not least for income forecasts as budgets have become more difficult to manage for both church treasurers and our larger investors.

The 2019 General Assembly also requested a list of Growth Fund holdings to be provided in the annual report. The Trustees are pleased to confirm this was made available in a downloadable annual review for 2019. In addition the Annual Report and Financial Statements, quarterly factsheets, ESG updates and 2020 Annual Review are available to download from the Church of Scotland website.

3. INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE AND OUTLOOK

3.1 The total value of funds invested through the Church of Scotland Investors Trust decreased from £478.4 million at 31 December 2019 to £468.9 million at 31 December 2020. On a global basis, the year 2020 was dominated by Covid-19 and, from a UK perspective, Covid-19 and Brexit. The effect of the lockdowns was fully felt by western countries going into Q2, leading to an unprecedented collapse in GDP growth for Q2 2020. Later in the year, as western countries eased their pandemic restrictions, economies rebounded. Sadly, Q4 saw Covid-19 infection rates rise again sharply leading to a renewal of restrictions by the end of 2020 and in the early months of 2021. Not surprisingly, financial market volatility was seen throughout the year. Despite such turbulence, all major equity markets, excluding UK equities, posted positive returns over the year to 31 December 2020.

3.2 As the result of poor UK equity returns and low exposure to the technology sector, the Growth Fund underperformed its benchmark. The Income Fund marginally underperformed, achieving returns almost in line with its benchmark but still enjoys a strong record over longer periods.

Total return for the Growth fund in 2020 was -0.62% against the composite benchmark (adjusted to mirror the ethical guidelines of this fund) of 3.06%.

In February 2021 the Strategic Allocation of the Growth Fund was changed, mainly to remove the distinction between UK and Overseas investment in equities. After this date, the benchmark includes 75% allocation to Global Equities and no specific allocation to UK Equities, recognising the relatively small size of the UK market and its low proportion of key growth sectors.

3.3 The Income Fund achieved a total return for 2020 of 6.90% against a benchmark of 7.20%.

4. INCOME DISTRIBUTIONS

4.1 The 17.0p per unit target initially set for the managers was removed in May 2020 following the cancellation of many UK dividends. This was communicated to Growth Fund investors in a statement from the Chairman in May following the reduction of the first distribution for 2020 from 8.0p per unit to 4.0p. A further update circulated to investors in November advised that the Trustees were forecasting a further distribution of 4.0p per unit, bringing the total distribution for 2020 to an estimated 12.0p per unit. This represents a yield of 2.23% based on the unit price as at 31 December 2020.

4.2 Income Fund distributions were reduced in September 2020 from 25.0p to 22.5p. Total income earned during the year was 43.1p per unit (2019 – 48.5p per unit) and in line with the Chairman's November statement, the Trustees agreed to distribute a further 20.0p for the period 1 July to 31 December 2020. The total distribution from revenue earned in 2020 is therefore 42.5p per unit which represents a yield of 3.34% based on the unit price as at 31 December 2020.

4.3 The average interest rate for 2020 declared by the Deposit Fund was 0.54%. This compares favourably with the Bank of England base rate of 0.10% for most of the year. However, as longer-term deposits matured and were reinvested at lower rates of interest the rates paid to investors in each quarter declined. Unless the base rate is increased, only very modest levels of income can be expected by investors in 2021.

5. MEMBERSHIP

5.1 In accordance with the terms of the Constitution, the following three members are due to retire by rotation at 31 May 2021: Mr R Nisbet, Mr G R Young and Mr A A Aitchison.

Mr Nisbet has indicated that he does wish to seek re-election. It is recommended to the General Assembly that Mr Nisbet should be reappointed as from 1 June 2021.

Two of our Trustees are standing down this year and we thank them for their long service and expertise. Alan Aitchison joined the church's investment arm in 1985, and so predates the current Investors Trust structure - and is our longest serving trustee. Gordon Young became a Trustee in 2009 and is also stepping down as the Chair of our Audit Committee.

5.2 In accordance with good practice the Investors Trust welcomed nominations for Trusteeship. From the nomination process and in accordance with the terms of the Constitution, it is recommended that Mr J G L Millar and Mrs J McKeown be appointed members from 1 June 2021.

6. ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2019 AND 2020

6.1 Copies of the 2019 and 2020 Annual Review and the Annual Report and Financial Statements for the years to 31 December 2019 and to 31 December 2020 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*

B J DUFFIN *Chairman*
R D BURGON *Vice-Chairman*
N ROBERTSON *Secretary*



The Church of Scotland

PART II –
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS
AND MINUTES OF
APPEAL HEARINGS

Jesus said:
Follow Me!
and I will make you
fish for people.

**AND IMMEDIATELY
THEY LEFT THEIR NETS
AND FOLLOWED HIM.**

General Assembly **2021**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2021

Supplementary Reports and Minutes of Appeal Hearings

- 23/1.....Supplementary Report of the Faith Nurture Forum
- 24/1.....Supplementary Report of the Assembly Trustees
- 25/1.....Minute 1 – Minute of Ministries Appeal Panel
29 October 2020
- 26/1.....Minute 2 – Minute of Ministries Appeal Panel
16 December 2020

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT – FAITH NURTURE FORUM

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Supplementary Report.
2. Pass the Presbytery Mission Plan Act as set out in Appendix 1.
3. Instruct Presbyteries to complete the process of developing and gaining final approval of their Presbytery Mission Plan by 31 December 2022 noting that Presbyteries which are in the process of union with other Presbyteries may seek to form a shared Presbytery Mission Plan with them as the fulfilment of this instruction. (*Section 2 and Section 7*)
4. Agree the number of ministry posts allocated to each Presbytery set out in Appendix 4 and instruct that this be the figure used in the forming of any Presbytery Mission Plan. (*Section 7 and Appendix 4*)
5. Instruct that all Presbytery Plans agreed and approved in terms of the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003) be suspended from 1 June 2021. (*Section 2 and Section 3*)
6. Instruct that from 1 June 2021
 - a) only vacancies and readjustments processed in terms of section 9(2) of Act VII 2003 (which require, for the avoidance of doubt, the approval of the Presbytery of the bounds and the concurrence of the Faith Nurture Forum) may proceed and
 - b) any vacancies and readjustments given permission to proceed through this exception shall be Reviewable Charges. (*Section 3*)
7. Instruct that where permission to call in terms of section 8 of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003) has been given prior to 1 June 2021 the vacancy process in a charge may continue after 1 June 2021 but if that process has not led to the preaching of a nominee in terms of section 22 of Act VIII 2003 by 30 September 2021, such a vacancy process shall be discontinued at that date unless agreement is reached between the Presbytery of the bounds and the Faith Nurture Forum that the process may be continued thereafter in terms of Act VIII 2003. (*Section 4*)
8. Instruct that from 1 June 2021 all outstanding appeals under section 6 of Act VII 2003 related to Presbytery Plans shall be suspended, but that this shall be without prejudice to any right to initiate a review in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act in due course. (*Section 5*)
9. Pass the Local Mission Church Regulations as set out in Appendix 5. (*Section 8 and Appendix 5*)

Report

1. PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN ACT

Members of the Faith Nurture Forum have worked with the General Assembly's Legal Questions Committee and with the General Trustees on the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Appendix 1.) This Act, as indicated in the main Volume of Reports, seeks to:

- Name mission as the prime driver for Planning.
- Align the description of mission with that being used in the Faith Action Plan.
- Commit to a territorial ministry as in the Constitution but also set the scene for ecumenical cooperation in its delivery.
- Bring Ministry Post numbers into the legislation as a mandatory figure, and facilitate Presbyteries achieving conformity to their allocation by 2025.
- Set a framework for a five-year rolling plan (as opposed to a fixed ten years in Act VII 2003) and require the Faith Nurture Forum to provide a five-year rolling projection of Ministry Post numbers.
- Simplify the strategic decisions about buildings and draw on the support and guidance provided by the General Trustees.
- Simplify and speed up the process whereby the process of arriving at Plan Decisions and other Planning matters can be challenged by Kirk Sessions and Presbyters through the provision of a bespoke review process. Outstanding appeals will fall if the new Presbytery Mission Plan Act is agreed by the General Assembly.
- Maintain a tight control on budgets by insisting that shortfalls be dealt with and appointments are properly set up with secure funding and good HR practice.
- Offer Presbyteries a wider range of options as they seek to reshape church life and use the Ministry Posts which they have been allocated in particular to add provision for – Team Ministry, “light touch” local church (Local Mission Church), online church, new expressions of church.
- Provide a clearer framework for implementing Plans through its description of adjustment processes.

2. THE PRIORITY OF MISSION

In developing the Presbytery Mission Plan Act presented to the General Assembly, questions have rightly been asked about where this leaves existing plans, drafted in terms of Act VII, 2003. The Faith Nurture Forum wishes to be clear about the priority of mission, and in particular the Five Marks of Mission, while the Assembly Trustees have been clear about the financial realities. There is an urgency and therefore the Faith Nurture Forum asks the General Assembly to instruct Presbyteries to begin working on new plans and to submit a new plan, in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act, reflecting the reduced number of ministries, no later than 31st December 2022.

3. SUSPENDING EXISTING PLANS

In order to facilitate this work, it makes sense to suspend all existing plans, while still allowing, in exceptional circumstances, for certain vacancies and readjustments to be processed in terms of section 9(2) of the Act VII 2003 (requiring, for the avoidance of doubt, the approval of the Presbytery of the bounds and the concurrence of the Faith Nurture Forum). Recognising too that circumstances may change while these new plans are being drafted, the Forum, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee and the

General Trustees, asks the General Assembly to instruct that such vacancies and readjustments given permission to proceed through this exception shall be Reviewable Charges. This proviso will apply until final plans under the new Presbytery Mission Plan Act have been agreed and concurred with by the Faith Nurture Forum, and any reviews arising from these Presbytery Mission Plan Act decisions are dealt with under the proposed review process.

4. EXISTING VACANCIES PURSUING CALLS

For those congregations pursuing a call at this time, it is only fair that they should be allowed to continue in that process. However, if that process has not led to the preaching of a nominee in terms of section 22 of Act VIII 2003 by 30 September 2021, such a vacancy process shall be discontinued at that date unless agreement is reached between the Presbytery of the bounds and the Faith Nurture Forum that the process may be continued thereafter in terms of Act VII 2003 section 9(2). Again, this allows Presbyteries the discretion to enable congregations which are critical to the mission of the Presbytery to seek to discern whether there is a suitable candidate for these vacancies, in conversation with the Faith Nurture Forum.

5. APPEALS

Given that there are outstanding appeals which have been lodged under the terms of Act VII, 2003, some of which may still be some way off resolution for a variety of reasons, it is proposed that any such appeals be suspended. This would be without prejudice to any right to initiate a review in terms of the agreed Presbytery Mission Plan Act in due course.

6. GUIDELINES AND CODE OF PRACTICE

The Faith Nurture Forum, working with the Legal Questions Committee and the General Trustees, will prepare Guidelines and a Code of Practice, focussing on mission and other underlying principles, a basic outline of which can be found at Appendix 2.

7. ALLOCATION OF MINISTRIES NUMBERS

7.1.1 The Assembly Trustees in their forward planning have indicated that the number of ministries which the Church will be able to afford by the end of 2025 is 600. Taking into account the need for a 10% allowance for vacancies, to allow for movement and flexibility, this means that the number of posts – a combination of Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and Ministries Development Staff – to be included in plans equates to 660.

7.1.2 In seeking to tease through how these 660 posts might be allocated across Scotland, the Faith Nurture Forum considered how to arrive at a distribution which was equitable; which was based on sound principles; and which reflected the Church's continuing Priority to the Poor, as affirmed by successive General Assemblies.

7.1.3 The General Assembly of 2018 considered a set of advisory figures, which related purely to Ministers of Word and Sacrament, and did not include Ministries Development Staff. Recognising that the advisory nature of these figures was unsatisfactory, the Forum has done further work on weightings and ministries allocations, drawing on the realisation that the weightings agreed by General Assembly in 2010 and again in 2011 required revisiting.

7.1.4 A small group met on three occasions, with input from the Rev Dr Fiona Tweedie, and received papers from the Church's Finance Department to consider whether these weightings were still helpful. The composition of the group is listed at Appendix 3. In addition, an informal survey of Presbytery Clerks took place to ascertain their views, and the responses from more rural Clerks were indicative of being supportive of the weightings, while the responses received

from some of the more urban Presbyteries were indicative of finding the weightings less than helpful.

7.1.5 In 2011, the allocation of ministries was based on two key factors. The first was population density, and, recognising that population density was radically different in the rural and remote parts of Scotland, the weightings reflected this, with those most remote and rural parts receiving a weighting of three, and the urban areas, and predominantly urban areas receiving a weighting factor of one. The second key factor reflected the fact that the mission of the Church was to those who self-identified as Church of Scotland in the 2011 Census, and also to those who self-identified as having no religious affiliation, as well those who chose not to answer this question.

7.1.6 While a Census took place in England in March 2021, the Scottish Census will take place in March 2022, with the key findings to support the revision of ministries allocations not being available until the latter part of 2023.

7.1.7 In looking at the weightings, and the allocation of ministries numbers, various options were considered. These included doing away with a weighting system entirely, while retaining the double weighting for population for Priority Areas; removing the weightings entirely, and removing the double weighting of population for Priority Areas, and offering a pool of 30 posts for MDS roles within Priority Areas, which would have been subject to a bidding process; and introducing a new weightings system.

7.1.8 The group looking at weightings also had access to the figures for Ministries and Mission allocations for the period 2019 to 2021, and looked at these alongside the number of ministries allocated to each Presbytery or cluster of Presbyteries where Presbyteries had come together to create a new Presbytery, with the costing of a ministry post equating to £43,698 at 2021 figures. There are some questions about whether using the population density statistics is the right method going forward and the Forum will consider these and report back to a subsequent General Assembly.

7.1.9 Equally the shape of Presbytery Reform will require appropriate adjustments to these weightings as new Presbyteries are created to replace existing ones. The weightings factors can be found on the General Assembly pages of the Church of Scotland website.

7.1.10 The Forum asks the General Assembly to retain the existing weightings, recognising that further work will take place in the coming year and the allocation of ministries arising from these weightings, capped at 660, and distributed accordingly across the Presbyteries in Scotland, with appropriate adjustments on a percentage basis for those Presbyteries not subject to a calculation against population. These figures are to be regarded as mandatory, and the new Presbytery Mission Act indicates this. These ministry figures can be found at Appendix 4.

7.1.11 For the Presbyteries of Clyde and Fife, the Forum offers an aggregate of ministries, and encourages other Presbyteries working together to shape a new Presbytery to consider these figures as they work collaboratively.

7.1.12 The new Presbytery Mission Plan Act provides for a more dynamic rolling five-year planning cycle, with ministry allocations being reported on each year to the General Assembly. Alongside the review of Ministries and Mission Allocations, reported on elsewhere to this General Assembly, it is appropriate to work with the existing weightings, alongside the percentage reduction in ministries numbers, as the baseline for Presbytery Mission Plans with an end date of 31 December 2025.

7.1.13 These numbers reflect those who self-identified as Church of Scotland in the 2011 Census, and also those who self-identified with no religious affiliation. Recognising that much housebuilding has taken place across Scotland since the 2011 Census, the work done by the Reverend Dr Fiona

Tweedie in arriving at these figures draws heavily on the Small Area Population Estimates data provided by National Records of Scotland, as at June 2019. The Forum is grateful for Dr Tweedie's support in this key area of work.

7.1.14 The Forum also asks the General Assembly to note that there will be a cap on the numbers of MDS posts within the overall allocation of ministries, at a higher percentage of the overall posts than was eventually the case in the 2011 plans. For 2022 this cap will be 120 in the first instance.

7.2 Guardianships

In addition, the provision of guardianships will continue, but guardianships will be built into plans as 0.25 of an FTE post; they receive two days of pastoral work and also a Sunday, and these costs need to be reflected fully in Presbytery Plans.

7.3 Financial Issues in Planning

The group has taken account of the possibility that a Presbytery might agree a Mission Plan which significantly reduces the aggregate amount of Ministry and Mission contributions which its congregations remit to the national Church. It is possible for a Presbytery to do so while acting in good faith and in accordance with Church law. Whether the Presbytery is a net contributor or not, this would imperil the Church's ability to pay for 600 ministries. The more Presbyteries produce Mission Plans which result in a reduction of their aggregate Ministry and Mission contributions, the greater the risk. To mitigate this risk, the group believes that the General Assembly should be clear in setting targets for gross aggregate Ministry and Mission contributions from each Presbytery. These targets would require annual revision and might be advisory or mandatory.

7.4 The group had neither the resources nor the time to bring detailed proposals to the Assembly. It is also aware that work is being done elsewhere on Church finance which might bear directly on this issue. Nevertheless, the group recommends that the Faith Nurture Forum, working with the Assembly Trustees and Legal Questions Committee, should monitor the potential impact of Presbytery Mission Planning on the finances of the national Church and, if necessary, bring proposals to a future General Assembly.

7.5 The Forum will continue to keep these figures under review and will report back to the General Assembly of 2022.

8. LOCAL MISSION CHURCH

8.1 In engaging with Presbyteries and congregations, the Faith Nurture Forum, the Principal Clerk's Office and the General Trustees have been all too aware of the demands placed on small congregations in their ongoing life and work as they seek to engage in mission in context. The burden of finding an Interim Moderator and of populating the offices of Session Clerk, Treasurer, Safeguarding Coordinator and a Property Convener, to name but some of the local offices required, is challenging for small congregations. There is a positive history in the Church of Scotland of mission stations being a vibrant expression of local church, and the regulations on Local Mission Church referred to below can be a significant contribution to that story.

8.2 Accordingly, following the initiative of the Legal Questions Committee, the Forum brings to the General Assembly Regulations on Local Mission Church, which can be found at Appendix 5.

8.3 These create provision for a congregation, which is small and which seeks to continue to worship, to have a continuing life, while recognising that the burdens of continuing with a Kirk Session and the associated offices, perhaps including a Clerk to the Congregational Board, as well as the roles indicated above are beyond its means. Worship could be provided by worship teams, by online provision, or through the offices of a Reader or Ordained Local Minister. The experiences of the last year have shown that different possibilities exist and that online worship can be offered as a deep experience of the Holy Spirit and the

gathered people of God. Some of the congregations currently experiencing life under Guardianship may wish, in consultation with Presbytery, to consider moving to assume the status of a local mission church.

In the name of the Forum

ROSEMARY FREW, *Convener*
KAREN K. CAMPBELL, *Vice-Convener*
ANGUS R MATHIESON, *Interim Head of Forum*

Appendix 1

PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN ACT [] 2021 Edinburgh, [] May [], Session []

The General Assembly declare and enact as follows: –

In requiring Presbyteries to plan mission within their bounds, the Church of Scotland seeks to:-

- underscore the Church's priority as participating in Christ's mission.
- set down a definition of that mission.
- provide a framework for a Presbytery to express that priority in forming a rolling five-year Mission Plan.
- enable a group of Presbyteries anticipating union to work together on a Mission Plan.
- ensure that a Presbytery makes best use of the ministry posts allocated to it by the General Assembly.
- insist that a Presbytery take decisions about the future of Church buildings.
- provide a range of ways in which a Presbytery may structure and resource Church life.
- engage the Faith Nurture Forum and the General Trustees in assisting Presbytery in their planning.

Accordingly, the General Assembly hereby enact and ordain:

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 For the purposes of this Act the following terms shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them:-

- a) "Adjustment" shall mean a form of adjustment set out in section 7, sub-sections (1) to (11);
- b) An "appointment" shall mean an appointment to a post other than an inducted Minister detailed within the Mission Plan and which is either counted within the allocation of ministry posts funded by the Parish Staffing Fund and allocated to that Presbytery by the General Assembly or is funded locally by the congregation and/or the Presbytery;
- c) "Approved Mission Plan" shall mean a Mission Plan that has been approved by the Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees;
- d) "Basis of Adjustment" shall mean the written terms upon which Adjustment is implemented;
- e) A "charge" shall mean a sphere of pastoral duty to which a minister is inducted and may include a Team Ministry Charge as referred to in section 7(10);
- f) A "congregation" shall mean an association of persons in a parish whose names are on the Communion Roll and Adherents' Roll and who are under the pastoral oversight of a minister or ministers (or an Interim Moderator) and a Kirk Session, for Christian worship, fellowship, instruction, Mission and service;
- g) "ecclesiastical building" shall mean any property pertaining to a congregation or agency whether or not in use for the purposes of the congregation or agency and in particular but without prejudice to the foregoing generality any Church, Church Hall, Manse,

house for an assistant or associate minister, Church Officer's house, retirement house, ancillary building or outbuilding or property which is let;

- h) A "Financial Board" shall mean the body responsible for managing the finances of a congregation, including a Congregational Board, Deacons' Court, Committee of Management and Kirk Session;
- i) the "Five Marks of Mission" shall mean:
 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 seek 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;
- j) "The Forum" shall mean the Faith Nurture Forum;
- k) "Guidance" shall mean the Guidance accompanying this Act as referred to in section 13;
- l) "Historic Properties" shall mean those buildings specified by the General Trustees as being of special historic or architectural interest which are outstanding examples of a particular period, style or building type and "Historic Property" shall be construed accordingly;
- m) "MDS" shall mean Ministries Development Staff, and refers to appointments of employees by the Forum;
- n) "Mission" shall be construed as meaning those aspects of church life set out in the Five Marks of Mission supplemented by the Guidance;
- o) "Mission Plan" shall mean a Mission Plan formulated in terms of section 2 below and in the form of the template set out in Guidance;
- p) "Mission Plan Review Panel" shall mean the Panel described in the Schedule;
- q) The "Presbytery" shall mean the Presbytery of the bounds where the charge, agency, partnership or Mission initiative is located or online activity is rooted; the word "Presbytery" may be construed so as to include a group of Presbyteries, where appropriate;
- r) The "shape of church life" shall mean the arrangements of congregations, agencies, ministries, partnerships initiatives and others, including their physical resources and online activities, all under the supervision of the Presbytery;
- s) "Vacancy" shall mean the state in which a charge finds itself when it is without an inducted minister and shall include the situation of a prospective vacancy where an Interim Moderator has been appointed under section 6(1) of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003), and "vacant" shall be construed accordingly.

2. THE PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN

2.0.1 Each Presbytery shall be required to have an Approved Mission Plan in place in terms of this Act by 31 December 2022.

2.0.2 It shall be in order for a group of Presbyteries anticipating union to present to the Forum and the General Trustees a shared draft Mission Plan in terms of this Act. For this to become an Approved Mission Plan in terms of this Act it must have been approved at a meeting of each of the individual Presbyteries and then the final approval of the Forum and the General Trustees must be obtained.

2.1 Content of A Mission Plan

2.1.1 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:-

- i) ensure that the life of the Church of Scotland is shaped around Mission and adequately reflects the outcomes of Local Church Review and ideas for local mission;
- ii) 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;
- iii) make appropriate use of such ministry posts as may be permitted by the General Assembly so that the number of post holders in each Presbytery conforms to the numbers and timescales set by the General Assembly;
- iv) ensure that new ways of being Church, other than stipendiary Ministers of Word and Sacrament or traditional MDS appointments, are reflected in the Mission Plan

2.1.2 In doing so the Presbytery will categorise each ecclesiastical building as either:-

- (a) to be retained beyond the five years from the date at which the Mission Plan is approved or annually reviewed, or
- (b) to be sold, let or otherwise disposed of by a specified date which is within five years from the date at which the ecclesiastical building is first categorised as (b).

2.1.3 In order to arrive at these categorisations the Presbytery shall use, and reference, resources and advice provided by the General Trustees, including the Land and Buildings Toolkit (or any successor guidance issued by the General Trustees).

2.1.4 In the case of a (b) categorisation the General Trustees shall be empowered, at their discretion and in consultation with the Forum, to refuse any application made in respect of that building in terms of the Work at Ecclesiastical Buildings Regulations (Regs I 1998) (as amended from time to time).

2.1.5 The Mission Plan shall also record those ecclesiastical buildings within the Presbytery which are Historic Properties, regardless of whether they are categorised as (a) or (b).

2.2 Process for preparing and approving a Mission Plan

2.2.1 Mission Plan is prepared: A Presbytery shall prepare a draft Mission Plan, in consultation with the Forum and the General Trustees. To facilitate the Presbytery's preparation of the Mission Plan, the Forum shall, as part of its input, intimate the total number of ministry posts approved by the General Assembly as referred to at section 2.4.1 below, and the General Trustees shall, as part of their input, provide such information as is available as to suitability of the ecclesiastical buildings for mission. In the course of its development the Presbytery shall at regular intervals share the draft Mission Plan with the Forum and the General Trustees. The Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees shall work together to develop the Plan, with the Forum and the General Trustees offering advice and guidance on the framing of the Mission Plan. Presbytery shall take into account the Code of Practice contained in the Guidance.

2.2.2 Presbytery meets to approve the Mission Plan:

The completed draft Mission Plan shall be put to a full meeting of the Presbytery for approval. When a Presbytery has voted to approve a Mission Plan, or to approve a Mission Plan following its annual evaluation and development, the Presbytery's process shall be sisted and an extract minute of the decision and a copy of the Mission Plan document shall

be sent to the Forum and the General Trustees for their final approval.

2.2.3 Approval of the Mission Plan by the Forum and the General Trustees: Upon receipt of the Mission Plan, the Forum and the General Trustees shall consider whether the Mission Plan conforms to section 2.1 above and thus whether the Forum and the General Trustees can grant final approval of the Mission Plan, or whether further discussion with the Presbytery is required. If in these discussions Presbytery representatives agree to possible amendments then the amended Mission Plan will be resubmitted to a full meeting of Presbytery for its final approval.

2.2.4 Possible referral to Mission Plan Review Panel for assistance: Discussion on the Mission Plan among the Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees shall continue until final approval of the Mission Plan is given by the Forum and the General Trustees. If final approval is not in place within a period of three calendar months after the Forum's and the General Trustees' receipt of the Mission Plan, the matter shall be referred to the Mission Plan Review Panel by the Presbytery and the Panel shall assist the parties to resolve the matter, so that final approval of the Mission Plan can be given.

2.2.5 Extract minute of final approvals to Presbytery: Once both the Forum and the General Trustees have given final approval of the Mission Plan, the Forum shall send an extract minute to Presbytery indicating that the Forum and the General Trustees have granted final approval of the Mission Plan.

2.2.6 The Approved Mission Plan: When the Forum's and the General Trustees' final approval of the Mission Plan is announced and recorded at a meeting of the Presbytery, the Mission Plan will then be considered an Approved Mission Plan and, subject to the right of review referred to at section 3 below, steps shall be taken by the Presbytery towards its implementation.

2.3 Annual evaluation and development of a Mission Plan

2.3.1 Each Presbytery shall carry out a process of annual evaluation and development of its Mission Plan so as to maintain in rolling form an accurate, comprehensive and up to date Mission Plan for the shape of church life in the next five years in that Presbytery.

2.3.2 The process of annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan shall be initiated by the Presbytery Clerk, and shall proceed in consultation with the Forum and the General Trustees. Thereafter approval by the Presbytery, and final approval by the Forum and General Trustees shall be sought and this process shall follow the procedure set out above at section 2.2, save that the period to achieve final approval of the Plan shall be one month rather than three months. After such evaluation and development, final approval and recording of that approval at a meeting of the Presbytery, the Mission Plan shall be re-dated to cover the next five years and that shall become the Presbytery's Approved Mission Plan.

2.4 Other provisions as to Mission Plans

2.4.1 The Forum shall bring 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.

2.4.2 In the first Approved Mission Plan, and in every subsequent Approved Mission Plan formed after the process of annual evaluation and development and approval, the provisions of section 2.1.1(iii) shall apply.

2.4.3 For the avoidance of doubt, in including in a Mission Plan provision for Adjustment to achieve the Mission Plan

goals, the Presbytery shall not be considered to be affecting the rights of an inducted Minister. The Presbytery shall have the right to call a meeting of the relevant Kirk Session(s) and the congregation(s) to discuss the Mission Plan with or without consent of the inducted minister. The inducted minister shall not be entitled to attend and speak at such a meeting, but the Presbytery may choose to meet separately with the inducted minister to discuss the Mission Plan goals.

3. REVIEW

3.1 Within fourteen days of the date of the Presbytery meeting at which the agreement of the Forum and the General Trustees to the Mission Plan (or to an annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan, as the case may be) has been recorded at the Presbytery meeting it shall be open to any twelve or more members of the Presbytery or to any Kirk Session within its bounds to seek a review of the process used by the Presbytery in preparing and approving the Mission Plan (or its annual evaluation or development) by sending intimation to the Principal Clerk (who in turn shall inform the Forum and the General Trustees).

3.2 When a review has been intimated: any provision of the Mission Plan which is not affected by a request for review may be progressed under section 4 while the review is pending.

3.3 The review may only be requested on the grounds set out in the Schedule to this Act.

3.4 Such a review shall be conducted by a Mission Plan Review Panel in accordance with provisions of the Schedule to this Act.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSION PLAN

4.1 After achieving the final approval of the Forum and the General Trustees to the Mission Plan (or to annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan), and when there are no outstanding requests for review to be heard by the Mission Plan Review Panel, the Presbytery shall proceed to implement the Approved Mission Plan.

5. PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANS AND PERMISSION TO CALL A MINISTER OR TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

5.1 A vacant charge in respect of which an Approved Mission Plan exists may be given permission to call a minister, subject to the provisions of Act VIII 2003, and further provided that:

- (a) the Mission Plan provides that no Adjustment is required before a new minister is inducted, or
- (b) the Adjustment described in the Approved Mission Plan has been fully implemented, or
- (c) the Presbytery has already negotiated a Basis for the Adjustment described in the Approved Mission Plan and is able to implement it before sustaining a call and there is no outstanding request for review to be heard by the Mission Plan Review Panel.

5.2 A vacant charge shall not be given permission to call a minister if:

- (a) a Basis of Adjustment has not yet been agreed between the Presbytery and the congregation, and/or
- (b) there is any outstanding request for review to be heard by the Mission Plan Review Panel, and/or
- (c) there are Mission Plan issues yet to be resolved in terms of this Act.

5.3 Appointments may also be made to other posts (MDS and/or Presbytery and/or locally funded posts) described in the Mission Plan providing that:

- (a) there is funding in place for the envisaged duration of the appointment,

- (b) the job description and contract of employment have been approved by the Human Resources department in the national office in order to ensure consistency and fairness across Presbyteries, and
- (c) Presbytery shall satisfy itself as to the status and good standing of any minister of another denomination appointed in terms of this section 5.3.

6. SUSPENSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSION PLAN

6.1 On cause shown, and subject to the right of any twelve or more members of Presbytery or a Kirk Session to request review by the Mission Plan Review Panel on the grounds set out in the Schedule within fourteen days of the date of suspension, the Presbytery, the Forum or the General Trustees may suspend the implementation of the Mission Plan in part or whole.

6.2 When this happens, the Presbytery and the Forum and the General Trustees shall strive to reach agreement with interested parties as soon as possible to allow the Mission Plan to be reinstated and implemented.

6.3 The Presbytery shall not permit a congregation to call a minister or an appointment to be made in terms of the Mission Plan when such a post is covered by the suspended section(s) (or as the case may be, whole) of the Mission Plan.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSION PLAN THROUGH ADJUSTMENT AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

7.0 The Mission Plan may specify any of the following forms of Adjustment and other arrangements: –

(1) Union

Two or more congregations may be united to form one congregation under the Unitary Constitution, and such union shall involve the union of charges, parishes, Kirk Sessions, Financial Boards, property and funds and, except in special circumstances where provision is made to the contrary in the Basis of Union, all congregational agencies and organisations.

(2) Linking

Two or more charges may be linked to form one charge in terms of a Basis of Linking, so that the congregations are served by one ministry, the constitutions of the said congregations being in no other way affected.

(3) Deferred Union or Deferred Linking

- (a) When for any reason it is not possible to unite a vacant congregation with another congregation under the minister of the other congregation, the Presbytery may decide to unite them on the understanding that the implementation of such decision shall be deferred to take place as soon as practicable after that minister's interest has terminated.
- (b) The Basis of Deferred Union shall provide (i) that the congregations to be united shall elect a minister who shall be inducted in the first instance as minister of the vacant congregation, and (ii) that on the termination of the other minister's interest the Union shall immediately be effective under the minister so elected and inducted.
- (c) If another vacancy occurs in the originally-vacant congregation before the termination of the other minister's interest, the Basis of Deferred Union shall remain in force and the congregations shall elect another minister as in (b) above; subject to the proviso that the Presbytery may decide to recall the Basis of Deferred Union with a view to making another Adjustment decision.
- (d) A linking may be deferred in the same manner as a union in terms of subsections (a) to (c) above.

(4) Local Mission Church

The Presbytery may determine in its Mission Plan that a Local Mission Church shall be created, either (a) following a union or dissolution effected in terms of this Act, or (b) as a new venture. Such a Local Mission Church shall be established in terms of the Local Mission Church Regulations and shall be governed by a Basis of Local Mission Church. The process to create a Local Mission Church shall be as specified in the Guidance.

(5) Guardianship

A charge may continue without the right to call a minister under the Guardianship of the Presbytery. There shall be a Basis of Guardianship which shall include the timing and scope of the how the guardianship shall be reviewed. In such a case, the Presbytery will appoint an Interim Moderator who will ensure that appropriate arrangements are put in place to enable the ongoing ministry and Mission of the congregation(s). For the avoidance of doubt, a Guardianship shall count as 0.25 towards the total ministry allocation for a Presbytery. A Guardianship shall be subject to a separate five yearly review process at the instigation of Presbytery, alongside the normal annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan.

(6) New Charge Development

Those new charges which have been established prior to the passing of this Act in terms of Act XIII 2000 may be included in the relevant Mission Plans, but no new charges under Act XIII 2000 may be specified in a Mission Plan after the passing of this Act.

(7) Transportation

- (a) The Presbytery may move a congregation from one place of worship to another, and, where that involves a change of parish, it shall be designated "transportation".
- (b) Where transportation is effected, the Presbytery shall take such steps of Adjustment as may be necessary to ensure that the parishes involved are allocated to defined charges.

(8) Parish Groupings

The Presbytery may declare that two or more charges shall have responsibility for a single area. The Basis of such an Adjustment shall determine the extent to which the charges shall operate as a Parish Grouping, for instance in the sharing of worship, personnel, education resources, mission initiatives, congregational organisations etc.

(9) Dissolution

A charge may be dissolved by the Presbytery of the bounds. The Basis of Dissolution shall provide for:-

- (a) The issuing of certificates of transference to all members of the congregation;
- (b) The allocation of the parish to another charge or charges;
- (c) The transfer to the General Trustees, prior to dissolution, of any heritable property held by or on behalf of the congregation title to which is not yet vested in the General Trustees;
- (d) The transfer, prior to dissolution, of funds to enable the General Trustees to discharge their obligations (including maintenance, security and insurance) in relation to any heritable property held by or on behalf of the congregation which is designated as a Historic Property; provided that such funds shall include (i) all restricted funds (including organ funds) held for fabric purposes and (ii) such proportion of all unrestricted funds as may be reasonably required for such purposes by the General Trustees; and
- (e) The destination of all other property and funds of the charge(s).

(10) Team Ministry

- (a) The Presbytery may determine, in respect of any charge, the amount of ministerial time required by the charge, and the number and nature of posts necessary, provided that (except in the case of job-sharing) the Presbytery shall identify one of the inducted ministers as moderator of the Kirk Session.
- (b) Presbyteries are encouraged in designing a Team Ministry to consider the significance of the role which might be played by those other than Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministries Development Staff.
- (c) The terms under which a Team Ministry will operate shall be set out in a Basis of Team Ministry agreed by the Presbytery and all members of the Team prior to any such Team Ministry being established; the Basis shall include a dispute resolution mechanism.
- (d) A Team Ministry may be created in one or other of the following two ways:
 - (I) a Presbytery may create a Team Ministry with an inducted parish minister (who shall be the moderator of the Kirk Session) and which may include a deacon, MDS appointments, the appointment of an Ordained Local Minister or such other appointment as may be deemed appropriate in Mission Plan discussions, or
 - (II) alternatively, the Presbytery may create within the charge a Team Ministry consisting of two or more Team Ministry Charges, to each of which a parish minister shall be inducted, provided always that one of the Team Ministry Charges shall be identified in the Basis as the one providing the moderator of the Kirk Session. The Team may also include a deacon, MDS appointments, the appointment of an Ordained Local Minister or such other appointment as may be deemed appropriate in Mission Plan discussions.
- (e) Where there are Team Ministry Charges created in terms of paragraph (d)(II) above, the following shall apply:
 - (A) The Team Ministry Charges shall share the same congregation and Kirk Session and be part of the same Church life.
 - (B) The ministers inducted to a Team Ministry Charge shall each occupy the manse provided for their use.
 - (C) The ministers of the Team Ministry Charges shall be appointed in one or other of the following two ways:
 - (i) the ministers may be called, with appropriate changes, through the vacancy processes set out in Act VIII 2003, or
 - (ii) where a new charge is being created by a union of charges and where there are at the time of the proposed union minister(s) inducted to one or more of those charges with unrestricted tenure, it shall be competent for the Presbytery to create Team Ministry Charges within the new charge and to include such minister(s) within the new charge subject to their agreement to the Basis of Team Ministry.
 - (D) The Team Ministry Charges, save for any exception at (e)(C)(ii) above, shall be Reviewable Charges in the terms set out in section 9(1) of this Act and may be part-time.

- (E) For the avoidance of doubt, the minister(s) who are not inducted to the Team Ministry Charge providing the moderator of the Kirk Session will not automatically succeed to that Team Ministry Charge on the occurrence of a vacancy but would be entitled to apply for that Team Ministry Charge through the vacancy processes set out in Act VIII 2003.

(11) New Forms of Church Life

After consultation with the Forum, the Presbytery may devise a new form of Adjustment or ministry, ensuring that such form is consistent with the Acts and deliverances of the General Assembly. This may include the provision of online Church, where the Presbytery seeks to coordinate and resource the provision of online worship and mission by identifying congregations, partnerships or agencies which will be given lead responsibility for such provision; this may include the allocation of a Mission Plan post or posts. The Mission Plan should demonstrate how the Presbytery will relate to those whose belonging is primarily through networks or the virtual world.

(12) Presbytery Mission Initiative

The Presbytery may set up a Presbytery Mission Initiative in terms of the Presbytery Mission Initiatives Act (Act V 2015).

8. AGREEMENT TO UNION OR LINKING UNDER AN INDUCTED MINISTER**8.1 Preliminary**

8.1.1 No Basis of Union or Linking shall be distributed by Presbytery to the office bearers or members of a congregation where the minister has been inducted on the basis of unrestricted tenure without the consent of that minister.

8.2 Congregational Votes on the Proposed Basis of Adjustment

8.2.1 When an explicit provision of a Basis of Union or Linking is that the minister of one of the congregations involved shall be the minister of the united or linked charge (the new charge) then the following procedures shall be adopted. All such votes shall be by secret ballot.

8.2.2 Where the minister referred to in 8.2.1 was inducted on unrestricted tenure to his or her current congregation, there shall be a single vote taken in that congregation to approve all the terms of the Basis. Other congregations shall vote using the double vote system as set out below.

8.2.3 Where the minister referred to in 8.2.1 was inducted on a Basis of Reviewable Charge there shall be separate votes taken in each congregation on each of the following matters:-

- i. to approve the terms of the Basis, apart from the clause which says that the minister referred to in 8.2.1 shall be the first minister of the new charge; and
- ii. to approve the clause in the Basis which says that the minister referred to in 8.2.1 shall be the first minister of the new charge.

8.2.4 Where a congregation is vacant there shall be separate votes taken in that congregation, irrespective of whether the minister referred to in 8.2.1 was inducted on unrestricted tenure or to a Reviewable Charge, on each of the following matters: -

- i. to approve the terms of the Basis, apart from the clause which says that the minister referred to in 8.2.1 shall be the first minister of the new charge; and
- ii. to approve the clause in the Basis which says that the minister referred to in 8.2.1 shall be the first minister of the new charge.

8.3 Procedure Subsequent to Congregational Votes

8.3.1 When the vote taken in terms of 8.2.2 is “for” then the Presbytery is free to proceed to effect the adjustment subject to consideration of the votes taken in terms of 8.2.3 and 8.2.4.

8.3.2 When votes are taken in terms of 8.2.3 and the vote is “for” in terms of i but “against” in terms of ii then the Presbytery may choose to follow one of these options:-

- i. if the review date for the Basis of Reviewable Charge has passed or is imminent, to end the tenure of the Reviewable Charge by giving the minister six months’ notice and thereafter enact the Union or Linking, or
- ii. if the review date for the Basis of Reviewable Charge is some time ahead seek to negotiate a Basis of Deferred Union or Linking to cover the period until the review is due.

8.3.3 Where votes are taken in terms of 8.2.4 and the vote is “for” in terms of i but “against” in terms of ii then the Presbytery may choose to follow one of these options:-

- i. if the review date for the Basis of Reviewable Charge has passed or is imminent, to end the tenure of the Reviewable Charge and give the minister six months’ notice and enact the union or linking, or
- ii. negotiate a Basis of Deferred Union or Linking which will be enacted when either the incumbent minister on unrestricted tenure has left his/her charge or, if applicable, when the Reviewable Charge may be reviewed and its tenure terminated.

8.4 General Provisions for Such Adjustments

8.4.1 A Presbytery may not effect an adjustment whereby a minister would be imposed on a congregation which has not voted in favour in terms of 8.2.3 ii or 8.2.4 ii.

8.4.2 In the case of a minister who becomes minister of a united or linked charge in terms of a Basis of Union or Linking, the united or linked charge shall be regarded as a modification of the charge to which he or she has already been inducted so that no further induction shall be required; but in all such cases the Presbytery shall conduct a service of introduction.

9. INSTRUMENTS FOR FUTURE PLANNING

9.0 The Presbytery may utilise in its Mission Plan either of the instruments for future planning described below.

(1) Reviewable Charge

9.1.1 In respect of any charge, the Presbytery may decide that such charge shall be a Reviewable Charge, meaning that its next minister shall be inducted on condition that the Presbytery may terminate the tenure of the minister at any time and for any reason which may seem good to the Presbytery, on terms specified in the Basis of Adjustment and always upon giving the minister six months’ notice in writing. On the date of termination, the minister shall be deemed to have demitted his or her charge.

9.1.2 The minister shall be free to seek to demit or be translated as in the ordinary case of any minister inducted to a charge, provided that, if the Reviewable Charge is that minister’s first charge, this constitutes exceptional circumstances in terms of section 4 of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003).

9.1.3 Before proceeding to induct a minister in terms of this section 9(1), the Presbytery shall submit to him or her the Basis of Reviewable Charge, and shall obtain and record his or her written acceptance thereof.

(2) Transference

9.2.1 A parish and charge may be transferred from the bounds and jurisdiction of one Presbytery to the bounds and jurisdiction of another with the agreement of both Presbyteries.

9.2.2 In the event of disagreement between the two Presbyteries, the Presbytery desiring the transference may request a review by the Mission Plan Review Panel in terms of the Schedule within fourteen days of the date of the Presbytery meeting at which a decision disputing the transference was taken, and shall immediately notify the other Presbytery of its request.

9.2.3 Transference shall be a necessary preliminary to union or linking of congregations which are not within the bounds of one Presbytery.

10. ACHIEVEMENT OF ADJUSTMENT

10.1 When the Presbytery decides to negotiate a Basis of Adjustment in a charge in accordance with a Mission Plan, it shall remit to the appropriate Standing Committee, or to a committee appointed for the purpose, the task of conferring with local parties, provided that:

- (a) Conference with local parties shall be with the ministers and with the elders and the members of the Financial Board (if any) of the congregations which may be involved in Adjustment, and should include consultation with other members of a ministry team;
- (b) No proposed Adjustment involving the rights of the minister shall be discussed with the office-bearers of the congregation as in (a) above without his or her consent in writing;
- (c) All meetings of office-bearers under this section 10.1 shall be called by the Presbytery’s Committee and a minister, deacon or elder, appointed by the said Committee, shall act as Convener for the purposes of conference. In no case shall a minister preside at or attend any meeting called under the terms of this Act where matters in which his or her interests are involved are discussed or decided.

10.2 A detailed Basis of Adjustment shall be negotiated with the office-bearers involved, and in the course of the negotiation its text shall be submitted to the Forum to ensure it is consistent with the Mission Plan, and to the Principal Clerk and the Solicitor of the Church who shall ensure that the provisions of the Basis are in conformity with Church and Civil Law. The Basis of Adjustment shall be voted upon firstly by the office-bearers and then by the congregation or congregations involved, before the matter is put to the Presbytery for decision. Those entitled to speak and vote at such a congregational meeting shall include those who have been formally recognised by the Kirk Session as adherents of the congregation. The Presbytery shall have regard to the decisions arrived at by the respective office bearers and congregations, provided always that:

- (a) no Basis affecting the rights of a minister shall be presented to his or her or any other congregation without his or her written consent,
- (b) any congregation directly involved in and named in any proposed Basis shall be cited to appear for their interests at any meeting of the Presbytery at which a decision is to be made in terms of this Act.

10.3 Notwithstanding the provisions of this section 10, while it shall be the duty of the Presbytery to make every effort to secure approval of the office bearers and congregations involved, the right of the Presbytery to effect Adjustment in terms of this Act is hereby affirmed, subject to the written consent of any minister or ministers whose rights would be adversely affected.

11. REVIEW OF A BASIS OF ADJUSTMENT

11.1 It shall be open to any Kirk Session involved in the Adjustment or twelve or more members of Presbytery to seek a review of a Basis of Adjustment by the Mission Plan Review Panel. Such a review shall consider whether the details of the Basis are in conformity with the Approved Mission Plan and this Act and must be requested within fourteen days of Presbytery’s decision on the Basis.

11.2 Such review shall otherwise proceed in line with the provisions of the Schedule.

12. MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY

12.1 For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that any person who is both a member of a cited congregation and a member or a corresponding member of the Presbytery (including an Interim Moderator) shall be entitled to participate in any discussion leading to a decision of the Presbytery in terms of this Act and, where qualified, to vote thereon.

13. GUIDANCE

13.1 The Forum, after consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, shall issue Guidance on the implementation and operation of this Act, including a Code of Practice, which shall be reviewed by the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, from time to time.

14. REPEALS AND AMENDMENTS

14.1 The Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003) is hereby repealed except that section 9(2) of that Act shall remain in force until Approved Mission Plans are in place for all Presbyteries.

SCHEDULE- THE MISSION PLAN REVIEW PANEL

A: GENERAL: COMPOSITION, JURISDICTION AND MAKING A REQUEST OF THE PANEL

1. Composition (for all Jurisdiction matters)

The Mission Plan Review Group shall be a group of fifteen persons appointed by the General Assembly on the Report of the Nomination Committee and in line with the process for appointing persons to other judicial bodies. Additionally, the Forum and the General Trustees shall be entitled to make suggestions to the Legal Questions Committee as to persons who are suitable for appointment to the Group, but the final decision as to nominees shall rest with the Legal Questions Committee. The members of the Group shall be suitably experienced members of the Church.

The Panel shall consist of three members drawn from the Mission Plan Review Group. One member shall act as Convener. The quorum of the Panel shall be two, including the Convener. None of the members of the Panel shall be members of the Presbytery whose Mission Plan is being considered or reviewed.

Where a Mission Plan Review Panel has previously been formed to consider a question relating to a particular Mission Plan, if there is a subsequent request for assistance or review relating to the same Mission Plan, the Panel shall be formed so as not to include the same persons.

2. Jurisdiction

The Panel shall consider the following matters:

- (a) in terms of section 2.2, an application by the Presbytery, the Forum and/or the General Trustees for the Panel to assist the parties to resolve the matter where agreement cannot be reached on a Mission Plan among the Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees within a period of three calendar months of their receipt of the Mission Plan;
- (b) in terms of section 2.3, an application by the Presbytery, the Forum and/or the General Trustees for the Panel to assist the parties to resolve the matter where agreement cannot be reached on the annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan among the Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees within a period of one calendar month of their receipt of the Mission Plan;

- (c) in terms of section 3, an application from any twelve or more members of the Presbytery or any Kirk Session seeking a review of the process used by the Presbytery in preparing and approving a Mission Plan or in its annual evaluation and development;
- (d) in terms of section 6, an application from any twelve or more members of Presbytery or a Kirk Session requesting a review of a decision of the Presbytery and/or the Forum and/or the General Trustees to suspend the implementation of a Mission Plan in part or whole;
- (e) in terms of section 9(2), an application for review from a Presbytery desiring to transfer a parish and charge from the bounds and jurisdiction of one Presbytery to the bounds and jurisdiction of another (Transference), where there is disagreement between the two Presbyteries; and
- (f) in terms of section 11, an application from twelve or more members of Presbytery or a Kirk Session seeking a review of a Basis of Adjustment, to consider whether the details of the Basis are in conformity with the Mission Plan and this Act;

provided always that no provision of this Act shall operate so as to have the Panel review its own decision or give judgement twice on the same question.

3. Making the request for assistance (Jurisdiction paragraphs(a) & (b)) or for review (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (f))

A request for assistance or review shall be sent to the Principal Clerk (who in turn shall inform the Forum and the General Trustees) within fourteen days of the relevant event.

B: ASSISTANCE (Jurisdiction paragraphs (a) & (b) above)

1. Procedure for assistance

The Panel shall have wide discretion to assist the parties to reach agreement as it sees fit. The Panel shall have power to require parties to produce documents and information as to the provisions of the Mission Plan.

C: REVIEW (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (f) above)

1. Grounds for requesting review (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (e) above)

A review may only be requested on the grounds that (a) there was a material error in Church law, (b) there was material irregularity of process on the part of Presbytery (or the Forum or General Trustees, as the case may be) or (c) the decision of Presbytery (or the Forum or General Trustees, as the case may be) took into account an irrelevant material fact or failed to take into account a relevant material fact.

2. Ground for requesting review (Jurisdiction paragraph (f) above)

Such a review may only be requested where it is alleged that the details of the Basis are not in conformity with the Approved Mission Plan and this Act.

3. Procedure for review (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (f) above)

A request for review shall require to obtain leave to proceed from the General Assembly's Committee on Overtures and Cases, whose decision shall be final.

The Panel shall complete a review within three calendar months of receiving the request for a review (along with all necessary documentation), save that the Panel has the discretion to extend this timescale on cause shown.

The Panel may choose to proceed wholly on written submissions or may choose to hold a hearing, which may be online. The Panel may decide whether or not to visit the place(s) giving rise to the request for review and when doing so may choose whether or not to meet with local parties.

If the Panel chooses to proceed wholly on written submissions it shall notify its final decision to all interested parties. The decision shall be in writing and shall set out the grounds upon which its decision was reached.

If the Panel chooses to hold a hearing, whether in person or online, procedure shall follow that of the General Assembly's Standing Orders and shall normally be as follows:

1. Hearing is opened with prayer
2. Convener makes introductions
3. Convener explains the purpose of the hearing
4. Persons requesting review are given opportunity to speak (through one nominated speaker)
5. Respondent (normally Presbytery) is given opportunity to speak (through one nominated speaker)
6. Members of the Panel ask questions of parties
7. Respondent has its final word
8. Persons requesting review have their final word
9. Parties are removed and Panel reaches a decision
10. Decision is intimated when parties are recalled or may be intimated by email to parties; at this stage a summary of reasons for the decision may be given
11. Hearing is closed with prayer/the Grace/the Benediction

Within fourteen days of the hearing a written decision shall be issued which shall set out the grounds on which the decision was reached.

4. Possible outcomes (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (e) above)

The outcome of the review process will be either (1) no change, i.e. to endorse the correctness of the decision which has been made, or (2) to send the matter back to the decision-maker for the decision to be made again, with identification of any deficiencies in its processes.

The review is about the legality of the processes adopted (how the decision was taken), not the substance of the decision made. The outcome will not be a different decision.

5. Possible outcomes (Jurisdiction paragraph (f) above)

The outcome of the review process will be either (1) to confirm that the Basis is in conformity with the Mission Plan and this Act or (2) to confirm that it is not. In the latter case the Presbytery will thereafter renegotiate the Basis.

6. Finality of decisions (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (f) above)

The Panel's decision on a request for review, however determined, shall be final and there shall be no right of appeal against a decision of the Panel.

Appendix 2

Mission and other underlying principles

1. Introduction

The Presbytery Mission Plan Act provides the legislative framework for the urgent need for a rapid and adaptive approach to Presbytery Planning. The task requires serious and immediate engagement on the part of Presbyteries, Congregations and all involved in the ministries of the Church. The Act outlines the Five Marks of Mission, and additional Guidelines will be available from the Faith Nurture Forum about how the Five Marks of Mission can be applied to the task of shaping Presbytery Plans.

Mission is the primary principle for making strategic decisions on the use of ministries posts, the use of Church

Buildings, and the wider ministry of the whole people of God. The template for our ministry is the ministry of Jesus. The Church's ministry is a participation in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus' ministry was a ministry rooted in and focused on mission, and is seen in Jesus' preaching in the synagogue in Nazareth in Luke 4.18, where Jesus says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

The church has affirmed a number of important principles that help to explain what is meant by being a church focused on mission. Presbyteries in their Plans will therefore take account of the following:

2. Communities

Every community of every size in every location within Scotland is part of a Church of Scotland Parish. While population should no longer be the only principle in shaping Presbytery Plans, it still remains the starting point. Our calling as a church is not primarily to resource congregations: it is mission to everyone in the land.

3. The Poor

Successive General Assemblies have affirmed the Gospel imperative is priority to the poor. At a time when resources are scarce, it is tempting to withdraw from the most marginal communities where churches are often fragile and small. However pressing those reasons are, this must be resisted because it goes against the Gospel and the repeated view of the General Assembly.

4. Congregations

One of the ways in which the Gospel finds expression is in committed congregations under the power of the Holy Spirit. These congregations both express the Gospel, and commend it to others. Presbyteries in their planning will identify congregations which are outward looking, which engage with their communities, and consider how these strengths can contribute to the mission of the Church.

5. Financial Responsibility

Presbytery Planning does not mean that congregations which make a net contribution to central funds take priority. A degree of financial realism is required, and it is recognised that some congregations are more generous than comparable ones, and even in the poorest congregations, per capita giving can be much higher than in some of the wealthiest congregations. It makes sense for Presbyteries to consider the complex financial picture and allocate ministerial resources to congregations which take their financial stewardship seriously.

6. Buildings

There is a connection between ministry and church buildings, although that connection is neither uniform nor universal. The Church of Scotland has too many buildings, numerous buildings that are under-utilised, buildings that are too large for present day needs and buildings that are in the wrong place. At a local level however, almost every church building is deemed essential. There is no simple solution to this problem. The starting point however should be mission. Presbyteries will want to consider which buildings are essential and useful for the mission they envisage.

7. Linkage or Union

In terms of charitable governance, it is important to attempt to make appropriately resourced, mission-minded governing bodies. There should be a presumption against ever-expanding linkages of separate congregations, which require multiple session meetings (and other meetings) for which a Minister might carry responsibility as well as office-bearers in each congregation. Shared mission should lead to a single governing body wherever possible, and support for individual

buildings can be provided through the use of local fabric care groups answerable to a central Kirk Session.

Appendix 3

Membership of Group examining weightings

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Rosemary Frew | Convener, and minister at Bowden and Melrose, Faith Nurture Forum |
| Karen K. Campbell | Vice-Convener, and minister at Edinburgh: Marchmont St Giles, Faith Nurture Forum |
| Lesley-Ann Calvert | Member of Dundee: The Steeple, and member, Faith Nurture Forum |
| Mike Goss | Minister, Barry Parish Church linked with Carnoustie Church, member, Faith Nurture Forum |
| Alan Hamilton | Minister, Killermont Parish Church and member, Faith Nurture Forum |
| Richard Lloyd | Member of Edinburgh: Queensferry, and member, Faith Nurture Forum |
| Ruth Mackenzie | Elder, member of Peterhead: New and member, Faith Nurture Forum |
| Scott McCarthy | Minister, Garthamlock and Craigend East, and member, Faith Nurture Forum |
| Angus R. Mathieson | Interim Head, Faith Nurture |

Appendix 4

Ministries Figures for the period to 31 December 2022

| Presbytery | Presbytery Number | 2021 TOTAL | 2011 FTEs |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|
| Edinburgh | 1 | 48.5 | 78.2 |
| West Lothian | 2 | 17 | 28.2 |
| Lothian | 3 | 25 | 30.2 |
| Melrose and Peebles | 4 | 9 | 13.7 |
| Duns | 5 | 4 | 7 |
| Jedburgh | 6 | 5.5 | 11.9 |
| Annandale and Eskdale | 7 | 7.5 | 13.6 |
| Dumfries and Kirkcudbright | 8 | 12.5 | 20.9 |
| Wigtown and Stranraer | 9 | 6 | 10.2 |
| Ayr | 10 | 24 | 26.6 |
| Irvine and Kilmarnock | 11 | 13.5 | 20.8 |
| Ardrossan | 12 | 13.5 | 23.1 |
| Lanark | 13 | 9.5 | 15.2 |
| Clyde | 14 | 40 | 59.8 |
| Glasgow (inc. Cumbernauld) | 16 | 84 | 133.7 |
| Hamilton | 17 | 34.5 | 57.5 |
| Argyll | 19 | 18 | 31.6 |
| Falkirk (excl. Cumbernauld) | 22 | 15.5 | 32.3 |
| Stirling | 23 | 21.5 | 35.2 |
| Fife | 24 | 44.5 | 68.1 |
| Dunkeld and Meigle | 27 | 6.5 | 11.3 |
| Perth | 28 | 16.5 | 26 |
| Dundee | 29 | 18 | 27.8 |
| Angus | 30 | 15.5 | 24.8 |
| Aberdeen and Shetland | 31 | 24 | 46.1 |

Ministries Figures for the period to 31 December 2022 (continued)

| Presbytery | Presbytery Number | 2021 TOTAL | 2011 FTEs |
|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Kincardine and Deeside | 32 | 10.5 | 15.8 |
| Gordon | 33 | 16 | 31.4 |
| Buchan | 34 | 14 | 22.6 |
| Moray | 35 | 14 | 20.8 |
| Abernethy | 36 | 4.5 | 7.3 |
| Inverness | 37 | 14 | 22.3 |
| Lochaber | 38 | 5.5 | 7.9 |
| Ross | 39 | 10 | 15.9 |
| Sutherland | 40 | 4 | 6.1 |
| Caithness | 41 | 5.5 | 9.1 |
| Lochcarron-Skye | 42 | 5 | 7.7 |
| Uist | 43 | 2 | 2.2 |
| Lewis | 44 | 5 | 7.1 |
| Orkney | 45 | 7 | 10.7 |
| England | 47 | 5 | 7.1 |
| International | 48 | 5 | 10.7 |
| TOTAL | | 661 | 1040.7 |

Appendix 5**LOCAL MISSION CHURCH REGULATIONS (REGS ZZ 2021)***Edinburgh [] May 2021, Session []***Definitions****1.** In these Regulations:

- (a) The term “charge” shall have the meaning given to it in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act ZZ 2021);
- (b) “Leadership Team” shall mean those persons who have the responsibilities in relation to the Local Mission Church outlined in section 6;
- (c) “Presbytery” shall mean the presbytery of the bounds within which the Local Mission Church is located.

Local Mission Church**2(1)** A Local Mission Church shall be a Christian community whose purpose is to worship, witness and serve in a distinct geographical setting.**2(2)** A Local Mission Church shall be established in terms of these Regulations and a Basis of Local Mission Church (hereinafter referred to as “the Basis”). The form of the Basis shall be prescribed from time to time by the Faith Nurture Forum after consultation with the Legal Questions Committee.**2(3)** A Local Mission Church shall not own any property, heritable or moveable, nor have any legal personality. It shall not have a Kirk Session and shall not have the right to call a minister. The creation or sustaining of a Local Mission Church is not dependent on the provision of a church building.**Creation of a Local Mission Church****3.** The process to create a Local Mission Church shall be as specified in the Guidance accompanying the Presbytery Mission Plan Act.**Role of Kirk Session of charge****4.** A Local Mission Church shall exist within the territorial boundaries of a charge. All legal and governance matters affecting the Local Mission Church shall be the responsibility of the Kirk Session of the charge. In particular, the Kirk Session shall:

- (a) ensure that all requirements of the law of the Church of Scotland and of civil law are fulfilled in relation to the Local Mission Church;
- (b) be the owner/title-holder of all property whether heritable or moveable, used by or within the possession of the Local Mission Church;
- (c) administer all offerings and other monies collected at or in relation to the Local Mission Church;
- (d) apply such monies in the first instance to meet the costs of the Local Mission Church for as long as it exists, after discussion with the Leadership Team, and thereafter as the Kirk Session determines.

Oversight by Presbytery**5.** A Local Mission Church shall be subject to the oversight of the Presbytery. In particular, a review of a Local Mission Church and its place in the Mission Plan shall be conducted by the Presbytery at least once every five years but without prejudice to annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan.**Leadership Team****6(1)** A Local Mission Church shall have a Leadership Team as set out in the Basis and this Team shall include one or more representatives of each of the Kirk Session and the Presbytery.**6(2)** The life and witness of the Local Mission Church shall be co-ordinated by its Leadership Team, subject to the oversight of the Kirk Session and the Presbytery. Without prejudice to this generality, the Leadership Team shall be responsible for:

- (a) developing appropriate expressions of worship, witness and service;
- (b) ensuring that the Local Mission Church is adequately organised;
- (c) ensuring good communication with the Kirk Session; and
- (d) assisting with the upkeep of buildings (if any), subject always to strict adherence to sections 7(a) and (b) below. Any contracts shall be entered into by the Kirk Session.

Further provisions

7. The following further provisions shall apply to a Local Mission Church:

- (a) Neither a Leadership Team nor any person acting on behalf of a Local Mission Church shall have any authority or power to enter into contracts or to incur liabilities on behalf of the Kirk Session.
- (b) Neither a Leadership Team nor any person acting on behalf of a Local Mission Church shall conduct themselves in such a way (including silence) that might cause an inference contrary to section 7(a) to be drawn by any person.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF THE ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES MAY 2021

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Supplementary Report.
2. Receive the 2020 Report and Accounts of The Church of Scotland Unincorporated Councils and Committees. (*Section 1*)
3. Approve the total to be contributed by congregations in 2022 of £42,000,000 based on the projection of congregational income for 2022 and its disposition among local congregational expenditure, the Parish Ministries Fund and the Mission and Renewal Fund. (*Section 2 and Appendix I*)
4. Note the indicative budget for 2022. (*Section 2 and Appendices I and II*)
5. Urge Presbyteries to prioritise the use of the 2022 Discretionary Allowance towards reducing the amounts of Ministries and Mission contributions payable by congregations which are struggling financially. (*Section 2.6*)
6. Approve the reappointment of Ann Nelson as an Assembly Trustee for a second term; and approve the appointment of David Cameron, Barry Hughes and Peter McEnhill as Assembly Trustees. (*Section 4*)

Report

1. AUDIT OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2020

The external auditors gave an unqualified, or 'clean', audit opinion on the Report and Accounts. The Assembly is invited to receive the 2020 Report and Accounts of the Unincorporated Entities. Commissioners are invited to view the Report and Accounts. <https://churchofscotland.org.uk/79854>

2. CONGREGATIONAL INCOME AND 2022 INCOME DISPOSITION

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The remit of the Assembly Trustees requires that "The Trustees shall recommend to the General Assembly the total amount of the Church's Co-ordinated Budget for the Parish Ministries Fund and the Mission and Renewal Fund for the following financial year; and shall determine the allocation of the budget for the Mission and Renewal Fund among the relevant Agencies". The Trustees' recommendations for total congregational contributions for 2022, and the allocation of these, are to be found in Appendix II. This level of income is required to pay for the activities to which the Church is already committed. Stability in income is needed to finance stipends, salaries and other costs of providing ministries and support to the local Church.

2.1.2 The Trustees' main Report details, at Section 5, the challenging financial situation facing the Church as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and reaffirms the need for budgetary prudence and the priority of resourcing Presbytery reform and supporting the growth of the local Church. In 2020 the Trustees noted a reduction of about 3% from 2019 in Ministries and Mission Contributions paid by Congregations by the year end, and became aware that some Congregations were using their reserves in order to maintain their contributions. This led to the decision that, for 2021, there should be an overall reduction in aggregate Ministries and Mission contributions of 18% to relieve the pressure locally. Analysis of congregational financial statistics confirms that, on average, Congregations' 2020 income reduced by approximately 20%. The extent to which Congregations are able to recover from this reduction in their income by 2022 remains to be seen. While there has been much innovation, resourcefulness and creativity within Congregations, which has mitigated some of the financial effects caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the road map out of the restrictions, and therefore some of its effects, are outwith the control of the Church and the Trustees. The pandemic has perhaps changed the behaviours and needs of many of our stakeholders, from our members, supporters, ministers and staff to our service users, partners and beneficiaries.

2.1.3 In bringing forward the recommendations for the Co-ordinated budget the Trustees have had to carefully consider and make assumptions about:

- The forecast level of congregational income
- The number of ministers likely to be in post in 2022
- The operating position of CrossReach

2.1.4 All of which has a high degree of uncertainty and a substantial potential impact on the Co-ordinated Budget.

2.1.5 With the financial situation of Congregations in mind, for a second year, the Trustees have agreed to bring a recommendation of an amount which will not fund all of these activities and they will part fund the activities from reserves of the Unincorporated Entities. With Congregations continuing to suffer the effects of the Covid-19 restrictions well into 2021, there are slim prospects for full financial recovery in 2021 and in all likelihood also in 2022. There will

be variability across Congregations in their ability to contribute to Ministries and Mission. Some may not have returned to a sustainable position. Others may have made savings and maintained or even increased giving, meaning that their reserves have not been impacted as badly as they might have been. Congregations have also been given relief of 18% in aggregate in their 2021 allocations which should help preserve some of their reserves although such decisions are made at a local level. With this financial backdrop, consideration needs to be given to a reduction in the amount required from Congregations in 2022 to an amount somewhere between the reduced contribution requested in 2021 of £38,172,000 and the level in the last pre-Covid-19 year, of £46,586,000.

2.1.6 The Assembly Trustees propose that the amount of the Budget to be met by congregations in 2022 should be set at £42,000,000. Appendix I summarises the actual and projected annual income of Congregations over the period 2019 to 2022 and how the income will be used – the “Income Disposition”. It should be noted that the reduced contributions required from Congregations in 2021 and 2022 have distorted the percentages shown on Appendix I when compared to previous years because the amount of contribution does not cover the required expenditure.

2.1.7 The projected “Ordinary Income” of Congregations for 2022 shown in Appendix I is £82,860,000. Projected income is assessable income and is based on returns of Financial Statistics from Congregations for 2020, rolled forward to 2021 and 2022. This is difficult to forecast because of the high level of uncertainty around congregational recovery. Based on these estimates, the amount retained by Congregations for local expenditure is projected to be 53.7% (2021 - 51.8%).

2.1.8 It should be noted that congregational income in Appendix I does not include extraordinary income, such as legacies, restricted income not available to meet regular expenditure, receipts for major fabric projects etc, which are assumed to be used exclusively to meet local congregational expenditure.

2.1.9 The percentage of congregational income allocated to the Parish Ministries Fund is projected to be 35.9% (2021 - 40.1%) after deducting vacancy allowances, and that to the Mission and Renewal Fund to be 10.4% (2021 - 8.1%). The Faith Nurture Forum receives funding from the Mission and Renewal Fund as well as the Parish Ministries Fund. Allocation to the Parish Ministries Fund pays for the provision of Ministries to the local Church.

2.1.10 Much of the work funded by the Mission and Renewal Fund is directed back to the local Church in the promotion of worship, prayer and discipleship; facilitating engagement with local and global communities. The Fund also provides the Church's financial and legal services; advice on Church judicial procedures; and regulatory compliance and safeguarding services.

2.2 Congregational Income

2.2.1 The commitment and generosity of those who make up the Congregations of the Church of Scotland across the country and beyond is evidenced in their regular giving, even in this most challenging and unprecedented time, for which we are all deeply grateful.

2.2.2 The starting point in the preparation of the indicative budget for the following year is the estimation of total congregational income for the previous year, drawn from the returns submitted by treasurers immediately after the year end. The calculations for 2022 are based on 65% of returns received to date and available for comparison. Provisional details for 2020 Congregational Income are contained in Appendix I. These show a decrease of 20.3% in total “Ordinary Income”, with “Offerings” down by only 10.7% due to a tremendous effort to maintain giving across the Church. This has also helped to maintain the

contribution of Gift Aid tax recovery which is down by only 4.9%.

2.2.3 Not unexpectedly, the starkest reduction is in “Other Ordinary Income” which suffered a 67% drop due to reduced income from areas such as outside organisations (mainly hall lets); regular fundraising; and weddings and funerals, all of which were impacted by the pandemic. In normal circumstances, even a small percentage reduction has a significant impact on congregational income. In the current circumstances the overall financial impact, which is estimated at a reduction in the order of £18,000,000, potentially more, leads to some extremely challenging times ahead for Congregations and the Church.

2.2.4 It is worth noting that Congregations with higher levels of giving by standing order were impacted less than those with lower levels.

2.2.5 Until the onset of the pandemic, there was evidence that the income of many Congregations remained steady, although this was not the experience of all. However, aggregate income was reducing as membership of the Church declined. It was already clear that, given the trend of reducing income, the Church could only carry out the activities which Congregations were able to fund. By far the largest proportion of that work is the cost of parish ministries and this is the reason why the Church needs to focus on Presbytery planning as a matter of urgency. The financial effects of the pandemic have only served to heighten that urgency.

2.2.6 Although early indications show a 67% reduction in “Other Ordinary Income” in 2020, this heading includes a number of different categories of income, and the total can only be confirmed when the detailed analysis of congregational accounts is completed later in the year. However it is apparent that income from outside organisations, previously an area of growth, is the aspect of income which has suffered the largest reduction over 2020.

2.3 Stipend Endowment Income

2.3.1 The reduction in Growth Fund dividend distributions in 2020 and 2021 by the Investors Trust led to reduced income in the Stipend Endowment Fund held by the General Trustees for the benefit of Congregations. This is passed through the Faith Nurture Forum which bore the effects of the reduction in 2020 since statements had already been issued to Congregations with the anticipated annual amount of stipend endowment income.

2.3.2 Early in 2021, representatives of the General Trustees, Faith Nurture Forum and Stewardship and Finance staff met to discuss a new investment strategy for the Stipend Endowment Fund. The General Trustees' Report to the General Assembly describes the new strategy which, if agreed, would cover the period 2021 to 2025 and would distribute capital as well as income at a level of £3,200,000 per annum over that period. This gives a measure of stability to congregational income over the next five years while Presbytery Plans are re-aligned. The budget has assumed this £3,200,000 as well as £440,000 of Glebe Rental income, but is subject to General Assembly approval of the General Trustees' proposal.

2.4 Parish Ministries Fund

(including Stipends and related expenses for Parish Ministers)

2.4.1 From Appendix II it will be noted that the projected cost of Parish Ministries for 2022 is £37,818,000 (2021 - £39,583,000). This is a best estimate based on existing Minister and Ministries Development Staff (MDS) numbers projected forward to take account of retirements, leavers and joiners. This is, however, difficult to forecast in detail and is closely connected with the Presbytery Planning Process. As indicated in Appendix I and Appendix II, the proportion of the amount of £42,000,000 to be contributed by Congregations to be allocated to the Parish Ministries Fund is £33,373,000. The balance of £4,445,000 will be

drawn from the Stipend Endowment Fund, Glebe Income and Investment Income.

2.4.2 The General Assembly previously agreed to a cap on MDS Staff of 120 Full Time Equivalents (FTE). Further information is provided under the Co-ordinated Budget (Section 2.7).

2.4.3 The 2019 Supplementary Report of the Council of Assembly suggested that a review of the Parish Ministries Fund ring-fencing arrangements should be carried out to establish whether this remains the most suitable method of budgeting for Parish Ministries costs. Following the 2019 General Assembly the Trustees agreed that these arrangements should be discontinued and that the Parish Ministries Fund would no longer be budgeted as a ring-fenced item, in addition to having tighter parameters over what should be included in the Parish Ministries Fund budget.

2.4.4 The Faith Nurture Forum will receive 81% of congregational contributions including stipend endowment income and glebe rents, directed through the Parish Ministries Fund, which includes use for:

- the National Stipend Fund which pays the stipend and other costs of parish ministers;
- ordained parish ministry support and development;
- the salaries and other costs of Ministries Development Staff;
- new, alternative and emerging forms of ministry costs;
- readership costs;
- recruitment and education for ministries, including Ordained Local Ministers and the training of Probationers;
- parish appraisal costs;
- properties costs;
- a share of support and administration costs.

2.4.5 However, as described at 2.1 in relation to the disposition of expenditure, the necessity to curtail expenditure in 2021 and 2022 has resulted in only the direct stipend and salary costs of Ministers and Ministries Development Staff and vacancy allowances being paid through the Parish Ministries Fund. Recruitment, training and education; parish appraisal; property; and administration costs are no longer included. These essential costs and other high priority work as agreed by the Assembly Trustees have been funded from reserves and the Mission and Renewal Fund element of congregational contributions. A review of the Parish Ministries Fund to reflect the new Presbytery Planning process will be carried out at a future date.

2.4.6 The Ministries Development Staff set out in 2.4.2 are as agreed within current Presbytery Plans, employed or appointed by the Ministries Council within the Faith Nurture Forum; and the numbers include Deacons, Associate Ministers, and Team Leaders. Any parish staff engaged locally by Congregations (and not designated on Presbytery Plans) are not funded by the Parish Ministries Fund.

2.5 Mission and Renewal Fund

2.5.1 The Mission and Renewal Fund's share of the Income Disposition is 10.4%, after releasing £600,000 (2021 - £600,000) from the Fund's budgeted, non-congregational annual income to support the Church's work. As detailed in the 2019 Report, the Mission and Renewal Fund Reserves were previously also used to support the budget. However, the Assembly Trustees consider that reserves, being essentially finite, should not normally be used to support regular ongoing work.

2.5.2 Also, as reported by the Council of Assembly in 2019, the balance on the Mission and Renewal Reserve Fund

as at 31 December 2018 had been extinguished. The review of Funds instructed by General Assembly 2018 resulted in reclassifications of general funds held by the former Councils, and reorganisation of other funds through OSCR. As a result, the balance of the Fund as at 31 December 2020 was £9,200,000.

2.5.3 The Trustees allocate Mission and Renewal contributions among Forums, Committees and Departments to meet the financing of approved work. The Forums have other income, mainly from investments; and, in addition, the reserves overseen by the Forums will be used to cover budget deficits arising in their area of work.

2.6 Presbytery Discretionary Allowance

2.6.1 The Assembly Trustees propose to maintain the total available for the Presbytery Discretionary Allowance for 2022 at 5% of the total Ministries and Mission contributions due from the Congregations in each Presbytery. This means that around £2,100,000 will be available to Presbyteries for regional or local use. However, given the financial difficulties of Congregations as a result of the pandemic, the Trustees are urging Presbyteries to prioritise the use of the Allowance for the remainder of 2021, and in 2022, towards assisting with the amounts of Ministries and Mission contributions payable by Congregations struggling financially. The Allowance should be targeted to Congregations which, for example, have suffered reductions in other income such as hall lets, rather than being automatically allocated across all Congregations in a Presbytery.

2.6.2 The Stewardship and Finance Department will support Presbyteries with the provision of regular information on shortfalls and remaining Allowance balances. In addition, the Congregational Sustainability Task Force recently set up by the Trustees will be on hand to provide advice on dealing with legal and buildings issues.

2.6.3 Presbyteries should be proactive in planning ahead in respect of a number of changes being brought as proposals to this year's General Assembly. In October 2020 the Ministries and Mission Review Group's Interim Report to the Assembly indicated that the proposed new system will see the ending of the Discretionary Allowance meaning that alternative ways of funding, or potentially curtailing certain posts and projects will need to be considered. The final proposal from the Group is included in the Trustees' main report.

2.6.4 New Presbyteries which are coming into being from 2022 are provided for in the Co-ordinated Budget to the equivalent cost of a Presbytery Clerk and full time Administrator and an allowance for running costs (although there is flexibility as to the use of the funding depending on local needs) and Presbyteries will need to consider ways in which they may raise further funds for projects or posts they wish to progress or continue.

2.6.5 The Mission Plan Act and proposed reduction in ministries numbers will need to be taken into consideration at this time.

2.7 The 2022 Co-ordinated Budget

2.7.1 As well as the issue of declining congregational income, pressures on the National Church budget have been of serious concern in recent years with the Councils that were in place until 2019 only able to make marginal reductions on programme costs until such time as clearly identified priorities were agreed. The reorganisation into Forums at the beginning of 2020; the development of the Faith Action Plan incorporating the Radical Action Plan elements; and improved accountability measures were beginning to take shape when the effects of the pandemic struck; and these measures proved to be invaluable in enabling cost reductions during 2020. Compared to the amount budgeted for 2019, a reduction in expenditure of £6,600,000 was achieved in 2020. This related to

expenditure outwith the Parish Ministries Fund and CrossReach.

2.7.2 As noted in the main report, the budgeted deficit for 2021 is £11,400,000. The reduced level of congregational contributions in 2022 will result in a budgeted deficit for 2022 of £5,100,000. However the focus on cost savings and the continued progression towards zero-based budgeting for 2022 will be important factors in containing the deficit. The Assembly Trustees propose that the Forums' expenditure budgets are frozen at the levels agreed for the 2021 Budget with only minor adjustments. The expenditure budgets of the service departments will also be frozen but the budget includes an additional amount for essential building repairs and investment in infrastructure systems. Core funding for the new Presbyteries established/to be established by 2022 has been included in the budget to secure funding whilst the long term funding arrangements are developed. This requires a budget of £120,000 per new Presbytery in 2022, totalling £600,000. Appropriate funding will be key in ensuring that the Church's governance structures can be made more efficient, which in turn will assist in allowing its ministry and mission to flourish.

2.7.3 The Co-ordinated Budget provides fully for the total projected number of current Presbytery Plan posts which are likely to be filled during 2022 as part of the Parish Ministries Fund.

2.7.4 Presbytery planning should ensure the most effective and appropriate use of resources at a local level. Changes in congregational configuration can lead to a drop in income without any corresponding drop in expenditure. Continued careful financial management of the national Forums and Committees, and the increase in the proportion of congregational income which is retained for local work, are essential to present a more sustainable picture. The proposed changes to the Ministries and Mission contribution system are designed to help achieve this but what remains evident is that the Church is only able to maintain the level of ministries and mission, both local and national, which its members are prepared to support through their offerings; diligent stewardship of the Church's resources of people, property and money remains paramount.

2.7.5 Absorbing further compliance and governance costs including the cost of Presbytery reform means that Forums and Committees will again face challenging budget decisions for 2022. The Trustees continue to scrutinise and prioritise Forums bids for additional funding for new projects and posts and have engaged in careful consideration of other proposed projects, looking at costs and resultant benefits of the work.

2.7.6 The number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff employed by the Central Services Committee (CSC) has reduced from a monthly average of 217 FTE in 2019 to an average of 199 FTE in 2020. Grant funding to partners has also substantially reduced and grant-making and grant receiving activities are being centralised to ensure better governance and sourcing of grant funding for both congregations and the National Church.

2.7.7 Appendix II shows indicative figures for Projected Gross Expenditure in 2022 for each Forum and how this is to be funded, using contributions from congregations, income from external sources and annual income from investments, with any projected deficit being met from the reserves of the individual Forums. This shows Projected Gross Expenditure of £101,173,000 (2021 - £101,755,000). The budgeted income comprises contributions from congregations £42,000,000 (2021 - £38,172,000); investment income £2,152,000 (2021 - £2,152,000); external sources including Stipend Endowment and glebe income and CrossReach service income, £51,911,000 (2021 - £50,036,000); with a deficit from reserves of £5,100,000 (2021 - £11,400,000). In recent years, in view of the lack of growth in congregational income and the necessary curtailment in the use of the Mission and Renewal

Reserve, no allowances were made within the budget for inflation and Forums and Departments were required to fund any increased costs from within their budgets. An amount has been included as a contingency in the 2022 Budget to cover potential cost increases and/or any restructuring costs. By Autumn 2021 the Forums will present their proposed work programmes for 2022 to the Trustees. New work programmes can only be accommodated if existing work programmes are ended or other savings made. It will be increasingly important for Forums to include exit strategies in any budget bids. The progress made during 2020 in achieving the 30% saving against 2019 costs will only be locked in by maintaining budget discipline. The Faith Action Plan and the new Head of Faith Action Programme post will begin to inform spending plans.

2.7.8 Forums will continue to use their restricted funds to progress their work and the reorganisation of funds through OSCR is freeing up money which was previously not available to be spent. The Assembly Trustees are bound to the General Assembly to ensure good governance and control over all of the funds of the Unincorporated Entities, including ensuring that adequate levels of unrestricted reserves are held.

2.8 Budgets of Forums, Committees and Departments

2.8.1 The Social Care Council

CrossReach has faced very challenging operating circumstances during the Covid-19 pandemic in both 2020 and 2021. Whilst all services have been affected the most significant impact has been in Older People's services. At the time of writing CrossReach has estimated a budget deficit of £1,460,000 for 2022. However, because of the uncertainties around recovery from, and longer term implications of the pandemic, it is not yet possible to attach any degree of certainty to this budget estimate. The complexities of the sector in which it operates; local authority funding cycles and National Care Contracts as well as potential changes in an election year mean that May 2021 is too early to firm up on a budget for 2022. The CrossReach Management Team is committed to managing operational risks.

The budget assumes that there will be no fundamental changes to the services provided and that any increases to the Scottish Living Wage or National Minimum Wage will be cost neutral (funded by National Care Contracts or service users). Potential impacts of the Independent Review of Adult Social Care may be factored into the 2022 budget later in the year. Other income and expenditure has been budgeted in line with 2021, and the budget anticipates that Covid-19 will be managed within normal operating procedures rather than being the cause of severe disruption because of outbreaks. However new Covid-19 variants could pose a further risk. Separately, there has been a lack of investment in property maintenance over 2020 and 2021 which could result in remedial works.

Finally, the budget does not allow for contribution to the Redress Scheme or liability in respect of any historical abuse cases, neither of which can yet be quantified.

Early in 2021, the Pension Trustees advised that the closed CrossReach defined benefit pension scheme was fully funded and that deficit repair contributions could cease in February 2021. The annual cost for 2022 would have been £620,000 and this recurring saving has been very warmly welcomed by both CrossReach and the Assembly Trustees.

2.8.2 Faith Nurture Forum

The Faith Nurture Forum budget, which incorporates the former Ministries Council and Mission and Discipleship Council budgets, has an indicative deficit budget at this point of £3,200,000 to be funded from its reserves. This assumes that the reduced level of congregational contributions is allocated to the Parish Ministries Fund and the deficit therefore arises on other Forum costs. Other Forum costs include the cost of recruiting, training and supporting ministries and the eldership; Partnership

Development and Priority Areas. The Forum is also responsible for two trading entities Life and Work magazine and the Scottish Storytelling Centre.

The budget assumes the transfer of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and Theological Forum budgets to the Office of the General Assembly in 2022.

As noted in 2.4.1, the budget for Parish Ministry costs is difficult to forecast. This is perhaps more so during the pandemic when the rate of retirements has not followed more recent patterns. Ministers are under no obligation to advise of their plans for retirement.

It is anticipated that the number of Presbyteries will reduce to 9 by the start of 2023. Current Presbytery plans will be drawn to a close at the end of May 2021 and new plans to fit the new structure of the Church will require to be in place by December 2022.

2022 will therefore see a transition period to the new plans and the Church will be working with existing numbers until then.

The budget assumes that numbers of ministers retiring will increase again towards the end of 2021; contributing to a reduction in parish minister numbers of 15, to 680.

It is then assumed that more ministers will retire in 2022 coinciding with the new Presbytery plans being established and the widening of parish boundaries etc., that will come with that change. The budget assumes a net decrease in parish ministry numbers by 35 in 2022, to 645.

By way of illustration, other budget scenarios have been considered. If the status quo was maintained in terms of Ministers joining equalling those leaving or retiring, the impact on the budget would be a cost of £1,400,000. If the rate of reduction of ministers was the same as forecast for 2021, the additional cost impact would be £280,000. All scenarios include 120 FTE MDS.

At present there are more than 120 Ministries Development Staff on the Presbytery plans however the number of MDS was capped at 120 until Dec 2020. Currently only essential recruitment is taking place but the 2022 Budget assumes 120 FTE staff. The work being done on the Presbytery Mission Plan Act provides for the allocation of ministries to be revisited and reported on, annually, to the General Assembly, and that will allow for future adjustments to the MDS establishment.

None of these costings include a stipend or salary increase in 2022. However any increase agreed by separate processes during 2021 would be covered by the contingency in the overall budget.

2.8.3 Faith Impact Forum

Faith Impact Forum incorporates the former World Mission Council and former Church and Society Council.

The Forum's indicative budget shows a deficit of £444,000. As in the case of the Faith Nurture Forum's other work, no congregational contributions have been allocated to the Faith Impact Forum in 2022. This is because the contributions from Congregations in 2022 are once again at a rate which does not cover all costs. The Forum has substantial funds, immediately available both for general and restricted purposes.

A block grant of £85,000 is paid annually by the Church to Christian Aid, and this is included in the Faith Impact Forum's budget. The Trustees gratefully acknowledge the substantial financial support provided by Congregations directly to Christian Aid.

The indicative budget shown on Appendix I does not include the work of the Israeli entities which are not part of the Co-ordinated budget process. However the results of all of these entities are included each year in the Church's consolidated ("Group") Annual Accounts.

Detailed 2022 budgets for the trading subsidiaries in Israel will be prepared later in 2021. The Guesthouse in Jerusalem plans to re-open on 2 May following its refurbishment and Covid-19 closure. The Scots Hotel re-opened on 25 March. The cash position of the hotel remains positive and both operations have bookings for 2021.

The Forum, through the residual World Mission Council as the employing agency, employs 10 mission partners and provides grant funding to support its programme of attentive accompaniment of partner churches and organisations overseas. The move towards zero based budgeting has meant a reduction in budgeted expenditure by the Forum to £2,200,000 in 2022 compared to £3,000,000 budgeted for 2020.

2.8.4 Office of the General Assembly

This budget, under the auspices of the Principal Clerk, includes the Clerk and office staff; the cost of the General Assembly and the running costs of the Assembly Hall and the Moderator's flat at Rothesay Terrace. Certain costs of Committees without Funds such as the grant to the Church of Scotland Trust are also included within the budget.

The budget assumes a return to an in person General Assembly in 2022.

The budgets of the Theological Forum and Ecumenical Relations Committee will also move to this budget if approved by the Assembly.

The Ecumenical Relations Committee has an annual budget of £193,000. This includes subscriptions to the Ecumenical Bodies – the World Council of Churches (WCC), World Council of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI).

The Theological Forum budget is £28,000.

2.8.5 Support and Services Committees and Departments

These Committees and Departments have been listed in Appendix II. They have no reserves and as such need to be funded mainly by congregational contributions. The Departments provide services to the national, local and regional Church as well as to the Church's other Statutory Corporations – the General Trustees, the Church of Scotland Investors Trust and The Church of Scotland Trust. They also carry out work on behalf of the Pension Trustees. Charges are made to these bodies as well as to the Housing and Loan Fund and New College. Cross charges are rarely made to Congregations, but when they do occur they are mainly for property-related transactions. The central support and service functions do not cross charge the Forums and Committees for their services other than limited charges for legal and safeguarding services provided to CrossReach as noted below.

The Social Care Council is largely autonomous in terms of central services and charges the costs of its Central Services costs against the service units. There is also some cross-working between Social Care and departments within the National Office, such as Estates, Law and Safeguarding.

Budgets for the service departments are largely based on 2021 budgets, with vacancies included where there will be a replacement. Individual budgets do not include cost of living increases in 2022 but increases for CSC staff working in service departments and the Forums would be covered by the contingency in the budget.

Key features of the service department budgets are:

2.8.5.1 National Office

The 2020 budget included £400,000 for essential repairs on the George Street property, most of which could not be carried out due to Covid-19 restrictions. A programme to maintain the fabric of the building and ensure the safety of staff and visitors has been agreed in consultation with the

General Trustees and £100,000 is included in the 2022 budget for this work.

2.8.5.2 Information Technology and Communications

The budget includes £200,000 of expenditure on IT infrastructure projects in line with the IT strategy being developed by the IT Programme Board. This will include improving our means of communication by moving to global use of Church e-mail addresses and development of the intranet as a platform for resources.

2.8.5.3 Office of the Assembly Trustees

The budget has been increased to include the staff of the former Go For It Fund and the budget for the Small Projects Fund of £100,000. The salary of the newly appointed Head of Faith Action Programme is also included here.

The department now carries out research and analysis functions including high level modelling of the Church's resources to allow for future planning. The budget for the Trustees' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group will be managed by the Office of Assembly Trustees supported by staff within the Faith Impact Forum.

2.8.5.4 Stewardship and Finance Department

Following the departure of several staff during 2020, including three at a senior level, the department has been restructured and savings made on salary cost. Whilst there has been an increase in running costs of the new HR and Payroll system the implementation of new modules for expenses will ultimately result in further business efficiencies.

2.9 Other Funds

The budget shown on Appendix II does not include the Housing and Loan Fund, the Guild and New College which are not part of the Co-ordinated Budget process.

2.10 2021 Budgets

The 2021 budgets approved by the Trustees are contained in the main report in the Blue Book (Section 39) along with a summary of the operating results of the Unincorporated Entities against the 2020 budget (Section 38).

3. SYSTEMS OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Role of Audit Committee

3.1 The Trustees are responsible for maintaining adequate systems of internal control. The Audit Committee's remit includes responsibility for reviewing the systems of internal control and for oversight of the Internal Audit function. This function is delivered by Azets (formerly Scott-Moncrieff) as the appointed Internal Auditors alongside the work of the Church's own Audit and Compliance Officer. Azets produce an annual programme of work based on an assessment of audit risk which seeks to ensure that all the main areas of activity are periodically reviewed. Audit reports are submitted at the end of each assignment and an annual audit report is made to the Audit Committee expressing an opinion on the systems of internal control in place in the Unincorporated Councils and Committees.

3.2 Azets conducted a number of reviews in 2020 covering the following areas:

- Cyber Security at CrossReach
- Tendering and Contract Maintenance at CrossReach
- Payroll System, National Office
- Risk Management, National Office

3.3 Azets reported to the Audit Committee that, in their opinion, the Church of Scotland has a framework of controls in place that provides adequate assurance regarding the organisation's governance framework, risk management and achievement of objectives, subject to implementation of:

- ongoing actions in response to and to embed actions from the Special Commission report on Structural Change, to strengthen governance arrangements, increase accountability and create clearer delegations of responsibility across the organisation; and
- a range of continuous improvement actions, addressing the higher-graded matters arising from internal audit reviews. This also applies to historic/backlog action implementation.

4. NEW TRUSTEES

4.1 The non-renewable terms of office of three of the original trustees, Beth Ashcroft, Alan Campbell and Norma Rolls, conclude at Assembly 2021. Following the process stipulated in our Constitution and Remit we consulted with the Nomination Committee, considered the required skillsets, and issued an open advertisement which resulted in a healthy response. After interview we decided to appoint David Cameron, Barry Hughes and Peter McEnhill. David is Minister of New Laigh, Kilmarnock and brings both parish ministry experience and an understanding of the challenges facing the National Church. Barry is Minister at St Mark's, Stirling and brings to the Trustees an understanding of Priority Area ministry. Peter is Clerk for the new Clyde Presbytery and brings a valuable connection to Presbytery Reform.

4.2 With three Ministers taking the place of three congregation members we are for the time being at the maximum number of Ministers under our Constitution. We were also disappointed at the small number of women applicants having, currently, been at a 50/50 balance. We would enjoin Commissioners and others to speak to possible applicants from as diverse backgrounds as possible, with a view to early 2022 when we will advertise for a further three new colleagues.

4.3 We were very pleased when Ann Nelson, who was appointed for the remainder of the term of George Cowie, and so being able to serve a second term, expressed her interest in doing so. We were delighted to approve this.

5. CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS 2020

5.1 Summary

- As at December 2020, there were 297,435 members of the Church of Scotland, a fall of 5% from 2019, and 33% from 2010.
- These figures are a reflection of the Church of Scotland in 2020, a year marked by the Covid-19 pandemic. Gathering for worship services was prohibited for much of the year.
- Additional questions were asked to reflect the changes in worship provision, including availability of online, or alternative offline worship provision.
- 84% of congregations had offered online worship; 67% had offered alternative offline worship and 82% had re-opened for public worship when able to do so. Almost 95,000 households are estimated to have worshipped online, and 17,000 made use of alternative offline provisions.
- 26% of congregations have people of BAME ethnicity represented, 7% have people of BAME ethnicity in leadership.
- Acknowledge the diligence and strenuous efforts of Clerks to obtain these statistics and transmit them to the National Offices at times of great difficulty.
- Nil return from Presbytery of Lewis and Presbytery of International Charges.

5.2 Introduction

Throughout 2020 the closure of church buildings, on advice from the Scottish and UK governments in response to the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on all areas of church life, including Professions of Faith, ordination of new Elders, Baptisms, Weddings and Attendance. Once church buildings were able to reopen, there was a cap on the total numbers of attendees throughout Scotland of 50. In addition, social distancing within church building required restricting numbers even further for some congregations. Not all churches who did reopen were able to do so immediately upon restrictions being lifted.

With this in mind, the 2020 congregational statistics should be read and interpreted in light of the impact of the pandemic and care should be taken in any comparisons to previous years.

Information on the number of those physically attending worship and congregational activities have not been reported in this year's statistics as many of these activities changed throughout the year due to the impact of restrictions in response to the pandemic.

5.3 Congregational Statistics 2020

Church-level membership and participation, 2020

Congregations within the Church of Scotland come in all shapes and sizes, from large city congregations to small rural or island communities. Table 1 shows the reported participation at the smallest 5% and 25% of churches, the median (i.e. middle) church, the largest 25% and 5% of churches (i.e. 75th and 95th percentile), and the mean (average) church. A few large congregations can result in a larger mean value that may not represent the overall data well – a “typical” church may be better described by the median value.

| | 5 th percentile | 25 th percentile | Median (middle) church | 75 th percentile | 95 th percentile | Mean (average) church |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Members | 22 | 91 | 181 | 311 | 556 | 224 |
| Adherents | 0 | 1 | 10 | 40 | 137 | 32 |
| Professions of Faith | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Children | 0 | 0 | 7 | 30 | 120 | 26 |
| Children receiving Communion | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 2 |
| Elders | 0 ^[1] | 8 | 15 | 27 | 54 | 19 |
| Baptisms | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Weddings | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Funerals | 0 | 3 | 9 | 17 | 36 | 12 |

Table 1: Church participation summary, 2020

The “typical”, i.e. median, congregation in 2020 has just over 180 members (181), and 10 adherents. In the median congregation there are also:

- no professions of faith in 2020.
- 7 children associated with the congregation, but none receiving communion.
- 9 funerals, no baptisms, and no weddings.
- The congregation is led by 15 elders.

Over 90% of congregations welcomed no new members through Profession of Faith, only 6% welcoming any new members in this way. 24% of congregations welcomed new members through certificates, and 18% through resolution of the Kirk Session. Children received Communion in 20% of congregations.

Persons and Agencies in Scotland for 2020

(cf Appendix II of the Reports of the Council of Assembly, 2019)

The membership statistics may be stated thus:

| | | | |
|------|---------------------------|------------|--------|
| Less | Removals by Death | 9,833 | |
| | Admissions by Profession | <u>190</u> | 9,643 |
| Less | Removals by Certificate | 1,110 | |
| | Admissions by Certificate | <u>679</u> | 431 |
| Less | Other Removals | 5,466 | |
| | Restoration | <u>769</u> | 4,697 |
| | Total decrease | | 14,771 |

And shown graphically in Figure 1, below.

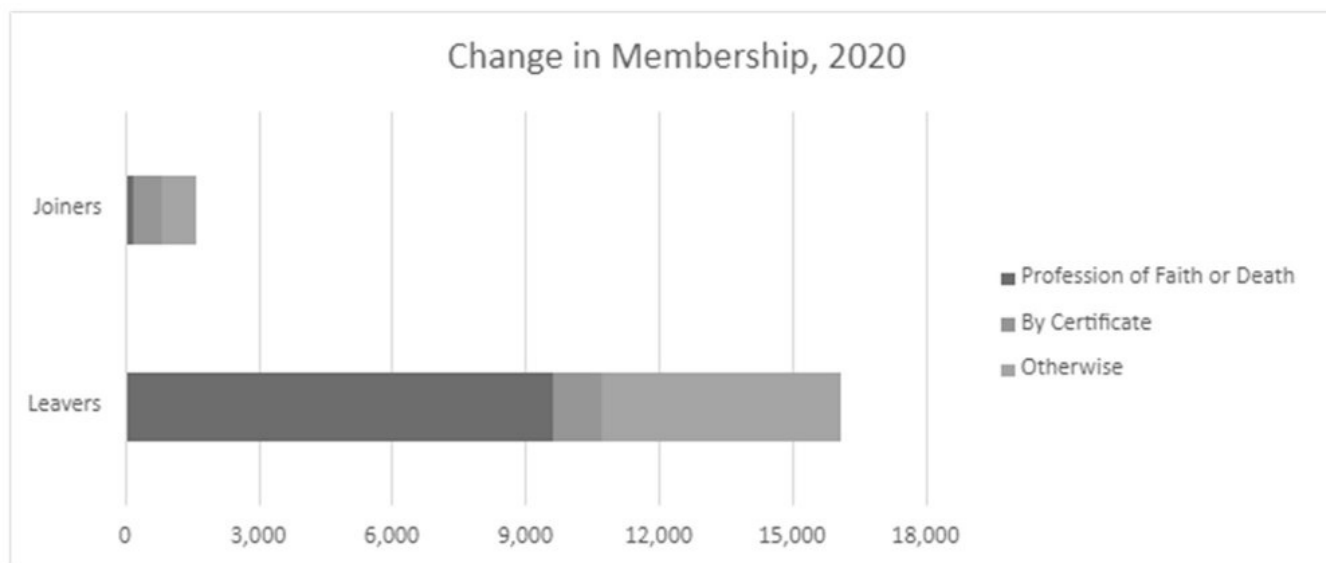
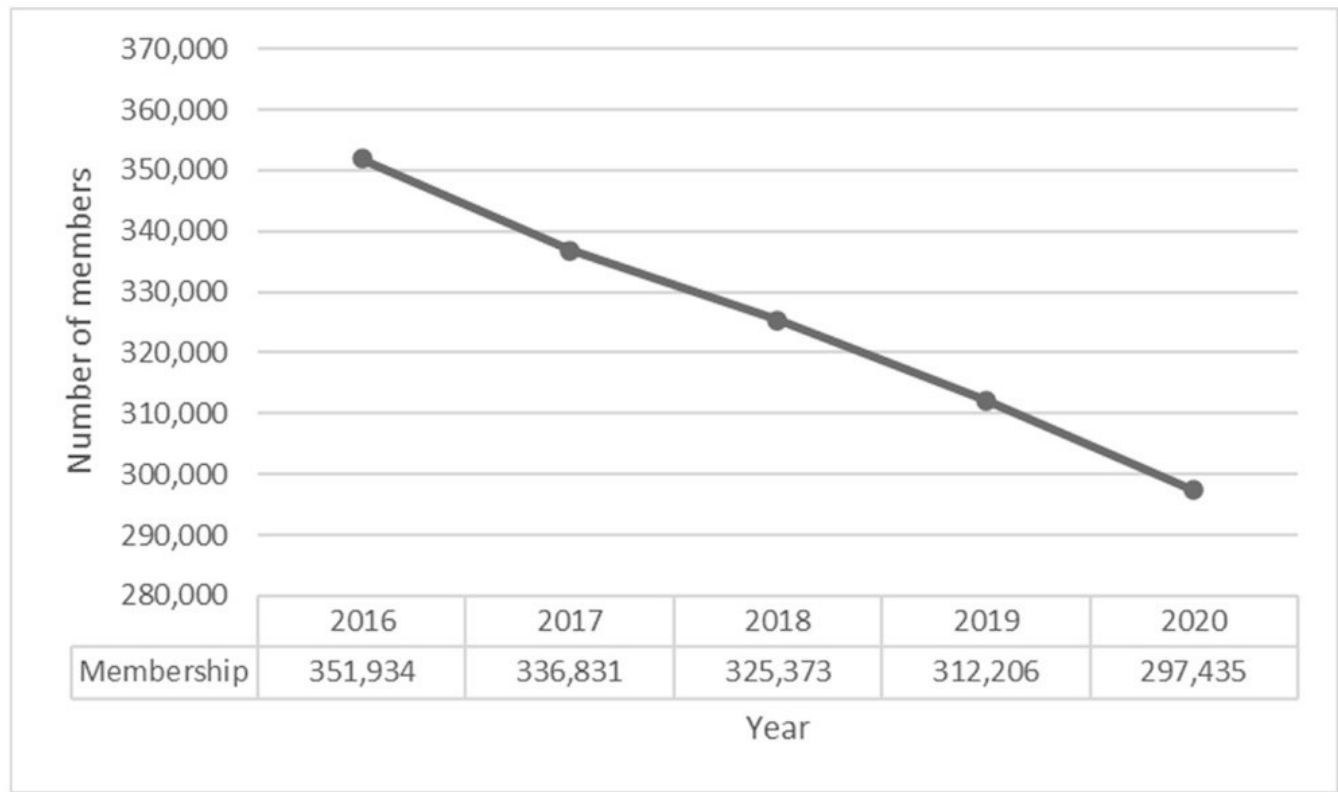


Figure 1 Leavers and Joiners in 2020

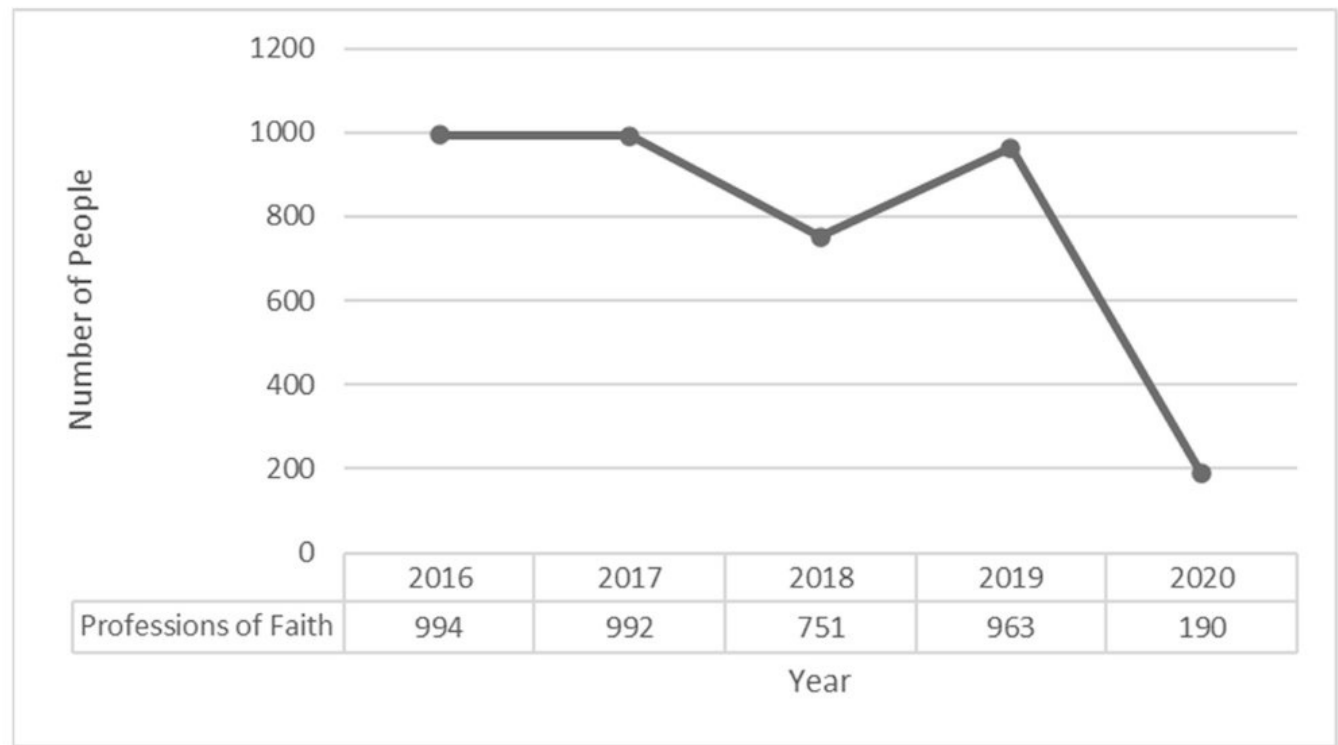
Comparative Graphs

Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic with the closure of church buildings during 2020 care should be taken in making comparisons to previous years, as can be seen in some of the graphs below.

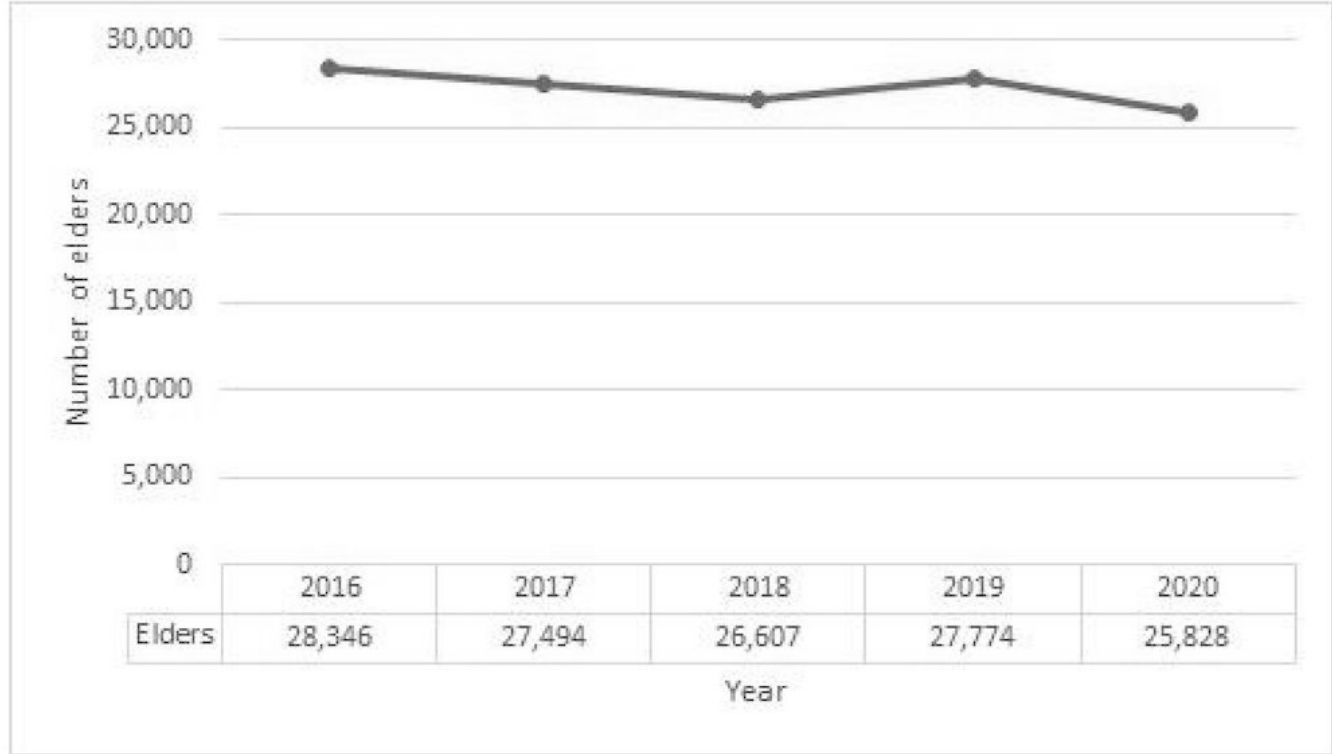
Membership



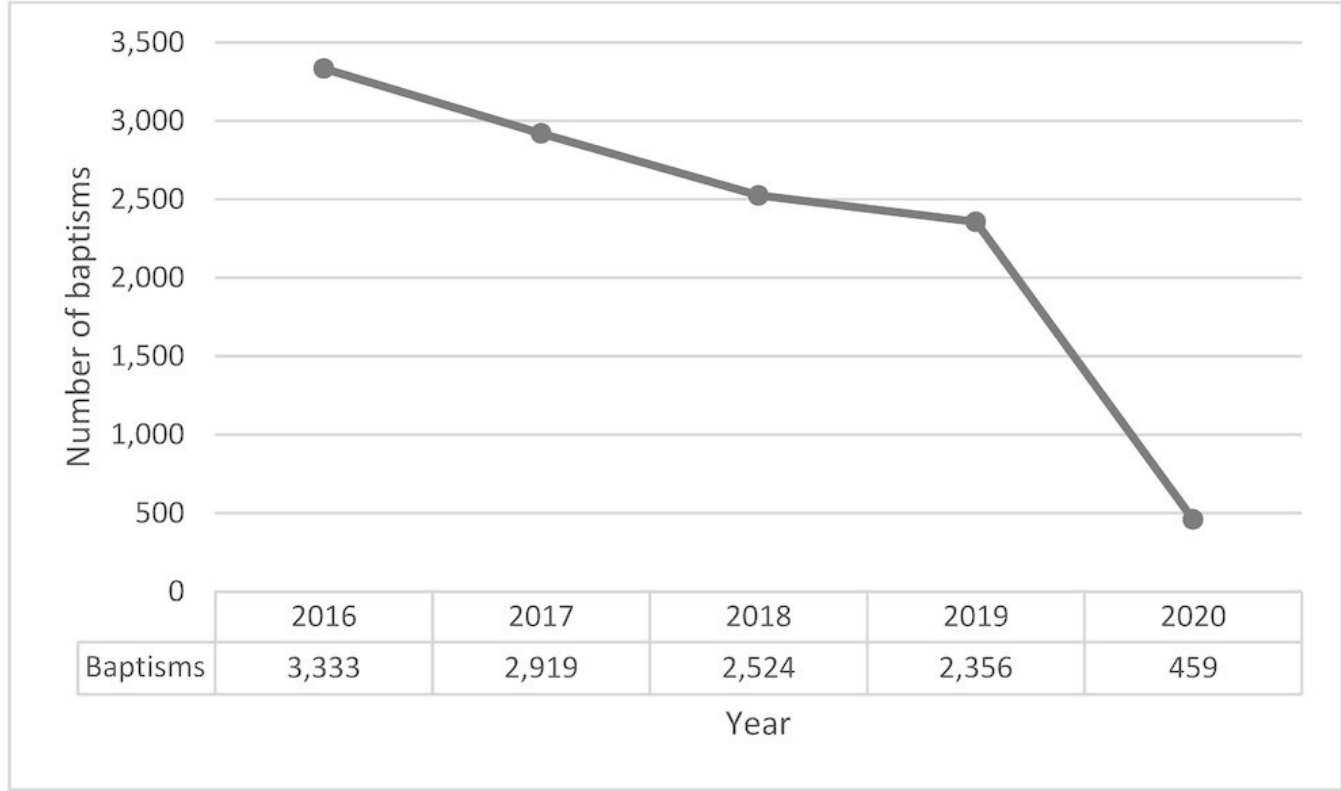
Professions of Faith



Elders



Baptisms



Presbytery Data

Reporting

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2019 | Admissions | Removals | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2020 | Notices of Removal | Supplementary Roll | Response Rate |
|-------------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| EDINBURGH | 20,305 | 108 | 920 | 19,493 | 26 | 1,202 | 99% |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 7,199 | 33 | 273 | 6,959 | 2 | 1,196 | 100% |
| LOTHIAN | 10,829 | 63 | 433 | 10,459 | 4 | 1,341 | 100% |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 5,206 | 32 | 255 | 4,983 | 6 | 562 | 100% |
| DUNS | 2,299 | 12 | 153 | 2,158 | 4 | 327 | 79% |
| JEDBURGH | 4,656 | 7 | 155 | 4,508 | 3 | 126 | 94% |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 3,743 | 12 | 164 | 3,591 | 12 | 691 | 100% |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 7,353 | 24 | 337 | 7,040 | 8 | 1,220 | 100% |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 4,176 | 30 | 208 | 3,998 | 17 | 151 | 100% |
| AYR | 14,994 | 66 | 1,147 | 13,913 | 28 | 1,264 | 100% |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 7,899 | 17 | 303 | 7,613 | 12 | 1,434 | 97% |
| ARDROSSAN | 7,016 | 24 | 361 | 6,679 | 18 | 649 | 89% |
| LANARK | 5,012 | 7 | 320 | 4,699 | 1 | 967 | 86% |
| CLYDE | 24,759 | 92 | 1,998 | 22,853 | 47 | 2,876 | 99% |
| GLASGOW | 26,313 | 108 | 1,161 | 25,260 | 38 | 2,387 | 79% |
| HAMILTON | 20,294 | 90 | 976 | 19,408 | 23 | 3,103 | 100% |
| ARGYLL | 5,942 | 78 | 384 | 5,638 | 19 | 697 | 100% |
| FALKIRK | 9,529 | 41 | 702 | 8,868 | 27 | 1,169 | 100% |
| STIRLING | 11,224 | 71 | 523 | 10,772 | 5 | 972 | 100% |
| DUNFERMLINE | 5,071 | 22 | 219 | 4,874 | 14 | 1,276 | 100% |
| KIRKCALDY | 6,126 | 20 | 277 | 5,869 | 9 | 552 | 91% |
| ST ANDREWS | 7,197 | 43 | 463 | 6,777 | 10 | 366 | 97% |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 4,044 | 18 | 187 | 3,875 | 5 | 352 | 100% |
| PERTH | 10,905 | 39 | 663 | 10,281 | 96 | 1,147 | 89% |
| DUNDEE | 9,285 | 43 | 454 | 8,874 | 34 | 534 | 100% |
| ANGUS | 10,312 | 45 | 402 | 9,955 | 17 | 1,076 | 90% |
| ABERDEEN AND SHETLAND | 11,844 | 76 | 1,060 | 10,860 | 12 | 1,133 | 100% |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 6,182 | 32 | 251 | 5,963 | 3 | 805 | 100% |
| GORDON | 10,516 | 210 | 293 | 10,433 | 18 | 787 | 96% |
| BUCHAN | 8,735 | 9 | 300 | 8,444 | 13 | 834 | 91% |
| MORAY | 6,303 | 44 | 247 | 6,099 | 8 | 319 | 93% |
| ABERNETHY | 955 | 29 | 52 | 932 | 1 | 60 | 100% |
| INVERNESS | 3,949 | 19 | 249 | 3,719 | 21 | 475 | 96% |
| LOCHABER | 904 | 4 | 60 | 848 | 2 | 17 | 100% |
| ROSS | 1,524 | 19 | 72 | 1,471 | 7 | 355 | 95% |
| SUTHERLAND | 542 | 10 | 48 | 504 | 4 | 176 | 93% |
| CAITHNESS | 921 | 12 | 83 | 850 | 1 | 237 | 100% |
| LOCHCARRON- SKYE | 491 | 4 | 19 | 476 | 3 | 120 | 100% |
| UIST | 278 | 4 | 14 | 268 | 1 | 20 | 100% |
| LEWIS | 835 | - | - | 835 | - | - | 0% |
| ORKNEY | 2,262 | 8 | 138 | 2,132 | 3 | 219 | 100% |
| ENGLAND | 1,865 | 13 | 84 | 1,794 | 6 | 674 | 100% |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 2,410 | - | - | 2,410 | - | - | 0% |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 312,206 | 1,638 | 16,409 | 297,435 | 588 | 33,868 | 94% |

Table 2: Presbytery reporting

Membership

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2020 | Admissions | | | Removals | | |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | | Profession of Faith | By Certificate | Restoration or Resolution | By Death | By Certificate | Otherwise |
| EDINBURGH | 19,493 | 9 | 41 | 58 | 661 | 102 | 157 |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 6,959 | 5 | 11 | 17 | 228 | 15 | 30 |
| LOTHIAN | 10,459 | 2 | 37 | 24 | 317 | 26 | 90 |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 4,983 | 2 | 16 | 14 | 191 | 21 | 43 |
| DUNS | 2,158 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 75 | 5 | 73 |
| JEDBURGH | 4,508 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 127 | 8 | 20 |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 3,591 | 1 | 10 | 1 | 114 | 16 | 34 |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 7,040 | 7 | 4 | 13 | 243 | 16 | 78 |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 3,998 | 0 | 15 | 15 | 99 | 18 | 91 |
| AYR | 13,913 | 15 | 36 | 15 | 521 | 60 | 566 |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 7,613 | 0 | 13 | 4 | 199 | 32 | 72 |
| ARDROSSAN | 6,679 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 229 | 35 | 97 |
| LANARK | 4,699 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 147 | 8 | 165 |
| CLYDE | 22,853 | 8 | 60 | 24 | 795 | 81 | 1,122 |
| GLASGOW | 25,260 | 24 | 42 | 42 | 717 | 97 | 347 |
| HAMILTON | 19,408 | 17 | 56 | 17 | 776 | 70 | 130 |
| ARGYLL | 5,638 | 11 | 11 | 56 | 227 | 22 | 135 |
| FALKIRK | 8,868 | 6 | 16 | 19 | 392 | 24 | 286 |
| STIRLING | 10,772 | 9 | 17 | 45 | 343 | 28 | 152 |
| DUNFERMLINE | 4,874 | 5 | 11 | 6 | 180 | 13 | 26 |
| KIRKCALDY | 5,869 | 4 | 12 | 4 | 228 | 23 | 26 |
| ST ANDREWS | 6,777 | 3 | 24 | 16 | 229 | 23 | 211 |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 3,875 | 0 | 10 | 8 | 147 | 24 | 16 |
| PERTH | 10,281 | 3 | 27 | 9 | 313 | 45 | 305 |
| DUNDEE | 8,874 | 7 | 17 | 19 | 334 | 44 | 76 |
| ANGUS | 9,955 | 3 | 22 | 20 | 330 | 22 | 50 |
| ABERDEEN AND SHETLAND | 10,860 | 3 | 38 | 35 | 363 | 54 | 643 |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 5,963 | 9 | 20 | 3 | 163 | 15 | 73 |
| GORDON | 10,433 | 0 | 25 | 185 | 223 | 45 | 25 |
| BUCHAN | 8,444 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 267 | 16 | 17 |
| MORAY | 6,099 | 22 | 8 | 14 | 195 | 16 | 36 |
| ABERNETHY | 932 | 0 | 2 | 27 | 29 | 3 | 20 |
| INVERNESS | 3,719 | 1 | 10 | 8 | 136 | 49 | 64 |
| LOCHABER | 848 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 37 | 5 | 18 |
| ROSS | 1,471 | 1 | 15 | 3 | 54 | 8 | 10 |
| SUTHERLAND | 504 | 1 | 9 | 0 | 21 | 3 | 24 |
| CAITHNESS | 850 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 33 | 7 | 43 |
| LOCHCARRON- SKYE | 476 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 7 |
| UIST | 268 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 13 | 1 | 0 |
| LEWIS | 835 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| ORKNEY | 2,132 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 88 | 3 | 47 |
| ENGLAND | 1,794 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 37 | 7 | 40 |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 2,410 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 297,435 | 190 | 679 | 769 | 9,833 | 1,110 | 5,466 |

Table 3: Presbytery membership figures

Occasional Offices

| Presbyteries | Baptisms | | | Weddings | Funerals |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| | All baptisms | Adult baptisms | Birth Thanksgiving Services | | |
| EDINBURGH | 35 | 1 | 5 | 48 | 1,028 |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 18 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 476 |
| LOTHIAN | 14 | 1 | 2 | 18 | 461 |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 9 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 216 |
| DUNS | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 143 |
| JEDBURGH | 7 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 194 |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 149 |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 18 | 1 | 1 | 16 | 302 |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 3 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 142 |
| AYR | 25 | 4 | 2 | 26 | 871 |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 9 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 296 |
| ARDROSSAN | 9 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 366 |
| LANARK | 3 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 318 |
| CLYDE | 37 | 1 | 0 | 22 | 1,361 |
| GLASGOW | 35 | 7 | 9 | 43 | 1,732 |
| HAMILTON | 52 | 9 | 3 | 14 | 1,357 |
| ARGYLL | 8 | 1 | 0 | 25 | 474 |
| FALKIRK | 7 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 629 |
| STIRLING | 12 | 0 | 2 | 16 | 486 |
| DUNFERMLINE | 17 | 3 | 1 | 11 | 314 |
| KIRKCALDY | 8 | 3 | 0 | 9 | 470 |
| ST ANDREWS | 6 | 1 | 0 | 20 | 270 |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 6 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 174 |
| PERTH | 10 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 311 |
| DUNDEE | 8 | 0 | 2 | 8 | 369 |
| ANGUS | 16 | 3 | 0 | 21 | 414 |
| ABERDEEN AND SHETLAND | 15 | 2 | 0 | 18 | 578 |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 6 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 192 |
| GORDON | 16 | 0 | 10 | 18 | 373 |
| BUCHAN | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 201 |
| MORAY | 5 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 306 |
| ABERNETHY | 3 | 3 | 0 | 11 | 88 |
| INVERNESS | 7 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 251 |
| LOCHABER | 4 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 75 |
| ROSS | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 136 |
| SUTHERLAND | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 82 |
| CAITHNESS | 5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 168 |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 42 |
| UIST | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 45 |
| LEWIS | - | - | - | - | - |
| ORKNEY | 3 | 1 | 0 | 7 | 120 |
| ENGLAND | 5 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 66 |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | - | - | - | - | - |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 459 | 54 | 49 | 503 | 16,046 |
| % Scotland | 1.0% | | | 4.2% | 25.0% |

Table 4: Presbytery baptisms, weddings, funerals figures

Church of Scotland congregations conducted 4.2% of weddings celebrated in Scotland in 2020, and 25.0% of funerals. They baptised or gave thanks for 1.0% of births (excluding adult baptisms).

Leadership

| Presbyteries | Elders | | | Other leaders | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | All | Male | Female | All |
| EDINBURGH | 864 | 1,134 | 1,998 | 83 | 126 | 209 |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 312 | 353 | 665 | 87 | 165 | 252 |
| LOTHIAN | 345 | 473 | 818 | 34 | 74 | 108 |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 184 | 214 | 398 | 35 | 52 | 87 |
| DUNS | 78 | 82 | 160 | 22 | 32 | 54 |
| JEDBURGH | 104 | 177 | 281 | 15 | 38 | 53 |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 122 | 182 | 304 | 7 | 23 | 30 |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 244 | 279 | 523 | 84 | 125 | 209 |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 94 | 122 | 216 | 18 | 48 | 66 |
| AYR | 531 | 749 | 1,280 | 49 | 101 | 150 |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 252 | 293 | 545 | 41 | 82 | 123 |
| ARDROSSAN | 238 | 352 | 590 | 46 | 95 | 141 |
| LANARK | 142 | 197 | 339 | 19 | 29 | 48 |
| CLYDE | 1,060 | 1,391 | 2,451 | 139 | 239 | 378 |
| GLASGOW | 986 | 1,279 | 2,265 | 192 | 360 | 552 |
| HAMILTON | 954 | 1,220 | 2,174 | 125 | 195 | 320 |
| ARGYLL | 297 | 393 | 690 | 81 | 122 | 203 |
| FALKIRK | 357 | 515 | 872 | 60 | 126 | 186 |
| STIRLING | 398 | 519 | 917 | 54 | 107 | 161 |
| DUNFERMLINE | 198 | 312 | 510 | 19 | 26 | 45 |
| KIRKCALDY | 197 | 338 | 535 | 37 | 84 | 121 |
| ST ANDREWS | 244 | 344 | 588 | 12 | 23 | 35 |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 134 | 156 | 290 | 29 | 35 | 64 |
| PERTH | 288 | 375 | 663 | 14 | 26 | 40 |
| DUNDEE | 342 | 408 | 750 | 71 | 97 | 168 |
| ANGUS | 293 | 427 | 720 | 22 | 34 | 56 |
| ABERDEEN AND SHETLAND | 433 | 568 | 1,001 | 26 | 52 | 78 |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 140 | 172 | 312 | 4 | 12 | 16 |
| GORDON | 246 | 331 | 577 | 24 | 43 | 67 |
| BUCHAN | 204 | 273 | 477 | 67 | 164 | 231 |
| MORAY | 206 | 303 | 509 | 14 | 64 | 78 |
| ABERNETHY | 37 | 61 | 98 | 6 | 3 | 9 |
| INVERNESS | 195 | 174 | 369 | 47 | 79 | 126 |
| LOCHABER | 39 | 76 | 115 | 10 | 23 | 33 |
| ROSS | 101 | 97 | 198 | 23 | 47 | 70 |
| SUTHERLAND | 26 | 59 | 85 | 6 | 12 | 18 |
| CAITHNESS | 51 | 52 | 103 | 21 | 46 | 67 |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 31 | 24 | 55 | 39 | 26 | 65 |
| UIST | 26 | 9 | 35 | 9 | 14 | 23 |
| LEWIS | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| ORKNEY | 73 | 119 | 192 | 14 | 17 | 31 |
| ENGLAND | 65 | 95 | 160 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 11,131 | 14,697 | 25,828 | 1,705 | 3,066 | 4,771 |

Table 5: Presbytery leadership figures

There are 25,828 elders in the Church of Scotland of whom 43.1% are male and 56.9% female, 8.7% of the membership.

Public Worship in 2020

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic church buildings were closed, on advice from the Scottish and UK governments, for many months during 2020.

The 2020 Congregational Statistics highlight that many of the congregations who were able to reopen once restrictions had eased, did so at different times, with numbers who were able to attend being impacted by the size and layout of their building to allow for social distancing and the maximum allowable number dependant on local restrictions once a new tier system was introduced throughout Scotland. Due to the significant differences across congregations, an initial analysis has demonstrated that it is not helpful to report these figures at a presbytery or wider church level in 2020.

Additional questions were added to the 2020 Congregational Statistics to obtain a broader and more realistic picture of worship throughout the church in 2020. These are given in Table 6. No responses were obtained from the Presbyteries of Lanark, Lewis or the Presbytery of International Charges.

84% of congregations offered online worship, with 67% making alternative offline provisions such as phone-in services or worship sheets. 95,000 households were estimated to have watched online worship, and 17,000 to have engaged in the alternative resources. These figures are made up of best estimates from congregations - it is impossible to judge how many people watch on a single device, or who re-watch a service. They are offered as indicative of the online engagement with the congregations of the Church of Scotland.

Additional information provided alongside the additional questions showed that some local radio stations also broadcast Church of Scotland services to those in the local area.

82% of congregations had re-opened their church building for public worship in 2020 when able to do so.

An ecumenical report, *"Adapt and be Flexible - the Mission Doesn't Stop!" The Scottish Church and the COVID-19 pandemic*, reported that 96% of churches in their sample were able to offer online worship.^[2] The value reported here (84%) is rather less, perhaps due to the larger numbers of congregations completing these congregational statistics details, or other denominations being able to offer more online material.

The same report, at p17, also noted that 75% of churches in Scotland had re-opened for some form of public worship. The figure reported here, 82%, is likely to be higher due to congregations owning their own buildings in contrast with some other denominations, and perhaps where online provision has not been able to be made.

Public worship in 2020

| Presbytery | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2020 | Able to offer online worship | Able to offer alternative offline worship | Estimate of online worshippers | Estimate of worshippers engaging with alternative offline worship | Re- opened building for public worship | Response rate |
|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---|---|------------------|
| EDINBURGH | 19,493 | 98% | 68% | 7,196 | 1,034 | 89% | 89% |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 6,959 | 96% | 63% | 1,879 | 162 | 54% | 100% |
| LOTHIAN | 10,459 | 89% | 78% | 2,848 | 874 | 97% | 80% |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 4,983 | 100% | 92% | 2,288 | 285 | 77% | 100% |
| DUNS | 2,158 | 100% | 45% | 538 | 67 | 100% | 79% |
| JEDBURGH | 4,508 | 73% | 82% | 315 | 67 | 91% | 69% |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 3,591 | 83% | 44% | 1,290 | 324 | 68% | 100% |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 7,040 | 63% | 53% | 3,109 | 413 | 91% | 100% |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 3,998 | 50% | 56% | 1,165 | 156 | 94% | 100% |
| AYR | 13,913 | 83% | 69% | 5,663 | 890 | 88% | 100% |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 7,613 | 83% | 64% | 1,438 | 353 | 53% | 58% |
| ARDROSSAN | 6,679 | 83% | 73% | 2,708 | 307 | 77% | 81% |
| LANARK | 4,699 | - | - | - | - | - | 0% |
| CLYDE | 22,853 | 81% | 65% | 5,843 | 457 | 72% | 57% |
| GLASGOW | 25,260 | 90% | 67% | 8,575 | 1,679 | 89% | 73% |
| HAMILTON | 19,408 | 90% | 69% | 7,592 | 855 | 68% | 82% |
| ARGYLL | 5,638 | 57% | 54% | 3,266 | 684 | 66% | 92% |
| FALKIRK | 8,868 | 74% | 85% | 3,285 | 746 | 94% | 100% |
| STIRLING | 10,772 | 86% | 66% | 2,722 | 274 | 90% | 64% |
| DUNFERMLINE | 4,874 | 100% | 75% | 2,773 | 417 | 88% | 100% |
| KIRKCALDY | 5,869 | 94% | 80% | 1,535 | 272 | 88% | 70% |
| ST ANDREWS | 6,777 | 88% | 74% | 850 | 576 | 95% | 68% |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 3,875 | 74% | 74% | 2,749 | 244 | 53% | 100% |
| PERTH | 10,281 | 89% | 69% | 2,265 | 554 | 89% | 77% |
| DUNDEE | 8,874 | 86% | 46% | 1,818 | 466 | 83% | 100% |
| ANGUS | 9,955 | 89% | 88% | 2,469 | 422 | 100% | 87% |
| ABERDEEN AND SHETLAND | 10,860 | 82% | 64% | 3,410 | 1,568 | 85% | 97% |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 5,963 | 88% | 53% | 1,190 | 81 | 82% | 89% |
| GORDON | 10,433 | 88% | 65% | 1,772 | 220 | 94% | 57% |
| BUCHAN | 8,444 | 72% | 55% | 1,592 | 237 | 83% | 83% |
| MORAY | 6,099 | 85% | 53% | 2,050 | 312 | 95% | 71% |
| ABERNETHY | 932 | 100% | 89% | 687 | 60 | 67% | 90% |
| INVERNESS | 3,719 | 92% | 71% | 2,653 | 453 | 58% | 96% |
| LOCHABER | 848 | 86% | 79% | 495 | 249 | 77% | 93% |
| ROSS | 1,471 | 79% | 72% | 698 | 230 | 76% | 81% |
| SUTHERLAND | 504 | 75% | 75% | 933 | 82 | 100% | 29% |
| CAITHNESS | 850 | 56% | 44% | 625 | 195 | 67% | 100% |
| LOCHCARRON- SKYE | 476 | 86% | 67% | 311 | 75 | 86% | 88% |
| UIST | 268 | 100% | 100% | 147 | 405 | 67% | 50% |
| LEWIS | 835 | - | - | - | - | - | 0% |
| ORKNEY | 2,132 | 67% | 44% | 1,363 | 215 | 59% | 85% |
| ENGLAND | 1,794 | 100% | 75% | 569 | 52 | 75% | 57% |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 2,410 | - | - | - | - | - | 0% |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 297,435 | 84% | 67% | 94,674 | 17,012 | 82% | 82% |

Table 6: Presbytery public worship figures

Congregational Statistical Returns – Young People

(cf Appendix III of the Reports of the Council of Assembly, 2019)

Work with children and young people was greatly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The figures presented here need to be considered with this in mind and data quality may not be as high as in other years.

Reports from the Presbyteries showed that as at 31 December 2020:

1. The number of children and young people aged 17 years and under who are involved in the life of the congregation is 33,153;
2. The number of people aged 18 years and over, whose names are not on the Communion Roll, but who are involved in the life of the congregations is 12,737 and
3. The number of children who receive Holy Communion in terms of Act V, 2000, Section 15 is 2,107.

| Presbyteries | Membership as at 31 st Dec 2020 | Children under 17 | Children receiving Communion | Adults not on Communion roll |
|----------------------------|--|----------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| EDINBURGH | 19,493 | 3,366 | 368 | 1,101 |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 6,959 | 1,190 | 35 | 232 |
| LOTHIAN | 10,459 | 1,097 | 144 | 534 |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 4,983 | 248 | 16 | 154 |
| DUNS | 2,158 | 92 | 14 | 33 |
| JEDBURGH | 4,508 | 283 | 2 | 5 |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 3,591 | 180 | 18 | 65 |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 7,040 | 171 | 17 | 64 |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 3,998 | 392 | 7 | 22 |
| AYR | 13,913 | 959 | 44 | 586 |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 7,613 | 1,034 | 77 | 293 |
| ARDROSSAN | 6,679 | 532 | 16 | 119 |
| LANARK | 4,699 | 959 | 109 | 360 |
| CLYDE | 22,853 | 4,191 | 213 | 674 |
| GLASGOW | 25,260 | 4,870 | 297 | 1,499 |
| HAMILTON | 19,408 | 3,043 | 97 | 576 |
| ARGYLL | 5,638 | 281 | 9 | 233 |
| FALKIRK | 8,868 | 1,331 | 43 | 235 |
| STIRLING | 10,772 | 979 | 88 | 321 |
| DUNFERMLINE | 4,874 | 564 | 68 | 234 |
| KIRKCALDY | 5,869 | 547 | 21 | 114 |
| ST ANDREWS | 6,777 | 200 | 10 | 158 |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 3,875 | 291 | 3 | 110 |
| PERTH | 10,281 | 775 | 42 | 404 |
| DUNDEE | 8,874 | 830 | 102 | 331 |
| ANGUS | 9,955 | 763 | 54 | 78 |
| ABERDEEN AND SHETLAND | 10,860 | 1,035 | 43 | 246 |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 5,963 | 387 | 25 | 176 |
| GORDON | 10,433 | 810 | 79 | 272 |
| BUCHAN | 8,444 | 974 | 1 | 76 |
| MORAY | 6,099 | 375 | 12 | 169 |
| ABERNETHY | 932 | 130 | 18 | 194 |
| INVERNESS | 3,719 | 569 | 72 | 831 |
| LOCHABER | 848 | 115 | 10 | 261 |
| ROSS | 1,471 | 113 | 4 | 748 |
| SUTHERLAND | 504 | 103 | 3 | 151 |
| CAITHNESS | 850 | 76 | 5 | 274 |
| LOCHCARRON-SKYE | 476 | 41 | 3 | 817 |
| UIST | 268 | 54 | 6 | 317 |
| LEWIS | 835 | - | - | - |
| ORKNEY | 2,132 | 146 | 16 | 73 |
| ENGLAND | 1,794 | 80 | 3 | 46 |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | 2,410 | - | - | - |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 297,435 | 33,868 | 2,214 | 13,186 |

Table 8: Young People and Adherents

Congregational Statistical Returns – Diversity

GA2020 tasked the Faith Impact Forum with investigating the experiences of people who are of Black, Asian or Minority Ethnicity (BAME)^[3] within the Church of Scotland. As part of that work, congregations were asked to report the percentage of their attenders, and of their leadership, who were of such ethnicity. The inability to meet for public worship in much of 2020 made this question less easy to answer, but we are grateful to Clerks for their best estimates at this time.

The following table shows, of those who replied, the percentage of congregations in each Presbytery who reported any people of BAME in their congregations or in their leadership. No responses were obtained from the Presbyteries of Lanark and Lewis nor the International Presbytery.

- 26% of Church of Scotland congregations had BAME attenders
- Only 7% of Church of Scotland congregations had BAME leaders
- A third of presbyteries had no BAME leaders at all.

| Presbyteries | Congregations as at 31 st Dec 2020 | Congregations with BAME attenders | Congregations with BAME leaders | Response rate |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| EDINBURGH | 70 | 60% | 14% | 83% |
| WEST LOTHIAN | 26 | 38% | 8% | 92% |
| LOTHIAN | 45 | 29% | 4% | 78% |
| MELROSE AND PEEBLES | 26 | 38% | 12% | 100% |
| DUNS | 14 | 14% | 0% | 79% |
| JEDBURGH | 16 | 13% | 0% | 69% |
| ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE | 19 | 11% | 11% | 100% |
| DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT | 32 | 22% | 6% | 100% |
| WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER | 18 | 17% | 6% | 100% |
| AYR | 48 | 19% | 6% | 98% |
| IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK | 26 | 8% | 4% | 54% |
| ARDROSSAN | 27 | 22% | 0% | 85% |
| LANARK | | - | - | 0% |
| CLYDE | 75 | 19% | 3% | 57% |
| GLASGOW | 124 | 42% | 15% | 69% |
| HAMILTON | 73 | 19% | 3% | 84% |
| ARGYLL | 51 | 10% | 10% | 92% |
| FALKIRK | 34 | 38% | 12% | 100% |
| STIRLING | 45 | 13% | 2% | 64% |
| DUNFERMLINE | 24 | 42% | 17% | 79% |
| KIRKCALDY | 23 | 13% | 4% | 65% |
| ST ANDREWS | 31 | 16% | 10% | 71% |
| DUNKELD AND MEIGLE | 19 | 21% | 0% | 100% |
| PERTH | 35 | 17% | 3% | 71% |
| DUNDEE | 35 | 34% | 9% | 91% |
| ANGUS | 31 | 16% | 0% | 87% |
| ABERDEEN AND SHETLAND | 34 | 71% | 24% | 97% |
| KINCARDINE AND DEESIDE | 19 | 32% | 5% | 84% |
| GORDON | 28 | 29% | 4% | 61% |
| BUCHAN | 35 | 9% | 0% | 80% |
| MORAY | 28 | 21% | 0% | 71% |
| ABERNETHY | 10 | 20% | 0% | 90% |
| INVERNESS | 25 | 32% | 12% | 92% |
| LOCHABER | 14 | 21% | 0% | 100% |
| ROSS | 21 | 14% | 0% | 81% |
| SUTHERLAND | 14 | 7% | 0% | 29% |
| CAITHNESS | 9 | 22% | 11% | 100% |
| LOHCARRON-SKYE | 8 | 25% | 0% | 88% |
| UIST | 6 | 0% | 0% | 50% |
| LEWIS | | - | - | 0% |
| ORKNEY | 20 | 5% | 0% | 90% |
| ENGLAND | 7 | 29% | 0% | 43% |
| INTERNATIONAL CHARGES | | - | - | 0% |
| CHURCH OF SCOTLAND | 1,245 | 26% | 7% | 80% |

Table 9: Ethnic diversity

In the name of the Trustees

JOHN CHALMERS, Convener
NORMA ROLLS, Vice-Convener
JAMES McNEILL, Administrative Trustee

Appendix I

CO-ORDINATED BUDGET STATISTICS 2019 TO 2022

| | 2019 | 2019 | 2020 | 2020 | 2021 | 2021 | 2022 | 2022 |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|
| | Actual | Increase/ (Decrease) | Provisional | Increase/ (Decrease) | Projected | Increase/ (Decrease) | Projected | Increase/ (Decrease) |
| | £'000 | % | £'000 | % | £'000 | % | £'000 | % |
| CONGREGATIONAL INCOME | | | | | | | | |
| Offerings | 60,851 | 2.2% | 54,325 | (10.7%) | 57,500 | 5.8% | 58,000 | 0.9% |
| Tax Recovery on Offerings | 10,212 | (10.9%) | 9,715 | (4.9%) | 9,775 | 0.6% | 9,860 | 0.9% |
| Total Offerings | 71,063 | 0.1% | 64,040 | (9.9%) | 67,275 | 5.1% | 67,860 | 0.9% |
| Other Ordinary Income | 15,945 | (1.8%) | 5,268 | (67.0%) | 5,025 | (4.6%) | 15,000 | 198.5% |
| Total Ordinary Income | 87,008 | (0.2%) | 69,308 | (20.3%) | 72,300 | 4.3% | 82,860 | 14.6% |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | | | | | |
| Available to Congregations | 43,690 | 2.3% | 26,175 | (40.1%) | 37,464 | 43.1% | 44,460 | 18.7% |
| Parish Ministries Fund | 37,473 | (2.2%) | 37,473 | 0.0% | 32,311 | (13.8%) | 33,373 | 3.3% |
| Less: Vacancy Allowances | (3,268) | | (3,453) | | (3,336) | | (3,600) | |
| Mission and Renewal Fund | 34,205 | 18% | 34,020 | (0.5%) | 28,975 | (14.8%) | 29,773 | 2.8% |
| Total Expenditure | 9,113 | 18% | 9,113 | 0.0% | 5,861 | (35.7%) | 8,627 | 47.2% |
| INCOME DISPOSITION | % | % | % | % | % | % | % | % |
| Available to Congregations | 50.2% | | 37.8% | | 51.8% | | 53.7% | |
| Parish Ministries Fund | 39.3% | | 49.1% | | 40.1% | | 35.9% | |
| Mission and Renewal Fund | 10.5% | | 13.1% | | 8.1% | | 10.4% | |
| | <u>100.0</u> | | <u>100.0</u> | | <u>100.0</u> | | <u>100.0</u> | |

Appendix II

2022 CO-ORDINATED BUDGET

Requirements for Parish Ministries Fund and Mission & Renewal Fund

| | Projected Total Expenditure | To be met by Congregations | Income from External Sources | Annual Income from Investments | Transfers between areas | 2022 Deficit to be met from Reserves | Budgeted Deficit 2021 |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| Parish Ministries Fund Total | 37,818 | 33,373 | 3,640 | 805 | - | - | 4,232 |
| Mission & Renewal Fund | | | | | | | |
| Faith Nurture Forum | 4,120 | 708 | - | 221 | 15 | 3,176 | 4,094 |
| Faith Impact Forum | 2,256 | - | 906 | 926 | (20) | 444 | 585 |
| Social Care Council | 48,087 | 1,115 | 45,318 | 194 | - | 1,460 | 2,648 |
| Support & Services Committees and Departments: | | | | | | | |
| Office of Assembly Trustees | 775 | 771 | 4 | - | - | - | 30 |
| Safeguarding | 387 | 323 | 64 | - | - | - | - |
| Stewardship and Finance | 1,470 | 1,059 | 391 | - | 20 | - | - |
| Law | 898 | 309 | 589 | - | - | - | - |
| Information and Communications Technology | 968 | 862 | 106 | - | - | - | - |
| Facilities Management 121-123 George Street | 1,032 | 850 | 182 | - | - | - | - |
| Central Properties Department, Health and Safety | 158 | 138 | 20 | - | - | - | - |
| Human Resources | 423 | 382 | 41 | - | - | - | - |
| Media and Communications | 519 | 504 | - | - | 15 | - | - |
| Unrestricted legacies not allocated to departments | - | (600) | 600 | - | - | - | - |
| Total Support and Services | 6,630 | 4,598 | 1,997 | - | 35 | - | 30 |
| Office of General Assembly | 1,231 | 1,175 | 50 | 6 | - | - | - |
| Presbytery Funding for 5 New Presbyteries | 600 | 600 | - | - | - | - | (193) |
| Contingency | 431 | 431 | - | - | (30) | 30 | - |
| Mission & Renewal Fund Totals | 63,355 | 8,627 | 48,271 | 1,347 | - | 5,110 | 7,164 |
| Total | 101,173 | 42,000 | 51,911 | 2,152 | - | 5,110 | 11,396 |

1. Income from external sources is from the provision of services e.g. CrossReach service income, cross charges to external parties and other Statutory Corporations. Forums are not cross charged for costs of Support and Services Departments.
2. Transfers to another budget line are shown as a negative and transfers in from another line as positive.
3. Amount to be met by congregations is before deduction of vacancy allowance.
4. Deficits from reserves held by Forums include accumulated revenue from prior years.
5. Budget relates to the Church of Scotland "Charity" only and excludes subsidiaries.
6. Office of General Assembly Covers the General Assembly and Moderator; Principal Clerk's department; Committee to Nominate Moderator and Committees without Funds such as Church of Scotland Trust. From May 2021, if approved, this will also include the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Theological Forum.

References

- [1] Elders figures are calculated from all congregations. Due to a large number of unions and nil returns, the 5% percentile reads 0 elders.
- [2] *"Adapt and be Flexible - the Mission Doesn't Stop!" The Scottish Church and the COVID-19 Pandemic.* Brendan Research, 2020. p11. www.brendanresearch.com/projects/sclf-acts-covid19 Last accessed 12 April, 2021.
- [3.] Whilst the congregational survey uses the BAME terminology, in light of recent work undertaken and growing understanding the term 'Ethnic Minorities' will be used in the future.

MINUTE OF MINISTRIES APPEAL PANEL 29 OCTOBER 2020

Minute 1

On the twenty ninth day of October 2020 the Ministries Appeal Panel met via Microsoft Teams and was duly constituted with prayer.

Sederunt: Mr Robin Stimpson (Convener),
Rev Catherine Collins,
Mr Andrew Gibb,
Mrs Isabell Montgomerie

The **Appellant** was accompanied.

For the Faith Nurture Forum: Rev Ann Inglis, Presbytery Assessor and Ms Kay Cathcart, Education and Training Secretary

In attendance: Rev Dr George J Whyte, Principal Clerk and Ms Christine Paterson, Depute Clerk

Introductions were made and the Convener explained the purpose of the hearing.

The Ministries Appeal Panel took up consideration of an Appeal in terms of the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004), sections 21 and 22, against a decision of the Interim Probationary Review Panel on 4 February 2020 to terminate the Appellant's candidature for full-time ministry of word and sacrament.

Parties were heard.

Questions were asked.

Parties made closing statements.

It was agreed that the Panel's decision would be intimated to the parties by email.

The Grace was said.

Parties withdrew.

Following deliberation the Ministries Appeal Panel resolved unanimously to uphold the appeal and quash the decision of the Interim Probationary Review Panel to terminate the Appellant's candidature. The Panel directs that a further Interim Probationary Review should be held and that new decision-makers should carry out this Review on behalf of both the Presbytery and the Faith Nurture Forum.

The Panel took the view that there were irregularities of process in that (i) the Appellant had been given insufficient time (five days) to consider reports which had been provided to him prior to the Review, and (ii) evidence produced by the Appellant at the Review had been "laid on the floor" and not considered in detail during the Review, which meant that there had been no opportunity to discuss it with the Appellant. These irregularities of process may also constitute a breach of the principles of natural justice.

The Panel did not find it proved that there was any bias on the part of the Interim Probationary Review Panel. The Panel did not take a decision on whether or not the decision had been influenced by any incorrect material fact.

The hearing was closed.

ROBIN STIMPSON, *Convener*
GEORGE J WHYTE, *Clerk*

MINUTE OF MINISTRIES APPEAL PANEL 16 DECEMBER 2020

Minute 2

On the sixteenth day of December 2020 the Ministries Appeal Panel met via Microsoft Teams and was duly constituted with prayer.

Sederunt: Mr Robin Stimpson (Convener),
Mr Andrew Gibb,
Rev Leslie Milton,
Mrs Isabell Montgomerie

For the Faith Nurture Forum: Rev Alastair Duncan,
Admissions Conference Director, and Rev Dr Lezley Stewart,
Recruitment and Support Secretary

In attendance: Rev Dr George J Whyte, Principal Clerk and
Ms Christine Paterson, Depute Clerk

Introductions were made and the Convener explained the purpose of the hearing.

The Ministries Appeal Panel took up consideration of an Appeal in terms of the Admission and Re-Admission of Ministers Act (Act IX 2002) against a decision of the Admissions Conference on 6 October 2020 not to accept the Appellant as an Admissions Candidate for Ministry in the Church of Scotland.

Parties were heard.

Questions were asked.

Parties made closing statements.

It was agreed that the Panel's decision would be intimated to the parties by email.

Parties withdrew.

Following deliberation the Ministries Appeal Panel resolved unanimously to dismiss the appeal and to uphold the decision of the Admissions Conference not to accept the Appellant as an Admissions Candidate for Ministry in the Church of Scotland.

The Ministries Appeal Panel did not identify any incorrect material fact which influenced the decision, nor did the Ministries Appeal Panel identify any irregularities in the process or breach of the principles of natural justice which affected the decision reached.

The Grace was said.

The hearing was closed.

ROBIN STIMPSON, *Convener*
GEORGE J WHYTE, *Clerk*



The Church of Scotland

PART III –
DELIVERANCES, ACTS,
OVERTURES, REGULATIONS
AND MEMBERS OF
STANDING COMMITTEES

Jesus said:

Follow Me!

**and I will make you
fish for people.**

**AND IMMEDIATELY
THEY LEFT THEIR NETS
AND FOLLOWED HIM.**

General Assembly **2021**

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2021

Deliverances of the General Assembly

- 27/1.....Assembly Business Committee
- 27/1.....Delegation of the General Assembly
- 27/1.....Assembly Trustees
- 27/2.....Special Commission on the Effectiveness of the
Presbyterian Form of Church Government
- 27/3.....Legal Questions Committee
- 27/3.....Ecumenical Relations Committee
- 27/3.....Faith Nurture Forum
- 27/5.....Trustees of the Church of Scotland Housing and
Loan Fund for Retired Ministers and Widows and
Widowers of Ministers
- 27/5.....The Church of Scotland Guild
- 27/5.....Registration of Ministries Committee
- 27/5.....Theological Forum
- 27/5.....Faith Impact Forum
- 27/6.....Iona Community Board
- 27/7.....Social Care Council
- 27/7.....Safeguarding Committee
- 27/8.....Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces
- 27/8.....General Trustees
- 27/8.....Church of Scotland Pension Trustees
- 27/8.....Nomination Committee
- 27/8.....Selection Committee
- 27/8.....Church Hymnary Trustees
- 27/9.....The Church of Scotland Trust
- 27/9.....The Church of Scotland Investors Trust

Acts, Overtures, Regulations and Members

- 28/1.....A – Legislative Acts of the General Assembly
- 29/1.....B – Overtures under the Barrier Act
- 30/1.....C – Regulations of the General Assembly
- 31/1.....D – List of Members of Standing Committees

Deliverances of the General Assembly 2021**ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE****The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the order of business for the first two days.
3. Appoint Rev Colin Renwick to be Precentor until May 2022.
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 24 May at 12pm, nomination(s) of Commissioner(s) to serve on the Selection Committee.
6. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian to form the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian, as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.
7. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer, to form the Presbytery of the South West as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.
8. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark to form the Presbytery of Lanarkshire as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.
9. Approve the Overture amending the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000) as set out in Appendix C and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.
10. Pass as an Interim Act the text of the Overture amending the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000) as set out in sections 1 and 2 only (but not section 3) of Appendix C.
11. Instruct the Committee to develop the fast tracking of deliverance approval necessitated by online Assemblies and continue in future Assemblies.
12. Instruct the Committee to continue its work on General Assembly reform, including engagement with the Legal Questions Committee's work on the Church Courts Act, reflection on the report of the Special Commission on the Effectiveness of the Presbyterian Form of Church Governance, and to share proposals with Presbyteries for early consultation, prior to reporting to the General Assembly of 2022.
13. Invite the Legal Questions Committee to prepare legislation enabling all or part of future General Assembly business to be conducted online, and report to a subsequent General Assembly.

SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY

14. Urge the Scottish Bible Society to pursue its ongoing efforts to address the challenge of global Bible translation and distribution.
15. Support the Society in its desire to work in partnership with congregations to improve people's experience of the Bible and its impact on their life.
16. Endorse the Society in its efforts to encourage confidence in the Gospel and in providing Scripture resources for mission purposes.

17. Commend the Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

DELEGATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**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.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report and Supplementary Report.
2. Acknowledge with gratitude the work and ministry of the Church at all levels during the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. Receive the 2020 Report and Accounts of the Church of Scotland Unincorporated Entities.
4. Note the challenging financial situation facing the Church as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and, while acknowledging the necessity of setting a Covid-19 recovery budget for 2021, reaffirm the need for budgetary prudence and the priority of resourcing Presbytery reform and supporting the growth of the local Church.
5. Thank the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr and the Ministries and Mission Review Group for their work and approve Giving to Grow as the new Ministries and Mission Allocation scheme to replace the current Ministries and Mission scheme.
6. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to report to the General Assembly of 2022 with further details in relation to:
 - (i) the funding models which will apply to the new Presbyteries;
 - (ii) the intended size, scope, terms and conditions of the proposed Transition Fund;
 - (iii) a comprehensive communication strategy for the implementation of Giving to Grow; and
 - (iv) the criteria and process for an annual review process for Giving to Grow.
7. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to present Regulations for Giving to Grow to the General Assembly of 2022 with a view to implementing Giving to Grow from 1 January 2023.
8. Lift the moratorium on increasing Ministries and Mission contributions imposed by the General Assembly of 2019.
9. Note the work done in projecting both the future availability and affordability of ministries across the Church of Scotland and set as a realistic aim that Presbyteries should seek to implement by 2025 Presbytery Plans based around 600 fulltime equivalent ministries and a target of no more than 60 further charges vacant at any one time.
10. Acknowledge that much has been learned through the consultations carried out on behalf of the Trustees by

the Special Group (D10) which was exploring the most effective and efficient way of delivering the work of the Faith Action Plan and note that the Trustees, building on the lessons learned, will continue this work in a spirit of collaboration, bringing a final report to the General Assembly of 2022.

11. Note the recommendations contained in Appendix 2 and, for the time being, approve the placing of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and of the Theological Forum within the Office of the General Assembly.
12. Approve the placing of the Gaelic Group within the Faith Nurture Forum.
13. Approve the reduction in the number of members of the Nomination Committee from 24 to 18 in addition to the Convener and Vice-Convener.
14. Agree to increase the size of the Personnel Appeal Panel to twelve persons, each appointed to serve a four year term with the option of appointment for a further four year term and grant powers to the Convener and Vice Convener of the Nomination Committee to approve the co-option of new members of the group.
15. Thank those involved in the External Communications Review and welcome the setting up of the Communications Strategy Board.
16. Approve the decision of the Assembly Trustees to suspend the work on the future of the George Street buildings for two years whilst ensuring a basic maintenance programme commences.
17. Given the urgency of the need to institute new forms of Church and to engage in pioneer mission:
 - (i) Instruct the Assembly Trustees to establish, as part of the Faith Action Plan, a Pioneer Mission Fund aimed at supporting local church growth, with a particular emphasis on church planting and the establishment of 100 new worshipping communities;
 - (ii) Encourage wide-ranging support for contributions to be made to this Fund, including contributions from individuals, businesses and outside bodies, and as soon as circumstances permit allocate central financial resources to this important work; and
 - (iii) Instruct the Assembly Trustees to make appropriate provision for the efficient management and evaluation of the Fund and the projects it supports.
18. Encourage Kirk Sessions to participate in a National Gift Day during Harvest time in 2021, promoting the offering of thanksgiving gifts to God for sustaining the Church through these challenging times.
19. Urge congregations to engage with the National Stewardship Programme, using the Narrative of Generosity resource to embrace a whole life of stewardship.
20. Note the appointment from 15 October 2020 of Gillian Elizabeth Coghlan as Depute Treasurer and confer upon the said Gillian Elizabeth Coghlan, Depute Treasurer, full power to discharge all legacies, bequests or donations which may have been or may be left, bequeathed or made to the Church of Scotland, or any of the Schemes, Councils, Forums, Committees or agencies thereof, or which may have been or may be left, bequeathed or made to the United Free Church of Scotland or to any of the Schemes, Boards or Committees or agencies thereof and which in terms of the Agreement with the continuing United Free Church of Scotland fall to the Church of Scotland or its Schemes, Councils, Forums, Committees or agencies,

and to sign all Discharges, Agreements, Indemnities, Undertakings, and other Deeds which may be necessary in connection therewith.

21. Approve the amended remit of the Legal Questions Committee set out in Appendix 3.
22. Urge the Assembly Trustees, in consultation with all relevant bodies, to expedite the exploration into allowing the proceeds from the sale of redundant buildings to be used more widely than at present, especially for purposes of Ministry and Mission.
23. Approve the total to be contributed by congregations in 2022 of £42,000,000 based on the projection of congregational income for 2022 and its disposition among local congregational expenditure, the Parish Ministries Fund and the Mission and Renewal Fund.
24. Note the indicative budget for 2022.
25. Urge Presbyteries to prioritise the use of the 2022 Discretionary Allowance towards reducing the amounts of Ministries and Mission contributions payable by congregations which are struggling financially.
26. Approve the reappointment of Ann Nelson as an Assembly Trustee for a second term; and approve the appointment of David Cameron, Barry Hughes and Peter McEnhill as Assembly Trustees and approve the appointment of Philip Ziegler as an Assembly Trustee until the General Assembly of 2022.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Invite Kirk Sessions to study the Report, especially Section 2, and consider the questions raised as they apply to their own mission strategies, or as part of their process of developing mission strategies.
3. Instruct Presbyteries to study the Report, especially Section 3, and consider the questions raised alongside their plans for reshaping the newly formed Presbyteries and developing mission strategies.
4. Instruct the Assembly Trustees, the Assembly Trustees' Webinar Group and related stakeholders to host a national day webinar on the opportunities presented by the Report, inviting participation from all levels of church life, this event to take place before 30 November 2021.
5. Instruct the agencies of the General Assembly to study the Report, and consider the questions raised, particularly around how these will impact the shaping and functioning of the General Assembly and the agencies of the General Assembly and their developing mission strategies, and also the relationship these bodies will have with each other, Presbyteries and the local Church, and in particular instruct (1) the Legal Questions Committee to consider these matters when framing the new Church Courts Act, (2) the Assembly Business Committee to consider these matters when looking at questions of General Assembly reform, and (3) the Assembly Trustees to consider including appropriate reporting on these matters in their report to the General Assembly of 2022.
6. Thank all those who have engaged with the Special Commission.
7. Thank and discharge the Special Commission.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Amend Standing Orders as detailed in section 4 and Appendix B of the Report of the Assembly Business Committee.
3. Note the intention of the Committee to bring a Church Courts Overture to the General Assembly of 2022 and encourage Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and others to engage with the Committee in the preceding consultation process.
4. Note the work done by the Committee in relation to the solemnisation of same sex marriages including the draft Overture set out in Appendix A and the Procurator's Supplementary Opinion at Appendix B.
5. Approve the Solemnisation of Same-Sex Marriage Overture as set out in Appendix A and transmit the same to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk by 31 December 2021.
6. Instruct the Committee, in consultation with others, to continue to develop a process of Presbytery Review and report to the General Assembly of 2024.
7. In relation to appeals:
 - (a) instruct the Faith Nurture Forum, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee and the Presbytery Clerks' Forum, to prepare a manual of good practice for Presbyteries to follow in terms of Mission Plan procedures; and
 - (b) instruct the Committee to consider bringing proposed amendments to the Appeals Act to allow early consideration of the competency and relevancy of any Grounds of Appeal and to bring any proposals to the General Assembly of 2022.
8. Note that (1) the Vacancy Protocol and the arrangements for Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to meet and vote by video-conferencing or audioconferencing or a combination of the two, agreed by the Commission of Assembly on 7 July 2020, (2) the three Protocols agreed by the General Assembly of October 2020 (the Congregational Meetings on Bases of Adjustment Protocol, the Congregational Meetings for Adopting the Unitary Constitution Protocol and the Congregational Meetings on Sale or Disposal of Church Buildings Protocol) and (3) the arrangements for Financial Boards to meet and vote by videoconferencing or audio-conferencing or a combination of the two, have all proved useful and continue these arrangements until the General Assembly of 2022.
9. Instruct that while the Covid-19 pandemic regulations prevent an in person congregational meeting taking place:
 - (a) Kirk Session shall have power to appoint to the Congregational Board members of the congregation who are not members of the Kirk Session to fill vacancies which have arisen, which appointments shall last only until such time as the Stated Annual Meeting is next held in person; and
 - (b) if in the Committee's view, at any time before the next General Assembly, alternative arrangements become necessary to enable elections to take place to Congregational Boards, the Committee shall have power to produce a Protocol to enable elections to Congregational Boards.

10. Pass an Act amending the Discipline Act (Act I 2019) as set out in Appendix C.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the Committee to engage with the reformed Presbyteries of the Church and report to a future General Assembly.
3. Instruct the Committee to facilitate a conference to explore the establishing of cooperative partnerships to enable Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland, taking heed amongst other possibilities of regional Covenant partnerships and local Mission Communities.
4. Note the establishing of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and welcome the development of an effective ecumenical forum during the Covid-19 pandemic.
5.
 - a) Approve the Saint Andrew Declaration, consisting of mutual Acknowledgements and Commitments between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church.
 - b) Instruct the Committee, in partnership with the Inter-church Relations Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, to oversee the implementation of the Commitments in the Saint Andrew Declaration and to set up the Working Group proposed by it.
6. Agree to 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.
7. Welcome the appointment of the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr as Co-Chair of the Columba Declaration Contact Group on behalf of the Church of Scotland and the Rt Rev James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle as Co-Chair on behalf of the Church of England.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and the Supplementary Report.
2. Note the work done on discipleship and urge Kirk Sessions to utilise the resources provided in order to respond to the clear call to refocus and reshape around the two-part call of discipleship, to follow Christ and to enable others to follow Christ.
3. Instruct the Forum to develop the first modules of a lay training programme, with a view to launching an entry level course in January 2022 and encourage the Assembly Trustees to explore with the Forum funding models for this training which would allow the training to be delivered at no cost to the participant or their congregation and report to the General Assembly of 2022.
4. Instruct the Forum to review the training expectations for Ordained Local Ministers.
5. Note the current mix of unrestricted and reviewable charges and instruct the Forum to keep questions around call and tenure under review.
6. Note the work which has taken place to date on developing a Capability Procedure for Ministers and

- instruct the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee to bring detailed proposals for such a procedure to the General Assembly of 2022.
7. Instruct the Forum to bring a revised Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of 2022.
8.
 - (a) Affirm the commitment of the Church to place priority for the poorest at the heart of all that it does, recognising the mission of Priority Area congregations in this.
 - (b) Instruct the Forum to continue to develop and deliver this key priority – implementing the whole Church strategy of prioritising support for those living in poverty and at the margins – within the Faith Action Plan, through the Priority Areas Implementation Group and Priority Areas Team.
9. Note the research project on Pioneer Ministry, and instruct Presbyteries to consider the findings as they engage in planning new ways of being church.
10. Note the insights gained from Path of Renewal and encourage the continuation of this project.
11. Note the work being done on developing intergenerational church life and instruct all Presbyteries to consider this in their planning.
12. Instruct the Forum to consider how the voices and opinions of young people can be gathered on a range of topics and shared widely, following on from the success of the Listening Project carried out by the Assembly Trustees, and the lessons learned from the 2019 Youth Attitudes Survey, and report to the General Assembly of 2022.
13. Instruct the Forum to reassert the Church's commitment to young people by revisiting and acting upon the sections of deliverance from 2019 and 2020 concerning young people and young adults (of Mission and Discipleship Council in 2019 deliverances 7-13 and 18-20 and Faith Nurture Forum in 2020 deliverance 15) with a view to being able to report actions taken to future General Assemblies.
14. Urge congregations to adopt the ACORN Programme as a means to help members practise mission at grass roots level, and through support in small groups, to gain confidence in effective discipleship.
15.
 - a) Note that Heart and Soul will no longer be part of future General Assemblies and give thanks for all who have contributed to it over the years and for all whose experience of the Church and its life have been enriched by their involvement.
 - b) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to report to a future General Assembly on how stories can be shared and lessons learned, having consulted with the Faith Impact Forum and the Assembly Trustees.
16. Instruct the Forum to work with the Diaconate Council, the Legal Questions Committee, and other stakeholders, 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.
17. Pass an Act amending the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010), in terms of Appendix 2.
18. Thank Catherine Wallace, D.C.S, for her service as Honorary Secretary to Diaconate Council since her appointment in 2017.
19. Pass a Regulation amending the Manse Adjudication Committee Regulations (Regulations III 2013) and Schedule, as set out in Appendix 3.
20. Instruct the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee to undertake a review of section 18 (Retirement of Ministers of Word and Sacrament) of the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018) and report to the General Assembly of 2022.
21. Instruct the Forum to explore the possibilities of developing a 3 year Gaelic Language Plan [2022 – 2025] that includes a particular emphasis on Gaelic Ministry and Mission to children and young people and to bring a report to the General Assembly of 2022.
22. Acknowledge and give thanks for those who have served in the name of the Church of Scotland, in paid and unpaid Chaplaincy in this past year of the Covid-19 Pandemic, sharing the Love of God in a variety of challenging settings.
23. Pass the Presbytery Mission Plan Act as set out in Appendix 1 subject to the following amendment to section (i) of Appendix 1: after "Five Marks of Mission shall mean:" and before "1. To proclaim...." add "The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ".
24. Instruct the Forum when developing principles for Presbytery Mission Planning, to include a principle of ecumenical working, bearing in mind the Lund Principle and the encouragement to form Local Mission Communities and regional Covenant Partnerships presented in the report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee.
25. Instruct the Forum to explore whether there may be some downward variance in the 0.25 FTE being allocated to every Guardianship in the provisions of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act, whilst maintaining principles of mission and financial sustainability, and report to the General Assembly of 2022.
26. Instruct Presbyteries to complete the process of developing and gaining final approval of their Presbytery Mission Plan by 31 December 2022 noting that Presbyteries which are in the process of union with other Presbyteries may seek to form a shared Presbytery Mission Plan with them as the fulfilment of this instruction.
27. Instruct the Forum to ensure that Presbyteries receive adequate Guidance on the implementation and operation of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act to enable them to commence planning from 30 June 2021, and to consult the Presbytery Clerks' Forum before issuing further Guidance.
28. Agree the number of ministry posts allocated to each Presbytery set out in Appendix 4 and instruct that this be the figure used in the forming of any Presbytery Mission Plan.
29. Instruct that all Presbytery Plans agreed and approved in terms of the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003) be suspended from 1 June 2021.
30. Instruct the Forum, in consultation with the Assembly Trustees, to provide appropriate financial and pastoral support to Graduate Candidates and those involved in the Familiarisation Programme who are adversely affected by the suspension of current Presbytery Plans, such provision to be reviewed at six-monthly intervals from this General Assembly, until all Presbytery Mission Plans have been approved.
31. Instruct that from 1 June 2021:
 - a) only vacancies and readjustments processed in terms of section 9(2) of Act VII 2003 (which require, for the avoidance of doubt, the approval of the Presbytery of the bounds and the

concurrence of the Faith Nurture Forum) may proceed, and

- b) any vacancies and readjustments given permission to proceed through this exception shall be Reviewable Charges.

32. Pass an Act temporarily amending Act VIII 2003 as follows:

[] ACT TEMPORARILY AMENDING THE VACANCY PROCEDURE ACT (ACT VIII 2003) (AS AMENDED) *Edinburgh, [] May 2021, Session []*

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. Add the following words at the end of section 28: "Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, where permission to call in terms of section 8 of this Act has been given prior to 1 June 2021 the vacancy process in a charge may continue after 1 June 2021 but if that process has not led to the preaching of a nominee in terms of section 22 of this Act by 31 December 2021, such a vacancy process shall be discontinued at that date unless agreement is reached between the Presbytery of the bounds and the Faith Nurture Forum that the process may be continued thereafter in terms of this Act. For the avoidance of doubt the unamended provisions of this section shall once again apply when the Presbytery has gained final approval in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act ZZ 2021) for a Mission Plan covering the vacant charge."

2. Delete the words "the Presbytery Plan in accordance with the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003)" where they appear in section 28 and substitute "the Mission Plan in accordance with the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act ZZ 2021)".

33. Instruct that as from 1 June 2021 no Presbytery shall grant permission to Call in terms of section 8 of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003) unless agreement has been reached with the Forum.

34. Instruct the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee to carry out a review of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003) in the light of the passing of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act and report to the General Assembly of 2022.

35. Instruct that from 1 June 2021 all outstanding appeals under section 6 of Act VII 2003 related to Presbytery Plans shall be suspended, but that this shall be without prejudice to any right to initiate a review in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act in due course.

36. Pass the Local Mission Church Regulations as set out in Appendix 5.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HOUSING AND LOAN FUND FOR RETIRED MINISTERS AND WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS OF MINISTERS

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and thank the Trustees and Staff.
2. Appoint Mrs Sharon Anne Ho as a Trustee of the Fund.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

2. Welcome the Guild's Strategy for 2021-24, "Look Forward in Faith" and its annual themes, "Lights and Bushels", "Wee Seeds, Big trees" and "New Wine, New Wine Skins".
3. Commend the Guild on its efforts to maintain contact with and involvement of its membership during the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. Commend the Guild on its fund-raising and twinning.
5. Celebrate the success of the Guild's Partnership Projects from 2018-21 and the raising of over £551,434.
6. Note and welcome the Guild's new Partnership Projects for 2021-24.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

REGISTRATION OF MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report
2. Commend Section 3 "Being Confirmed, Professing the Faith, Sharing Communion" as an exploration of Profession of Faith/Confirmation and church membership.
3. Receive the report "Westminster, Confessions and the Church" (Appendix) as an interim response to the instruction given by the General Assembly of 2018.
4. Invite the Theological Forum to facilitate knowledge of the Westminster Confession by producing video resources on the Confession to allow Church leaders and members to study the Confession if they so wished; such material to assist the Church in gaining an understanding of its subordinate standard and thus allow engagement with the consultation which the Forum seeks.
5. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to discuss the questions laid out in Section 23 of "Westminster, Confessions and the Church" (Appendix), along with any further or additional comments, and respond to the Theological Forum by 31 December 2021.
6. Instruct the Theological Forum to bring firm proposals regarding the confessional standards of the Church to the General Assembly of 2022.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. 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.
3. Recognise and give thanks for the critical role of the voices, concerns, and passion of young people involved in the life of the Church of Scotland who have campaigned for disinvestment from fossil fuels; and urge congregations to provide an opportunity to listen to young people in the congregation, or in the local community, to hear about their concerns.
4. Urge congregations to prepare for the COP26 UN Climate Summit due to take place in Glasgow in

- November 2021 by using the Climate Sunday prayer and worship resources (www.climatesunday.org); and consider how they can respond in prayer and action and to support congregations to sign the 'Scottish Churches COP26 Pledge'.
5. (i) Instruct the Forum to work with the Trustees, the General Trustees, the Social Care Council, the Faith Nurture Forum, and others as appropriate, to use the "Net Zero by 2030" framework to develop plans and activities for the Church to work towards meeting this ambition, and to report annually to the General Assembly (ii) Urge all congregations and Presbyteries to consider the implications of Net Zero for their own buildings, activities, procurement and finances, and to start long-term planning for the changes that will be required, and (iii) Urge congregations and Presbyteries to join Eco-Congregation Scotland, and other ecumenical environment networks, so they may experience the benefits of expert advice and support, as well as the opportunity to join local and regional ecumenical networks to share information and ideas about how to reach Net Zero goals.
 6. Instruct the Forum to work with the General Trustees to negotiate a much improved Electricity Supply offer, given that many churches will need to move to electrical heating to meet the "Net Zero by 2030" requirement.
 7. Welcome the agreement with the Church of Scotland Investors Trust that, as a matter of principle, the portfolios of investments managed should align with the UN Paris Agreement in pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.
 8. Welcome the fact that no oil and gas company shares are currently held; and note that any future investment in oil and gas would only follow agreement between the Church of Scotland Investors Trust and the Faith Impact Forum that there was good evidence that its strategy and implementation was aligned with the stringent targets set by the Paris Agreement.
 9. (i) 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.
(ii) Instruct the Selection Committee to consider carefully the range of skills and diversity of backgrounds required for this task and present the names for this Special Committee on ethical investment practice to a later session of this General Assembly.
 10. Urge the UK Government to do all that it can to ensure Covid-19 vaccines are available throughout the world, particularly in resource-poor countries, on the basis of clinical need to preserve human life.
 11. Invite Kirk Sessions to arrange a public meeting to consider themes and ideas for a just and green future following the Covid-19 pandemic, and identify the implications for their parish, the wider community, for Scotland and the world, and instruct the Forum to support Kirk Sessions in this.
 12. Instruct the Forum to call for the development of safe and legal routes for people desperately seeking sanctuary so that they can travel, live, work and contribute to our society with respect and dignity.
 13. Urge the UK Government to reverse its policies regarding migrants crossing the English Channel, the accommodation of asylum seekers in former army camps or other institutions rather than in the community, and the plans to increase the deportation of asylum seekers to other countries.
 14. Deplore the decision of the UK Government to cut overseas aid programmes and call on the UK Government and Parliament to continue to provide a minimum of 0.7% of Gross National Income as Overseas Development Assistance in line with the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 and all main parties' 2019 manifesto commitments.
 15. Welcome the cross-Church work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and of engaging with the experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people within the Church of Scotland; and instruct the Forum, the Faith Nurture Forum and the Assembly Trustees to consider how best to ensure the necessary resources are available to act on the outcomes.
 16. Urge Kirk Sessions to take part in the basic training provided by Integrity – the Church of Scotland's Violence Against Women Task Group.
 17. Instruct the Forum, in consultation with the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to renew and strengthen ecumenical dialogue, partnership and collaboration on public affairs with: (1) the Church of England; (2) through the new Scottish Christian Forum; and (3) within the Joint Public Issues Team.
 18. Urge congregations to support the Reset the Debt campaign; instruct the Forum to promote the campaign, and to call on the UK Government to establish a Jubilee Fund to provide grants to pay off and cancel unavoidable debt accrued by households because of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions.
 19. Instruct the Forum to promote the Meet Your MSP resources and encourage congregations to approach their MSPs, especially those newly elected to the Scottish Parliament, in order to establish and strengthen relations with elected representatives.
 20. Commend the report on Artificial Intelligence; urge the Church to engage with the issues raised, especially in relation to pastoral care, worship and mission; and instruct the Forum to provide resources to support this engagement.
 21. Urge all parts of the Church of Scotland to continue to support Christian Aid as an expression of the Church of Scotland's solidarity and commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide.
 22. Urge congregations and Presbyteries to seek ways to listen and learn from partner churches around the world in relation to issues such as poverty, climate change, migration, HIV, recovery from Covid-19 and interfaith activities, and to develop partner and twinning relationships.

GEORGE J WHYTE
Cl Eccl Scot

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report
2. Welcome the appointments of Ruth Harvey as Leader and Sarah Metcalfe as Executive Director and wish them well at this important stage in the life of the Iona Community.

3. Note with gratitude the completion of the renovation of the living quarters of Iona Abbey as a place of welcome, worship and the renewal of the common life for the whole Church.
4. Rejoice with the Iona Community in the coming into force of the United Nations Nuclear Ban Treaty and affirm the call for the UK Government to join in signing it.
5. Affirm the work of the Community in supporting action towards Climate Justice.
6. Commend the Unlocked programme to Presbyteries, Congregations and wider ecumenical partners.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Commend the dedication, commitment and exceptional effort of all CrossReach staff who have worked throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and have continued to deliver high quality services, in Christ's name, to the people who rely on them for support; expressing particular appreciation and thanks to all of those who have worked on the front line.
3. Express alarm at the high rate of drugs deaths in Scotland and instruct CrossReach to work in collaboration with the Faith Impact Forum to hold the Scottish Government to account on its promise to reduce drug deaths and to ensure that the appropriate resources are put in place.
4. Celebrate the completion of the Care and Education restructure and commend those involved for working through the significant challenges it has posed.
5. Endorse the efforts being made by CrossReach to keep 'The Promise' which has been made to children who have experience of the care system; infants, children, young people, adults and their families - 'that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential'; encourage Presbyteries, congregations and individuals in joining with CrossReach to commend this initiative and to do all they can to combat the discrimination and stigma which exists in the current children's care system.
6. Note the significant financial challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the additional strain this has caused to CrossReach; celebrate the generous response to the Emergency Coronavirus Appeal from local and international partners without which the organisation would have struggled to offer all that it has to the people it cares for; and encourage Presbyteries, congregations and individual members to continue to offer support through proactive and tangible means.
7. Recognise The Guild for their outstanding support of their Project Partners and commend them for working alongside CrossReach to tackle loneliness and isolation over the past three years.
8. Note the satisfactory position of the closed Church of Scotland pension scheme in regard to CrossReach and commend the Pension Trustees for their efforts.
9. Welcome the findings of the Scottish Parliament commissioned Independent Review into Adult Social Care and those of the Parliament's Health and Sport Committee; note the recommendations made which are needed to improve the current situation for supported people, the social care workforce and unpaid carers; urge Presbyteries, congregations and individuals to get involved in raising awareness of the

inequalities in the current system by all possible means and to call for the necessary resources which will begin to address these.

10. (a) Note the human and financial impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on CrossReach and the steps being taken to recover;
- (b) note too, the likely future impact of the recommendations of the recent reviews into the structure and funding of the adult social care sector in Scotland; and
- (c) Instruct the Council to report to the General Assembly of 2022 outlining a way forward which takes account of both of these factors and which puts CrossReach on a sustainable footing.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Note the Safeguarding Service Annual Statistical Report.
3. Encourage congregations to mark "Safeguarding Sunday" with those of other denominations on Sunday 10th October 2021 or on any other suitable day in October.
4. Note the work being undertaken by the Safeguarding Committee to better understand the needs and experiences of survivors of abuse.
5. Direct that advice given by the Safeguarding Service, when framed as an instruction, must be followed by all Agencies of the General Assembly and by all Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Safeguarding Coordinators, office-holders, staff and volunteers involved in work with Vulnerable Groups (as defined in the Safeguarding Act), and pass an Act amending the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018) accordingly as set out in Appendix A.
6. Note the good, ongoing working relationships with CrossReach, the Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade and the United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland.
7. Note the ongoing work in relation to International Development issues and the development of overseas protocols.
8. Note that work is ongoing to implement an online solution for the Congregational Register (SG7), Audit Checklist (SG11), and Presbytery Register.
9. Instruct the Safeguarding Service in collaboration with the Faith Nurture Forum to undertake work to scope out a mandatory advanced safeguarding training programme for ministers, and report to the General Assembly of 2022. In the interim, instruct ministers to attend local Introductory Safeguarding Training and record attendance on the Presbytery Register if they have not attended such a course in the last three years.
10. Instruct Presbyteries to co-operate with the Safeguarding Service in a compliance audit of Safeguarding data in readiness for the implementation of the Disclosure Act.
11. Thank all the volunteers who give of their time to promote and embed good safeguarding practices across the Church and express gratitude for the excellent work they undertake.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HER MAJESTY'S FORCES**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank those who serve in Her Majesty's Forces as Chaplains for their service to Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel, their families and the wider military community.
3. Recognise the particular service of those Chaplains who have served in support of the contribution of the Armed Services to efforts relating to Covid-19 in the past year and give thanks for the support of their families.
4. Commend to the prayers of the Church all Chaplains, and all those whom they serve.
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.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

GENERAL TRUSTEES**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report and the 2019 and 2020 Accounts of the General Trustees.
2. Welcome progress on the Land & Buildings Plan in respect of: -
 - (a) the Presbytery Planning Toolkit for Land & Buildings
 - (b) the appointment of a Presbytery Buildings Officer
 - (c) the creation of a Historic Property Portfolio and associated Fund.
3. Welcome the intention to consult on proposed changes to Parliamentary Acts and General Assembly Acts and Regulations.
4. Welcome organisational changes including the adoption of a quorum of five for meetings of the Trustees' Board.
5.
 - (a) Appoint Mr Ian T Townsend as Chair and Rev Fiona M Mathieson as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year
 - (b) Authorise payment of £1,900 to each of Mr Raymond K Young as Chair and Mr Ian T Townsend as Vice-Chair for their services over the past year.
6.
 - a) Express the gratitude of the Church for the 24 years of service that Mr David Robertson has given through his work with the General Trustees, and
 - b) Thank Mr Raymond Young for his vigorous and energetic Chairing of the General Trustees during a time of significant change.
7. Express the thanks of the Church to Mr Brian Auld, Head of Building Safety, Risk and Compliance, for the crucial role he has played in responding to the consequences of Covid-19 on the life and work of our congregations.
8. Note the revised investment policy in respect of the Consolidated Stipend Fund.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND PENSION TRUSTEES**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

NOMINATION COMMITTEE**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank those who responded to the call for nominations and encourage members, Elders, Deacons and Ministers to consider nomination for the 2021-22 process.
3. Invite each of the Standing Committees to reconsider its constitution and confirm the appropriate number of General Assembly appointed members which is required.
4. Urge the Nomination Committee to consider adding additional information to the form to ensure a diverse range of voices is facilitated and included on Committees; such as Age brackets, Previous experience, Length of service on National Committees, Preferred method of attendance (in person or online) including hybrid option enabled for all to improve inclusion.
5. Note that Candidates in Training, Probationers and Ministers in their first year after ordination will not normally be nominated to serve on Standing Committees.
6. Make alterations to the Unincorporated Entities of the Church as set forth in the Report subject to the following addition:
Add:
Legal Questions Committee
Minister Appointed Euan Glen (Cluny linked with Monymusk).
7. Appoint James Drummond Young as a Convener of the Judicial Commission.
8. Appoint Shona Haldane as a Convener of the Discipline Tribunal.
9. Appoint Hazel Hastie as Convener of the Registration of Ministries Committee.
10. Appoint Liam Fraser as Convener of the Theological Forum.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

SELECTION COMMITTEE**The General Assembly:**

1. Appoint the following five persons to serve on the Special Committee on Ethical Investment:
Val Brown (Chair)
Sir Ewan Brown
Hannah Dunlop
Rev Dr Thomas Kisitu
Alasdair Ronald

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

CHURCH HYMNARY TRUSTEES**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND TRUST

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank the members of the Trust for their diligence.
3. Re-appoint Mrs Morag Angus and Mr Leon Marshall as members of the Trust from 1 June 2021.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND INVESTORS TRUST

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the reappointment of Mr R H Nisbet as a member of the Investors Trust from 1 June 2021.
3. Approve the appointment of Mr J G L Millar and Mrs J McKeown from 1 June 2021.
4. Receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Investors Trust for 2019 and 2020.

GEORGE J WHYTE
CI Eccl Scot

A – Legislative Acts of The General Assembly 2021**I ACT UNITING THE PRESBYTERIES OF HAMILTON AND LANARK***Edinburgh, 22 May 2021, Session 1*

Notwithstanding the terms of Act II 1975, by which the present overall Presbytery structure of the Church was established, and following the decision of the General Assembly of 2019 to reform the number of Presbyteries, the General Assembly in the exercise of power to readjust the said structure as may be required from time to time enact and ordain that:-

1. With effect from 1 January 2022 the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark shall be united in terms of the Basis of Union agreed by them all.
2. The name of the united Presbytery shall be the Presbytery of Lanarkshire Church of Scotland, known as 'Lanarkshire Presbytery' or 'Presbytery of Lanarkshire'.
3. The Scottish Charity Number SC048680 shall be retained as the Scottish Charity Number of Presbytery of Lanarkshire Church of Scotland.
4. All ministers and deacons having seats in the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark in terms of Act III 2000 (as amended) shall be members of the Lanarkshire Presbytery.
5. All Presbytery elders, whether commissioned by Kirk Session or appointed by the Presbytery, shall so long as their commission or appointment run be members of the Lanarkshire Presbytery.
6. All property or funds belonging to or held on behalf of the Presbytery of Hamilton or the Presbytery of Lanark shall belong to the Lanarkshire Presbytery. Any trust or other special funds held by either Presbytery shall, from the date of the Union, be dealt with in such a way as is competent and as may be agreed to by the united Presbytery, subject to obtaining of legal advice on any question of difficulty which may arise.

II ACT UNITING THE PRESBYTERIES OF EDINBURGH AND WEST LOTHIAN*Edinburgh, 22 May 2021, Session 1*

In terms of the decision of the General Assembly of 2019 to approve a Radical Action Plan, which *inter alia* encouraged the establishment of around twelve regional Presbytery structures by the General Assembly of 2024 enact and ordain that:-

1. With effect from 1 January 2022 the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian shall be united in terms of the Basis of Union agreed by them all.
2. The name of the united Presbytery shall be the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian and for registration purposes shall be the "Church of Scotland Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian".
3. All ministers and deacons having seats in the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian at 31 December 2021 in terms of Act III 2000 (as amended) shall be members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.
4. All Presbytery elders at 31 December 2021, whether commissioned by Kirk Session or appointed by the Presbytery, shall so long as their commission or appointment run be members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.

5. All corresponding members of the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian at 31 December 2021 shall be corresponding members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian until their corresponding membership is concluded by the united Presbytery.
6. All property or funds belonging to or held on behalf of the Presbytery of Edinburgh or the Presbytery of West Lothian shall belong to the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian. Any trust or other special funds held by either Presbytery shall, from the date of the Union, be dealt with in such a way as is competent and as may be agreed to by the united Presbytery, subject to obtaining of legal advice on any question of difficulty which may arise.

III ACT UNITING THE PRESBYTERIES OF ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE, ARDROSSAN, AYR, DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT, IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK, AND WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER*Edinburgh, 22 May 2021, Session 1*

Notwithstanding the terms of Act II 1975, by which the present overall Presbytery structure of the Church was established, the General Assembly in the exercise of power to readjust the said structure as may be required from time to time enact and ordain that:-

1. The Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer shall be united on or before 30 September 2022.
2. The name of the united Presbytery shall be the Presbytery of the South West and for registration purposes shall be the "Church of Scotland Presbytery of the South West".
3. All ministers and deacons having seats in the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer in terms of Act III 2000 [as amended] shall be members of the Presbytery of the South West.
4. All Presbytery elders of the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer, whether commissioned by Kirk Session or appointed by the Presbytery, shall, so long as their commissions or appointments run, be members of the Presbytery of the South West.
5. The Presbytery shall be a charity registered with OSCR and shall retain the existing Charity Number of the Presbytery of Ayr (SC020676).
6. All property or funds belonging to or held on behalf of the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer shall belong to the Presbytery of the South West.
7. Any trust or other special funds held by the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer shall, from the date of the Union, be dealt with in such a way as is competent and as may be agreed to by the united Presbytery, subject to obtaining legal advice on any question as may arise.

IV INTERIM ACT AMENDING THE CHURCH COURTS ACT (ACT III 2000)

Edinburgh, 22 May 2021, Session 2

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

1. In section 2, delete the words "one in every four or part of four" where they appear in the second line and substitute "one in every five or part of five".
2. In section 4, delete the words "one in every four, or part of four" where they appear in the second line and substitute "one in every five or part of five".

V ACT AMENDING THE DISCIPLINE ACT (ACT I 2019) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, 24 May 2021, Session 3

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Discipline Act (Act I 2019), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. In section 19(1) delete "twenty eight (28)" and substitute "thirty five (35)".
2. In section 22(1) delete "fourteen (14)" and substitute "twenty eight (28)", and on the first occasion it appears, delete "twenty eight (28)" and substitute "thirty five (35)".
3. In section 24(1) delete "twenty eight (28)" and substitute "thirty five (35)".

VI ACT AMENDING THE DEACONS ACT (ACT VIII 2010) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, 25 May 2021, Session 5

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. In the existing section 18(2) delete "Appendix" and substitute "Appendices A, B and C".
2. Delete the existing Appendices A, B & C and substitute the following:

APPENDIX A

CONSTITUTION OF DIACONATE COUNCIL ("Council")

1. Functions

The Functions of Council hereinafter constituted shall be:

- To promote the call to, and ministry of, the Diaconate of the Church of Scotland
- To support the Diaconate Rule of Life
- To provide fellowship and support to those engaged in Diaconal Service
- To formulate and express the collective views of the Diaconate to the wider Church
- To provide opportunity for in-service training and personal development
- To engage with those in similar ministries at home and overseas
- To support the Church in the selection, training and development of Deacons

2. Constitution

Council shall consist of:

All Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **E** or **R** who shall be voting members of Council. In addition:

- Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **I** and those engaged in Diaconal Service within other denominations may attend Council at their own expense as corresponding members.

- The Faith Nurture Forum of the Church (the Forum") will be represented by 3 attendees who will be corresponding members.
- Designated Guests invited by the Executive Committee on behalf of Council may attend Council.
- Diaconal Students and those undertaking probationary periods may be invited to attend Council as designated guests.

3. Office – bearers

The Office bearers shall be:

- A President, who shall hold office for four years and will not be eligible to serve consecutive terms of office.
- A Vice President, who shall hold office for four years and will not be eligible to serve consecutive terms of office.

The President and the Vice President shall be elected by Council in a manner specified in the Standing Orders.

Council shall approve the appointment of a Minute Secretary, who shall serve for two years and shall be eligible to serve consecutive terms of office.

4. Committees

4.1 Executive Committee

An Executive Committee of five shall be appointed by Council to attend to matters pertaining to the Diaconate and shall be constituted in a manner provided in Standing Orders.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President and Vice-President, who shall be *ex-officio* and three members elected by Council in manner specified in Standing Orders.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt corresponding members or, where desirable, establish a Short Life Working Group to support the work of the Executive Committee.

Administrative support will be provided by the Forum.

4.2 Short Life Working Groups

Council shall have power to establish, if it so desires, Short Life Working Groups to facilitate its business, consider aspects of Diaconal Ministry and to promote the Diaconate Rule of Life. Any such Short Life Working Group shall be given an agreed remit.

A Short Life Working Group shall nominate one of their number as "Chairperson" who will report on behalf of the Group to the Executive Committee. The Short Life Working Group can, if required and with the permission of the Executive Committee, appoint additional members where appropriate.

5. Finance

Each year the Forum, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall set an operational budget for Council. The Executive Committee shall be accountable for any budget set by the Forum.

Any proposal involving finance amounting to more than the total budget shall, before action is taken, be referred to the Forum.

The Executive Committee shall administer all Discretionary Funds (both Restricted and Designated) held on behalf of Council. In addition, and for the avoidance of doubt, the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the administration and application of the annual "Holiday Grant".

The Executive Committee may use the Discretionary Fund to make grants to members of the Church of Scotland Diaconate to support activities which are consistent with the Diaconate Rule of Life. In exceptional circumstances, the Executive Committee may consider an Emergency Hardship Grant, to help members of the Diaconate who are in financial need.

Applications for financial assistance should be made in writing to the President. All such applications and grants shall remain confidential.

6. Meetings

Council shall meet twice a year. Usually one of the meetings shall be residential in nature.

The Executive Committee will be responsible for setting the date of such Council meetings and shall make all necessary arrangements.

A draft calendar of meetings for the following twelve months shall be agreed and issued by the Executive Committee in October each year.

The Executive Committee, in agreement with the Forum, may in exceptional circumstances call an extraordinary meeting of Council.

Council shall meet in public or in private as the Executive Committee may decide or following a request under Standing Orders.

7. Procedure

- The Executive Committee shall be responsible for all arrangements pertaining to Council including setting the date and the agenda.
- Worship during Council shall be coordinated by the President.
- Council shall appoint a Minute Secretary who shall record the minutes of Council.
- The cost of Council, including the travelling expenses of full members of Council, and designated guests, shall be met from the Council Budget.

Other procedures shall be as set out in Standing Orders.

8. Regional Diaconate Groups

Council shall recognise and support the establishment of Regional Diaconate Groups. Regional Groups shall do all things necessary for, or incidental to, the functioning of Council, and shall be governed by the Constitution set out in Appendix C.

9. Alteration of Constitution

Any alteration to this Constitution may be made only by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership of Council, upon a motion of which fifteen days' notice has been given to all members thereof.

APPENDIX B

DIACONATE COUNCIL – STANDING ORDERS

1. Procedure at Meetings

1.1 The President, or in their absence the Vice-President, shall preside, whom failing Council shall appoint its own Chairperson *pro tempore*.

1.2 The President shall ensure that each session of Council be opened and closed with prayer.

2. Business Session

2.1 The Business Session of Council shall include:

- (1) Election of Office-bearers
- (2) Roll of Honour
- (3) Finance Report
- (4) Establishment of, and reports from, Short Life Working Groups
- (5) Where invited, appoint representatives to the Faith Nurture Forum of the Church or to other events
- (6) Reports from the General Assembly and the Standing Committees of the General Assembly

- (7) Initiation of discussion on any matters which concern the Diaconate, Diaconal Service and the wider interests of the Church
- (8) Recognition of, and reports from, Regional Groups annually
- (9) Welcome of guests from the Church at home, nationally and internationally
- (10) Welcome and presentation of Diaconal Students

2.2 Council shall normally meet in public, however where a matter is considered contentious, or relates to a sensitive issue, Council may meet in private. It shall be competent for the Executive Committee to move that such items be taken in private. The speaker on any item of business can also request that an item is taken in private, giving reasons briefly; the seconding shall be formal, and any vote necessary shall be taken without debate.

2.3 On a Point of Order being raised (it is necessary for a specific Standing Order to be specified) the President shall rule thereon and such ruling shall be accepted as the finding of Council.

3. Election of Office-bearers

3.1 Nominations for the election of the President and Vice-President shall be sent to the Executive Committee by Regional Groups. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

3.2 Each Regional Group shall send in a maximum of two nominations to the Executive Committee. Nominations will be selected from the membership of Council. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

3.3 The election of Office Bearers shall take place by Postal Vote. The Executive Committee shall notify voting members of Council of nominations and will take all necessary steps to facilitate election of the Office Bearers.

3.4 The Executive Committee shall bring to Council recommendations for the post of Minute Secretary.

4. Executive Committee

4.1 The President and Vice-President shall be *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee. The term of office shall run for 4 years from June 1st of the year elected.

4.2 Council will elect 3 members from their numbers to serve on the Executive Committee, one member to be elected annually.

4.3 Elected members shall serve for 3 years. Nominations to the Executive Committee can be made by Regional Groups or by individual members of Council. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

4.4 Election to the Executive Committee will take place by Postal Vote. The Executive Committee shall notify members of Council of all nominations and will take all necessary steps to facilitate election of the Office Bearers.

5. Short Life Working Groups

5.1 Any Short Life Working Group appointed by Council, by virtue of the power conferred on it in the Constitution, shall be given a special remit, and shall report to Council.

5.2 Members of Short Life Working Groups will be identified, and appointed, by the Executive Committee.

6. Minutes

6.1 The Minutes Secretary shall record the Minutes of Council which shall be approved at the opening session of the next Council.

6.2 Full Minutes of the proceedings of Council shall be circulated to all members at least 15 days prior to the start of Council.

7. Reports

7.1 Reports from Regional Groups shall be sent to the Executive Committee by the last day of February each year.

7.2 Reports from the Executive Committee and from Short Life Working Groups will be sent to Council Members along with the Agenda 15 days prior to the start of Council.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Regional Groups, individuals or Standing Committees of the General Assembly may request that an item be placed on the Agenda for Council, giving 15 days' notice to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall decide if such business is competent.

8.2 When less than 15 days' notice has been given, the mover shall briefly introduce the item and Council shall, without discussion, decide by simple majority whether to take up the item of business or to depart from the matter.

9. Suspension of Standing Orders

9.1 It shall be competent to suspend Standing Orders, or any one of them, in any particular case, but a motion to this effect shall not be carried unless it receives the support of at least two-thirds of the voting members present and voting on the question being put by the President.

10. Close of Council

10.1 When the business set down for the final day of the session of Council has been completed, Council shall approve the date and place of its next meeting.

11. Alterations of Standing Orders

11.1 Fifteen days' notice having been given, these Standing Orders may be altered by a two-thirds majority of voting members present at a meeting of Council.

APPENDIX C

REGIONAL GROUP OF THE DIACONATE – CONSTITUTION

1. The name shall be "Church of Scotland Diaconate Regional Group (area covered)"

2. Aim

- To promote the call to, and ministry of, the Diaconate of the Church of Scotland
- To support the Diaconate Rule of Life
- To provide fellowship and support to those engaged in Diaconal Service
- To support the training of Diaconal students and those serving a probationary period within their bounds
- To communicate with the Executive Committee on matters concerning Diaconal Ministry
- To provide an opportunity for Deacons to reflect on matters concerning Diaconal Ministry or public interest

3. The aim shall be reached by:

- Meeting at least twice each year
- Providing an opportunity for fellowship and the nurturing of devotional life as set out in the Diaconate Rule of Life
- Submitting an annual report to the Executive Committee in February each year for submission to Council
- Considering business sent to the Regional Group by the Executive Committee or Council
- Taking to Council matters concerning Diaconal Ministry

4. Membership

- All Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **E** or **R** shall be full members of the Regional Group.

- All Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **I** may be associated but without voting rights.
- Diaconate students or those serving a probationary period shall be associated but without voting rights.
- Deacons of other denominations may be invited to be associated with a Regional Group.

5. Chairperson

Each Regional Group shall appoint a Chairperson in accordance with a procedure agreed by the Regional Group in advance. The role of the Chairperson shall be:

- To act as a spokesperson for the Regional Group
- To ensure clear and timely communication between the Regional Group and Executive Committee
- To coordinate meetings of the Regional Group
- To coordinate communication between members of the Regional Group

6. Report for Council

A report from each Regional Group will submit a report to the Executive Committee by the end of February each year.

7. Council Business

Regional Groups or individuals may request an item of competent business to be placed on the Agenda of Council, giving 15 days' notice to the Executive Committee. Where shorter notice has been given, the mover shall briefly introduce the item and Council shall, without discussion, decide by simple majority whether or not to take up the item of business.

Any business brought forward by an individual Deacon, if rejected by the Regional Group, shall if desired by the Deacon, be forwarded by the Regional Group with full comments to the Executive Committee for consideration.

8. Election of President and Vice-President of Council

On the occasion of the election of a President or Vice-President of Council, Regional Groups shall send to the Executive Committee by the end of October not more than two nominations.

Nominations shall be selected from the voting membership of Council. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

Nominations to the Executive Committee shall be submitted to the Executive Committee by the Regional Group or by an individual. Nominations shall be sent to the Executive Committee by the end of October. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

9. Change of Constitution

Any request to change the constitution can be proposed by the Executive Committee or a Regional Group. Where the proposal is made by a Regional Group the Group should notify the Executive Committee for discussion and agreement at Council. As each Regional Group is governed by the same Constitution, such changes shall only become effective when approved by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership of Council.

VII ACT AMENDING THE SAFEGUARDING ACT (ACT XVI 2018)

Edinburgh, 26 May 2021, Session 7

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

- 1. Add a new section 16(4) as follows and renumber accordingly thereafter:*

- (4) Advice given by the Safeguarding Service, when framed as an instruction, must be followed by all Employing Agencies and by all Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Safeguarding Co-ordinators, office-holders, staff and volunteers involved in work with Vulnerable Groups.

VIII PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN ACT (ACT VIII 2021)

Edinburgh, 26 May 2021, Session 8

In requiring Presbyteries to plan mission within their bounds, the Church of Scotland seeks to:-

- underscore the Church's priority as participating in Christ's mission.
- set down a definition of that mission.
- provide a framework for a Presbytery to express that priority in forming a rolling five-year Mission Plan.
- enable a group of Presbyteries anticipating union to work together on a Mission Plan.
- ensure that a Presbytery makes best use of the ministry posts allocated to it by the General Assembly.
- insist that a Presbytery take decisions about the future of Church buildings.
- provide a range of ways in which a Presbytery may structure and resource Church life.
- engage the Faith Nurture Forum and the General Trustees in assisting Presbytery in their planning.

Accordingly, the General Assembly hereby enact and ordain:

1. DEFINITIONS

1.1 For the purposes of this Act the following terms shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them:-

- a) "Adjustment" shall mean a form of adjustment set out in section 7, sub-sections (1) to (11);
- b) An "appointment" shall mean an appointment to a post other than an inducted Minister detailed within the Mission Plan and which is either counted within the allocation of ministry posts funded by the Parish Staffing Fund and allocated to that Presbytery by the General Assembly or is funded locally by the congregation and/or the Presbytery;
- c) "Approved Mission Plan" shall mean a Mission Plan that has been approved by the Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees;
- d) "Basis of Adjustment" shall mean the written terms upon which Adjustment is implemented;
- e) A "charge" shall mean a sphere of pastoral duty to which a minister is inducted and may include a Team Ministry Charge as referred to in section 7(10);
- f) A "congregation" shall mean an association of persons in a parish whose names are on the Communion Roll and Adherents' Roll and who are under the pastoral oversight of a minister or ministers (or an Interim Moderator) and a Kirk Session, for Christian worship, fellowship, instruction, Mission and service;
- g) "ecclesiastical building" shall mean any property pertaining to a congregation or agency whether or not in use for the purposes of the congregation or agency and in particular but without prejudice to the foregoing generality any Church, Church Hall, Manse, house for an assistant or associate minister, Church Officer's house, retirement house, ancillary building or outbuilding or property which is let;
- h) A "Financial Board" shall mean the body responsible for managing the finances of a congregation, including a Congregational Board, Deacons' Court, Committee of Management and Kirk Session;

- i) the "Five Marks of Mission" shall mean:

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 seek 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;

- j) "The Forum" shall mean the Faith Nurture Forum;

- k) "Guidance" shall mean the Guidance accompanying this Act as referred to in section 13; *(to be developed collaboratively among FNF, GTs and LQC)*

- l) "Historic Properties" shall mean those buildings specified by the General Trustees as being of special historic or architectural interest which are outstanding examples of a particular period, style or building type and "Historic Property" shall be construed accordingly; "MDS" shall mean Ministries Development Staff, and refers to appointments of employees by the Forum;

- n) "Mission" shall be construed as meaning those aspects of church life set out in the Five Marks of Mission supplemented by the Guidance;

- o) "Mission Plan" shall mean a Mission Plan formulated in terms of section 2 below and in the form of the template set out in Guidance;

- p) "Mission Plan Review Panel" shall mean the Panel described in the Schedule;

- q) The "Presbytery" shall mean the Presbytery of the bounds where the charge, agency, partnership or Mission initiative is located or online activity is rooted; the word "Presbytery" may be construed so as to include a group of Presbyteries, where appropriate;

- r) The "shape of church life" shall mean the arrangements of congregations, agencies, ministries, partnerships initiatives and others, including their physical resources and online activities, all under the supervision of the Presbytery;

- s) "vacancy" shall mean the state in which a charge finds itself when it is without an inducted minister and shall include the situation of a prospective vacancy where an Interim Moderator has been appointed under section 6(1) of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003), and "vacant" shall be construed accordingly.

2. THE PRESBYTERY MISSION PLAN

2.0.1 Each Presbytery shall be required to have an Approved Mission Plan in place in terms of this Act by 31 December 2022.

2.0.2 It shall be in order for a group of Presbyteries anticipating union to present to the Forum and the General Trustees a shared draft Mission Plan in terms of this Act. For this to become an Approved Mission Plan in terms of this Act it must have been approved at a meeting of each of the individual Presbyteries and then the final approval of the Forum and the General Trustees must be obtained.

2.1 CONTENT OF A MISSION PLAN

2.1.1 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:-

- i) ensure that the life of the Church of Scotland is shaped around Mission and adequately reflects the outcomes of Local Church Review and ideas for local mission;

- ii) 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;
- iii) make appropriate use of such ministry posts as may be permitted by the General Assembly so that the number of post holders in each Presbytery conforms to the numbers and timescales set by the General Assembly;
- iv) ensure that new ways of being Church, other than stipendiary Ministers of Word and Sacrament or traditional MDS appointments, are reflected in the Mission Plan;

2.1.2 In doing so the Presbytery will categorise each ecclesiastical building as either:-

- (a) to be retained beyond the five years from the date at which the Mission Plan is approved or annually reviewed, or
- (b) to be sold, let or otherwise disposed of by a specified date which is within five years from the date at which the ecclesiastical building is first categorised as (b).

2.1.3 In order to arrive at these categorisations the Presbytery shall use, and reference, resources and advice provided by the General Trustees, including the Land and Buildings Toolkit (or any successor guidance issued by the General Trustees).

2.1.4 In the case of a (b) categorisation the General Trustees shall be empowered, at their discretion and in consultation with the Forum, to refuse any application made in respect of that building in terms of the Work at Ecclesiastical Buildings Regulations (Regs I 1998) (as amended from time to time).

2.1.5 The Mission Plan shall also record those ecclesiastical buildings within the Presbytery which are Historic Properties, regardless of whether they are categorised as (a) or (b).

2.2 PROCESS FOR PREPARING AND APPROVING A MISSION PLAN

2.2.1 Mission Plan is prepared: A Presbytery shall prepare a draft Mission Plan, in consultation with the Forum and the General Trustees. To facilitate the Presbytery's preparation of the Mission Plan, the Forum shall, as part of its input, intimate the total number of ministry posts approved by the General Assembly as referred to at section 2.4.1 below, and the General Trustees shall, as part of their input, provide such information as is available as to suitability of the ecclesiastical buildings for Mission. In the course of its development the Presbytery shall at regular intervals share the draft Mission Plan with the Forum and the General Trustees. The Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees shall work together to develop the Plan, with the Forum and the General Trustees offering advice and guidance on the framing of the Mission Plan. Presbytery shall take into account the Code of Practice contained in the Guidance.

2.2.2 Presbytery meets to approve the Mission Plan: The completed draft Mission Plan shall be put to a full meeting of the Presbytery for approval. When a Presbytery has voted to approve a Mission Plan, or to approve a Mission Plan following its annual evaluation and development, the Presbytery's process shall be sisted and an extract minute of the decision and a copy of the Mission Plan document shall be sent to the Forum and the General Trustees for their final approval.

2.2.3 Approval of the Mission Plan by the Forum and the General Trustees: Upon receipt of the Mission Plan, the Forum and the General Trustees shall consider whether the Mission Plan conforms to section 2.1 above and thus whether the Forum and the General Trustees can grant final approval

of the Mission Plan, or whether further discussion with the Presbytery is required. If in these discussions Presbytery representatives agree to possible amendments then the amended Mission Plan will be resubmitted to a full meeting of Presbytery for its final approval.

2.2.4 Possible referral to Mission Plan Review Panel for assistance: Discussion on the Mission Plan among the Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees shall continue until final approval of the Mission Plan is given by the Forum and the General Trustees. If final approval is not in place within a period of three calendar months after the Forum's and the General Trustees' receipt of the Mission Plan, the matter shall be referred to the Mission Plan Review Panel by the Presbytery and the Panel shall assist the parties to resolve the matter, so that final approval of the Mission Plan can be given.

2.2.5 Extract minute of final approvals to Presbytery: Once both the Forum and the General Trustees have given final approval of the Mission Plan, the Forum shall send an extract minute to Presbytery indicating that the Forum and the General Trustees have granted final approval of the Mission Plan.

2.2.6 The Approved Mission Plan: When the Forum's and the General Trustees' final approval of the Mission Plan is announced and recorded at a meeting of the Presbytery, the Mission Plan will then be considered an Approved Mission Plan and, subject to the right of review referred to at section 3 below, steps shall be taken by the Presbytery towards its implementation.

2.3 ANNUAL EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF A MISSION PLAN

2.3.1 Each Presbytery shall carry out a process of annual evaluation and development of its Mission Plan so as to maintain in rolling form an accurate, comprehensive and up to date Mission Plan for the shape of church life in the next five years in that Presbytery.

2.3.2 The process of annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan shall be initiated by the Presbytery Clerk, and shall proceed in consultation with the Forum and the General Trustees. Thereafter approval by the Presbytery, and final approval by the Forum and General Trustees shall be sought and this process shall follow the procedure set out above at section 2.2, save that the period to achieve final approval of the Plan shall be one month rather than three months. After such evaluation and development, final approval and recording of that approval at a meeting of the Presbytery, the Mission Plan shall be re-dated to cover the next five years and that shall become the Presbytery's Approved Mission Plan.

2.4 OTHER PROVISIONS AS TO MISSION PLANS

2.4.1 The Forum shall bring 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.

2.4.2 In the first Approved Mission Plan, and in every subsequent Approved Mission Plan formed after the process of annual evaluation and development and approval, the provisions of section 2.1.1(iii) shall apply.

2.4.3 For the avoidance of doubt, in including in a Mission Plan provision for Adjustment to achieve the Mission Plan goals, the Presbytery shall not be considered to be affecting the rights of an inducted Minister. The Presbytery shall have the right to call a meeting of the relevant Kirk Session(s) and the congregation(s) to discuss the Mission Plan with or without consent of the inducted minister. The inducted minister shall not be entitled to attend and speak at such a meeting, but the Presbytery may choose to meet separately with the inducted minister to discuss the Mission Plan goals.

3. REVIEW

3.1 Within fourteen days of the date of the Presbytery meeting at which the agreement of the Forum and the General Trustees to the Mission Plan (or to an annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan, as the case may be) has been recorded at the Presbytery meeting it shall be open to any twelve or more members of the Presbytery or to any Kirk Session within its bounds to seek a review of the process used by the Presbytery in preparing and approving the Mission Plan (or its annual evaluation or development) by sending intimation to the Principal Clerk (who in turn shall inform the Forum and the General Trustees).

3.2 When a review has been intimated: any provision of the Mission Plan which is not affected by a request for review may be progressed under section 4 while the review is pending.

3.3 The review may only be requested on the grounds set out in the Schedule to this Act.

3.4 Such a review shall be conducted by a Mission Plan Review Panel in accordance with provisions of the Schedule to this Act.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSION PLAN

4.1 After achieving the final approval of the Forum and the General Trustees to the Mission Plan (or to annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan), and when there are no outstanding requests for review to be heard by the Mission Plan Review Panel, the Presbytery shall proceed to implement the Approved Mission Plan.

5. PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANS AND PERMISSION TO CALL A MINISTER OR TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

5.1 A vacant charge in respect of which an Approved Mission Plan exists may be given permission to call a minister, subject to the provisions of Act VIII 2003, and further provided that:

- (a) the Mission Plan provides that no Adjustment is required before a new minister is inducted, or
- (b) the Adjustment described in the Approved Mission Plan has been fully implemented, or
- (c) the Presbytery has already negotiated a Basis for the Adjustment described in the Approved Mission Plan and is able to implement it before sustaining a call and there is no outstanding request for review to be heard by the Mission Plan Review Panel.

5.2 A vacant charge shall not be given permission to call a minister if:

- (a) a Basis of Adjustment has not yet been agreed between the Presbytery and the congregation, and/or
- (b) there is any outstanding request for review to be heard by the Mission Plan Review Panel, and/or
- (c) there are Mission Plan issues yet to be resolved in terms of this Act.

5.3 Appointments may also be made to other posts (MDS and/or Presbytery and/or locally funded posts) described in the Mission Plan providing that:

- (a) there is funding in place for the envisaged duration of the appointment,
- (b) the job description and contract of employment have been approved by the Human Resources department in the national office in order to ensure consistency and fairness across Presbyteries, and
- (c) Presbytery shall satisfy itself as to the status and good standing of any minister of another denomination appointed in terms of this section 5.3.

6. SUSPENSION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSION PLAN

6.1 On cause shown, and subject to the right of any twelve or more members of Presbytery or a Kirk Session to request review by the Mission Plan Review Panel on the grounds set out in the Schedule within fourteen days of the date of suspension, the Presbytery, the Forum or the General Trustees may suspend the implementation of the Mission Plan in part or whole.

6.2 When this happens, the Presbytery and the Forum and the General Trustees shall strive to reach agreement with interested parties as soon as possible to allow the Mission Plan to be reinstated and implemented.

6.3 The Presbytery shall not permit a congregation to call a minister or an appointment to be made in terms of the Mission Plan when such a post is covered by the suspended section(s) (or as the case may be, whole) of the Mission Plan.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MISSION PLAN THROUGH ADJUSTMENT AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

7.0 The Mission Plan may specify any of the following forms of Adjustment and other arrangements:-

(1) UNION

Two or more congregations may be united to form one congregation under the Unitary Constitution, and such union shall involve the union of charges, parishes, Kirk Sessions, Financial Boards, property and funds and, except in special circumstances where provision is made to the contrary in the Basis of Union, all congregational agencies and organisations.

(2) LINKING

Two or more charges may be linked to form one charge in terms of a Basis of Linking, so that the congregations are served by one ministry, the constitutions of the said congregations being in no other way affected.

(3) DEFERRED UNION OR DEFERRED LINKING

(a) When for any reason it is not possible to unite a vacant congregation with another congregation under the minister of the other congregation, the Presbytery may decide to unite them on the understanding that the implementation of such decision shall be deferred to take place as soon as practicable after that minister's interest has terminated.

(b) The Basis of Deferred Union shall provide (i) that the congregations to be united shall elect a minister who shall be inducted in the first instance as minister of the vacant congregation, and (ii) that on the termination of the other minister's interest the Union shall immediately be effective under the minister so elected and inducted.

(c) If another vacancy occurs in the originally-vacant congregation before the termination of the other minister's interest, the Basis of Deferred Union shall remain in force and the congregations shall elect another minister as in (b) above; subject to the proviso that the Presbytery may decide to recall the Basis of Deferred Union with a view to making another Adjustment decision.

(d) A linking may be deferred in the same manner as a union in terms of subsections (a) to (c) above.

(4) LOCAL MISSION CHURCH

The Presbytery may determine in its Mission Plan that a Local Mission Church shall be created, either (a) following a union or dissolution effected in terms of this Act, or (b) as a new venture. Such a Local Mission Church shall be established in terms of the Local Mission Church Regulations and shall be governed by a Basis of Local Mission Church. The process to create a Local Mission Church shall be as specified in the Guidance.

(5) GUARDIANSHIP

A charge may continue without the right to call a minister under the Guardianship of the Presbytery. There shall be a Basis of Guardianship which shall include the timing and scope of the how the guardianship shall be reviewed. In such a case, the Presbytery will appoint an Interim Moderator who will ensure that appropriate arrangements are put in place to enable the ongoing ministry and Mission of the congregation(s). For the avoidance of doubt, a Guardianship shall count as 0.25 towards the total ministry allocation for a Presbytery. A Guardianship shall be subject to a separate five yearly review process at the instigation of Presbytery, alongside the normal annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan.

(6) NEW CHARGE DEVELOPMENT

Those new charges which have been established prior to the passing of this Act in terms of Act XIII 2000 may be included in the relevant Mission Plans, but no new charges under Act XIII 2000 may be specified in a Mission Plan after the passing of this Act.

(7) TRANSPORTATION

(a) The Presbytery may move a congregation from one place of worship to another, and, where that involves a change of parish, it shall be designated "transportation".

(b) Where transportation is effected, the Presbytery shall take such steps of Adjustment as may be necessary to ensure that the parishes involved are allocated to defined charges.

(8) PARISH GROUPINGS

The Presbytery may declare that two or more charges shall have responsibility for a single area. The Basis of such an Adjustment shall determine the extent to which the charges shall operate as a Parish Grouping, for instance in the sharing of worship, personnel, education resources, mission initiatives, congregational organisations etc.

(9) DISSOLUTION

A charge may be dissolved by the Presbytery of the bounds. The Basis of Dissolution shall provide for:-

- (a)** The issuing of certificates of transference to all members of the congregation;
- (b)** The allocation of the parish to another charge or charges;
- (c)** The transfer to the General Trustees, prior to dissolution, of any heritable property held by or on behalf of the congregation title to which is not yet vested in the General Trustees;
- (d)** The transfer, prior to dissolution, of funds to enable the General Trustees to discharge their obligations (including maintenance, security and insurance) in relation to any heritable property held by or on behalf of the congregation which is designated as a Historic Property; provided that such funds shall include (i) all restricted funds (including organ funds) held for fabric purposes and (ii) such proportion of all unrestricted funds as may be reasonably required for such purposes by the General Trustees; and
- (e)** The destination of all other property and funds of the charge(s).

(10) TEAM MINISTRY

- (a)** The Presbytery may determine, in respect of any charge, the amount of ministerial time required by the charge, and the number and nature of posts necessary, provided that (except in the case of job-sharing) the Presbytery shall identify one of the inducted ministers as moderator of the Kirk Session.
- (b)** Presbyteries are encouraged in designing a Team Ministry to consider the significance of the role which

might be played by those other than Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ministries Development Staff.

- (c)** The terms under which a Team Ministry will operate shall be set out in a Basis of Team Ministry agreed by the Presbytery and all members of the Team prior to any such Team Ministry being established; the Basis shall include a dispute resolution mechanism.
- (d)** A Team Ministry may be created in one or other of the following two ways:
 - (i)** a Presbytery may create a Team Ministry with an inducted parish minister (who shall be the moderator of the Kirk Session) and which may include a deacon, MDS appointments, the appointment of an Ordained Local Minister or such other appointment as may be deemed appropriate in Mission Plan discussions, or
 - (ii)** alternatively, the Presbytery may create within the charge a Team Ministry consisting of two or more Team Ministry Charges, to each of which a parish minister shall be inducted, provided always that one of the Team Ministry Charges shall be identified in the Basis as the one providing the moderator of the Kirk Session. The Team may also include a deacon, MDS appointments, the appointment of an Ordained Local Minister or such other appointment as may be deemed appropriate in Mission Plan discussions.
- (e)** Where there are Team Ministry Charges created in terms of paragraph (d)(ii) above, the following shall apply:
 - (A)** The Team Ministry Charges shall share the same congregation and Kirk Session and be part of the same Church life.
 - (B)** The ministers inducted to a Team Ministry Charge shall each occupy the manse provided for their use.
 - (C)** The ministers of the Team Ministry Charges shall be appointed in one or other of the following two ways:
 - (i)** the ministers may be called, with appropriate changes, through the vacancy processes set out in Act VIII 2003, or
 - (ii)** where a new charge is being created by a union of charges and where there are at the time of the proposed union minister(s) inducted to one or more of those charges with unrestricted tenure, it shall be competent for the Presbytery to create Team Ministry Charges within the new charge and to include such minister(s) within the new charge subject to their agreement to the Basis of Team Ministry.
 - (D)** The Team Ministry Charges, save for any exception at (e)(C)(ii) above, shall be Reviewable Charges in the terms set out in section 9(1) of this Act and may be part-time.
 - (E)** For the avoidance of doubt, the minister(s) who are not inducted to the Team Ministry Charge providing the moderator of the Kirk Session will not automatically succeed to that Team Ministry Charge on the occurrence of a vacancy but would be entitled to apply for that Team Ministry Charge through the vacancy processes set out in Act VIII 2003.

(11) NEW FORMS OF CHURCH LIFE

After consultation with the Forum, the Presbytery may devise a new form of Adjustment or ministry, ensuring that such form is consistent with the Acts and deliverances of the

General Assembly. This may include the provision of online Church, where the Presbytery seeks to coordinate and resource the provision of online worship and Mission by identifying congregations, partnerships or agencies which will be given lead responsibility for such provision; this may include the allocation of a Mission Plan post or posts. The Mission Plan should demonstrate how the Presbytery will relate to those whose belonging is primarily through networks or the virtual world.

(12) PRESBYTERY MISSION INITIATIVE

The Presbytery may set up a Presbytery Mission Initiative in terms of the Presbytery Mission Initiatives Act (Act V 2015).

8. AGREEMENT TO UNION OR LINKING UNDER AN INDUCTED MINISTER

8.1 PRELIMINARY

8.1.1 No Basis of Union or Linking shall be distributed by Presbytery to the office bearers or members of a congregation where the minister has been inducted on the basis of unrestricted tenure without the consent of that minister.

8.2 CONGREGATIONAL VOTES ON THE PROPOSED BASIS OF ADJUSTMENT

8.2.1 When an explicit provision of a Basis of Union or Linking is that the minister of one of the congregations involved shall be the minister of the united or linked charge (the new charge) then the following procedures shall be adopted. All such votes shall be by secret ballot.

8.2.2 Where the minister referred to in 8.2.1 was inducted on unrestricted tenure to his or her current congregation, there shall be a single vote taken in that congregation to approve all the terms of the Basis. Other congregations shall vote using the double vote system as set out below.

8.2.3 Where the minister referred to in 8.2.1 was inducted on a Basis of Reviewable Charge there shall be separate votes taken in each congregation on each of the following matters:-

- i. to approve the terms of the Basis, apart from the clause which says that the minister referred to in 8.2.1 shall be the first minister of the new charge; and
- ii. to approve the clause in the Basis which says that the minister referred to in 8.2.1 shall be the first minister of the new charge.

8.2.4 Where a congregation is vacant there shall be separate votes taken in that congregation, irrespective of whether the minister referred to in 8.2.1 was inducted on unrestricted tenure or to a Reviewable Charge, on each of the following matters:-

- i. to approve the terms of the Basis, apart from the clause which says that the minister referred to in 8.2.1 shall be the first minister of the new charge; and
- ii. to approve the clause in the Basis which says that the minister referred to in 8.2.1 shall be the first minister of the new charge.

8.3 PROCEDURE SUBSEQUENT TO CONGREGATIONAL VOTES

8.3.1 When the vote taken in terms of 8.2.2 is "for" then the Presbytery is free to proceed to effect the adjustment subject to consideration of the votes taken in terms of 8.2.3 and 8.2.4

8.3.2 When votes are taken in terms of 8.2.3 and the vote is "for" in terms of i but "against" in terms of ii then the Presbytery may choose to follow one of these options:-

- i. if the review date for the Basis of Reviewable Charge has passed or is imminent, to end the tenure of the Reviewable Charge by giving the minister six months' notice and thereafter enact the Union or Linking, or

- ii. if the review date for the Basis of Reviewable Charge is some time ahead seek to negotiate a Basis of Deferred Union or Linking to cover the period until the review is due.

8.3.3 Where votes are taken in terms of 8.2.4 and the vote is "for" in terms of i but "against" in terms of ii then the Presbytery may choose to follow one of these options:-

- i. if the review date for the Basis of Reviewable Charge has passed or is imminent, to end the tenure of the Reviewable Charge and give the minister six months' notice and enact the union or linking, or
- ii. negotiate a Basis of Deferred Union or Linking which will be enacted when either the incumbent minister on unrestricted tenure has left his/her charge or, if applicable, when the Reviewable Charge may be reviewed and its tenure terminated.

8.4 GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR SUCH ADJUSTMENTS

8.4.1 A Presbytery may not effect an adjustment whereby a minister would be imposed on a congregation which has not voted in favour in terms of 8.2.3 ii or 8.2.4 ii.

8.4.2 In the case of a minister who becomes minister of a united or linked charge in terms of a Basis of Union or Linking, the united or linked charge shall be regarded as a modification of the charge to which he or she has already been inducted so that no further induction shall be required; but in all such cases the Presbytery shall conduct a service of introduction.

9. INSTRUMENTS FOR FUTURE PLANNING

9.0 The Presbytery may utilise in its Mission Plan either of the instruments for future planning described below.

(1) REVIEWABLE CHARGE

9.1.1 In respect of any charge, the Presbytery may decide that such charge shall be a Reviewable Charge, meaning that its next minister shall be inducted on condition that the Presbytery may terminate the tenure of the minister at any time and for any reason which may seem good to the Presbytery, on terms specified in the Basis of Adjustment and always upon giving the minister six months' notice in writing. On the date of termination, the minister shall be deemed to have demitted his or her charge.

9.1.2 The minister shall be free to seek to demit or be translated as in the ordinary case of any minister inducted to a charge, provided that, if the Reviewable Charge is that minister's first charge, this constitutes exceptional circumstances in terms of section 4 of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003).

9.1.3 Before proceeding to induct a minister in terms of this section 9(1), the Presbytery shall submit to him or her the Basis of Reviewable Charge, and shall obtain and record his or her written acceptance thereof.

(2) TRANSFERENCE

9.2.1 A parish and charge may be transferred from the bounds and jurisdiction of one Presbytery to the bounds and jurisdiction of another with the agreement of both Presbyteries.

9.2.2 In the event of disagreement between the two Presbyteries, the Presbytery desiring the transference may request a review by the Mission Plan Review Panel in terms of the Schedule within fourteen days of the date of the Presbytery meeting at which a decision disputing the transference was taken, and shall immediately notify the other Presbytery of its request.

9.2.3 Transference shall be a necessary preliminary to union or linking of congregations which are not within the bounds of one Presbytery.

10. ACHIEVEMENT OF ADJUSTMENT

10.1 When the Presbytery decides to negotiate a Basis of Adjustment in a charge in accordance with a Mission Plan, it shall remit to the appropriate Standing Committee, or to a committee appointed for the purpose, the task of conferring with local parties, provided that:

- (a) Conference with local parties shall be with the ministers and with the elders and the members of the Financial Board (if any) of the congregations which may be involved in Adjustment, and should include consultation with other members of a ministry team;
- (b) No proposed Adjustment involving the rights of the minister shall be discussed with the office-bearers of the congregation as in (a) above without his or her consent in writing;
- (c) All meetings of office-bearers under this section 10.1 shall be called by the Presbytery's Committee and a minister, deacon or elder, appointed by the said Committee, shall act as Convener for the purposes of conference. In no case shall a minister preside at or attend any meeting called under the terms of this Act where matters in which his or her interests are involved are discussed or decided.

10.2 A detailed Basis of Adjustment shall be negotiated with the office-bearers involved, and in the course of the negotiation its text shall be submitted to the Forum to ensure it is consistent with the Mission Plan, and to the Principal Clerk and the Solicitor of the Church who shall ensure that the provisions of the Basis are in conformity with Church and Civil Law. The Basis of Adjustment shall be voted upon firstly by the office-bearers and then by the congregation or congregations involved, before the matter is put to the Presbytery for decision. Those entitled to speak and vote at such a congregational meeting shall include those who have been formally recognised by the Kirk Session as adherents of the congregation. The Presbytery shall have regard to the decisions arrived at by the respective office bearers and congregations, provided always that:

- (a) no Basis affecting the rights of a minister shall be presented to his or her, or any other, congregation without his or her written consent,
- (b) any congregation directly involved in and named in any proposed Basis shall be cited to appear for their interests at any meeting of the Presbytery at which a decision is to be made in terms of this Act.

10.3 Notwithstanding the provisions of this section 10, while it shall be the duty of the Presbytery to make every effort to secure approval of the office bearers and congregations involved, the right of the Presbytery to effect Adjustment in terms of this Act is hereby affirmed, subject to the written consent of any minister or ministers whose rights would be adversely affected.

11. REVIEW OF A BASIS OF ADJUSTMENT

11.1 It shall be open to any Kirk Session involved in the Adjustment or twelve or more members of Presbytery to seek a review of a Basis of Adjustment by the Mission Plan Review Panel. Such a review shall consider whether the details of the Basis are in conformity with the Approved Mission Plan and this Act and must be requested within fourteen days of Presbytery's decision on the Basis.

11.2 Such review shall otherwise proceed in line with the provisions of the Schedule.

12. MEMBERS OF PRESBYTERY

12.1 For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that any person who is both a member of a cited congregation and a member or a corresponding member of the Presbytery (including an Interim Moderator) shall be entitled to participate in any discussion leading to a decision of the Presbytery in terms of this Act and, where qualified, to vote thereon.

13. GUIDANCE

13.1 The Forum, after consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, shall issue Guidance on the implementation and operation of this Act, including a Code of Practice, which shall be reviewed by the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, from time to time.

14. REPEALS AND AMENDMENTS

14.1 The Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003) is hereby repealed except that section 9(2) of that Act shall remain in force until Approved Mission Plans are in place for all Presbyteries.

SCHEDULE- THE MISSION PLAN REVIEW PANEL**A: GENERAL: COMPOSITION, JURISDICTION AND MAKING A REQUEST OF THE PANEL****1. Composition (for all Jurisdiction matters)**

The Mission Plan Review Group shall be a group of fifteen persons appointed by the General Assembly on the Report of the Nomination Committee and in line with the process for appointing persons to other judicial bodies. Additionally, the Forum and the General Trustees shall be entitled to make suggestions to the Legal Questions Committee as to persons who are suitable for appointment to the Group, but the final decision as to nominees shall rest with the Legal Questions Committee. The members of the Group shall be suitably experienced members of the Church.

The Panel shall consist of three members drawn from the Mission Plan Review Group. One member shall act as Convener. The quorum of the Panel shall be two, including the Convener. None of the members of the Panel shall be members of the Presbytery whose Mission Plan is being considered or reviewed.

Where a Mission Plan Review Panel has previously been formed to consider a question relating to a particular Mission Plan, if there is a subsequent request for assistance or review relating to the same Mission Plan, the Panel shall be formed so as not to include the same persons.

2. Jurisdiction

The Panel shall consider the following matters:

- (a) in terms of section 2.2, an application by the Presbytery, the Forum and/or the General Trustees for the Panel to assist the parties to resolve the matter where agreement cannot be reached on a Mission Plan among the Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees within a period of three calendar months of their receipt of the Mission Plan;
- (b) in terms of section 2.3, an application by the Presbytery, the Forum and/or the General Trustees for the Panel to assist the parties to resolve the matter where agreement cannot be reached on the annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan among the Presbytery, the Forum and the General Trustees within a period of one calendar month of their receipt of the Mission Plan;
- (c) in terms of section 3, an application from any twelve or more members of the Presbytery or any Kirk Session seeking a review of the process used by the Presbytery in preparing and approving a Mission Plan or in its annual evaluation and development;
- (d) in terms of section 6, an application from any twelve or more members of Presbytery or a Kirk Session requesting a review of a decision of the Presbytery and/or the Forum and/or the General Trustees to suspend the implementation of a Mission Plan in part or whole;

- (e) in terms of section 9(2), an application for review from a Presbytery desiring to transfer a parish and charge from the bounds and jurisdiction of one Presbytery to the bounds and jurisdiction of another (Transference), where there is disagreement between the two Presbyteries; and
- (f) in terms of section 11, an application from twelve or more members of Presbytery or a Kirk Session seeking a review of a Basis of Adjustment, to consider whether the details of the Basis are in conformity with the Mission Plan and this Act;

provided always that no provision of this Act shall operate so as to have the Panel review its own decision or give judgement twice on the same question.

3. Making the request for assistance (Jurisdiction paragraphs(a) & (b)) or for review (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (f))

A request for assistance or review shall be sent to the Principal Clerk (who in turn shall inform the Forum and the General Trustees) within fourteen days of the relevant event.

B: ASSISTANCE (Jurisdiction paragraphs (a) & (b) above)

1. Procedure for assistance

The Panel shall have wide discretion to assist the parties to reach agreement as it sees fit. The Panel shall have power to require parties to produce documents and information as to the provisions of the Mission Plan.

C: REVIEW (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (f) above)

1. Grounds for requesting review (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (e) above)

A review may only be requested on the grounds that (a) there was a material error in Church law, (b) there was material irregularity of process on the part of Presbytery (or the Forum or General Trustees, as the case may be) or (c) the decision of Presbytery (or the Forum or General Trustees, as the case may be) took into account an irrelevant material fact or failed to take into account a relevant material fact.

2. Ground for requesting review (Jurisdiction paragraph (f) above)

Such a review may only be requested where it is alleged that the details of the Basis are not in conformity with the Approved Mission Plan and this Act.

3. Procedure for review (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (f) above)

A request for review shall require to obtain leave to proceed from the General Assembly's Committee on Overtures and Cases, whose decision shall be final.

The Panel shall complete a review within three calendar months of receiving the request for a review (along with all necessary documentation), save that the Panel has the discretion to extend this timescale on cause shown. The Panel may choose to proceed wholly on written submissions or may choose to hold a hearing, which may be online. The Panel may decide whether or not to visit the place(s) giving rise to the request for review and when doing so may choose whether or not to meet with local parties.

If the Panel chooses to proceed wholly on written submissions it shall notify its final decision to all interested parties. The decision shall be in writing and shall set out the grounds upon which its decision was reached.

If the Panel chooses to hold a hearing, whether in person or online, procedure shall follow that of the General Assembly's Standing Orders and shall normally be as follows:

1. Hearing is opened with prayer
2. Convener makes introductions
3. Convener explains the purpose of the hearing

4. Persons requesting review are given opportunity to speak (through one nominated speaker)
5. Respondent (normally Presbytery) is given opportunity to speak (through one nominated speaker)
6. Members of the Panel ask questions of parties
7. Respondent has its final word
8. Persons requesting review have their final word
9. Parties are removed and Panel reaches a decision
10. Decision is intimated when parties are recalled or may be intimated by email to parties; at this stage a summary of reasons for the decision may be given
11. Hearing is closed with prayer/the Grace/the Benediction

Within fourteen days of the hearing a written decision shall be issued which shall set out the grounds on which the decision was reached.

4. Possible outcomes (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (e) above)

The outcome of the review process will be either (1) no change, ie to endorse the correctness of the decision which has been made, or (2) to send the matter back to the decision-maker for the decision to be made again, with identifications of any deficiencies in its processes.

The review is about the legality of the processes adopted (how the decision was taken), not the substance of the decision made. The outcome will not be a different decision.

5. Possible outcomes (Jurisdiction paragraph (f) above)

The outcome of the review process will be either (1) to confirm that the Basis is in conformity with the Mission Plan and this Act or (2) to confirm that it is not. In the latter case the Presbytery will thereafter renegotiate the Basis.

6. Finality of decisions (Jurisdiction paragraphs (c) to (f) above)

The Panel's decision on a request for review, however determined, shall be final and there shall be no right of appeal against a decision of the Panel.

IX ACT TEMPORARILY AMENDING THE VACANCY PROCEDURE ACT (ACT VIII 2003) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, 27 May 2021, Session 9

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *Add the following words at the end of section 28: "Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, where permission to call in terms of section 8 of this Act has been given prior to 1 June 2021 the vacancy process in a charge may continue after 1 June 2021 but if that process has not led to the preaching of a nominee in terms of section 22 of this Act by 31 December 2021, such a vacancy process shall be discontinued at that date unless agreement is reached between the Presbytery of the bounds and the Faith Nurture Forum that the process may be continued thereafter in terms of this Act. For the avoidance of doubt the unamended provisions of this section shall once again apply when the Presbytery has gained final approval in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) for a Mission Plan covering the vacant charge."*
2. *Delete the words "the Presbytery Plan in accordance with the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003)" where they appear in section 28 and substitute "the Mission Plan in accordance with the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021)".*

B - Overtures under the Barrier Act**OVERTURE AMENDING THE CHURCH COURTS ACT (ACT III 2000)**

The General Assembly adopt the Overture the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.

The General Assembly, with the consent of a majority of Presbyteries, hereby enact and ordain that the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. In section 2, delete the words "one in every four or part of four" where they appear in the second line and substitute "one in every five or part of five".
2. In section 4, delete the words "one in every four, or part of four" where they appear in the second line and substitute "one in every five or part of five".
3. Delete sections 6(c) and (d) and substitute:
 "(c) 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 6(b) or otherwise members *ex officiis*, shall be members of the General Assembly *ex officiis*. They shall be appointed in addition to their Presbytery's number of Commissions in terms of section 2 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 2 above to any other former Moderators eligible to be commissioned."

SOLEMNISATION OF SAME SEX MARRIAGE OVERTURE

The General Assembly adopt the Overture the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.

The General Assembly, with consent of a majority of Presbyteries, hereby enact and ordain as follows:

Definitions and Interpretation

1. (a) "Parish Minister" shall have the meaning ascribed to it in the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018);
- (b) "Minister of Word and Sacrament" shall have the meaning ascribed to it in the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018);
- (c) "same sex marriage" shall mean the process described in the MSA;
- (d) "the MSA" shall mean the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977 as it exists at 24 May 2021;
- (e) "Deacon" shall mean a person holding the office of Deacon in terms of the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010);
- (f) "Authorised Celebrant" for the purposes of this Act means a Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon who is empowered to solemnise same sex marriage in terms of the MSA;
- (g) "Principal Clerk" includes a person deputising for the Principal Clerk.

General provisions

2. A Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon may apply in terms of this Act to become an Authorised Celebrant for same sex marriage.

3. No person shall be required by this Act to participate in the solemnisation of, or be involved in the arrangements for, a same sex marriage.
4. In all matters referred to in this Act, including but not limited to making application to become an Authorised Celebrant, permitting or granting consent for use of buildings, arranging for the participation of others in the solemnisation of a same sex marriage, and making practical arrangements for same sex weddings, a Minister of Word and Sacrament or a Deacon, as the case may be, shall take account of the peace and unity and pastoral needs of the congregation and of any parish or other grouping of which it is a part.

Becoming an Authorised Celebrant for same sex marriage

5. The process for becoming an Authorised Celebrant shall be:
 - (i) Application shall be made initially to the Principal Clerk's Office on a form prescribed by the Principal Clerk.
 - (ii) The Principal Clerk will make application to the Registrar General for Scotland on behalf of the Minister of Word and Sacrament or Deacon, as the case may be, in terms of section 9(1A) of the MSA.
 - (iii) The Principal Clerk will liaise with and advise the Minister of Word and Sacrament or Deacon, as the case may be, of the outcome of the application.
6. The Principal Clerk shall maintain an up to date record of Authorised Celebrants.
7. Authorised Celebrants shall be responsible for initiating their own three yearly renewal of their status in terms of the MSA, although the actual process will be administered through the Principal Clerk's Office.

Use of buildings

8. Only a Parish Minister who has become an Authorised Celebrant in terms of sections 5 to 7 above may, in accordance with and subject to the terms of sections 12 to 15 of the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018):
 - (i) permit the use of a Church building in their charge for the solemnisation of same sex marriage, and
 - (ii) grant consent for other Authorised Celebrants to use such a building for the solemnisation of same sex marriage.

For the avoidance of doubt, any specific permission or consent for an individual same sex marriage granted by a Parish Minister in terms of this section 8 shall endure notwithstanding that such Parish Minister subsequently departs from the charge in respect of which such permission or consent was granted.
9. An Interim Moderator who is a Minister of Word and Sacrament shall, for the purposes of this Act, have the same rights and obligations as a Parish Minister under section 8 of this Act in relation to use of buildings.

Minister's or Deacon's discretion

10. Nothing in this Act shall contravene the general principle of Church law that any Minister of Word and Sacrament or Deacon has the right to determine at any time whether or not to conduct the marriage of any persons.

Territorial extent

11. This Act makes provision for same sex marriage conducted in accordance with the MSA.

Consequential amendments

12. The Recognition of Marriage Services Act (Act I 1977) shall be amended as follows:
 - (i) *Section 2 shall be deleted and the following shall be substituted:*
"Solemnisation of marriage in the Church of Scotland is effected by an ordained minister or deacon in a religious ceremony wherein, before God, and in the presence of the minister or deacon and at least two competent witnesses, the parties covenant together to take each other in marriage as long as they both shall live, and the minister or deacon declares the parties to be married."
 - (ii) *In section 3, the words "or deacon" shall be inserted after the word "minister".*
 - (iii) *Section 4 shall be deleted.*
13. The Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018) shall be amended as follows:
Add a new sub-paragraph (5) as follows to section 4:
 - (5) "where a Minister of Word and Sacrament who is an Authorised Celebrant in terms of the Solemnisation of Same Sex Marriage Act (Act []), enters the bounds of the Charge of an existing Parish Minister who is not such an Authorised Celebrant, to solemnise a same sex marriage."

Guidance

14. The Legal Questions Committee shall produce Guidance to accompany this Act, which Guidance shall be reviewed by it from time to time. Such Guidance shall be taken into account by all those using or affected by this Act.

C - Regulations of the General Assembly 2021**I REGULATIONS AMENDING THE MANSE ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE REGULATIONS (REGULATIONS III 2013)***Edinburgh, 25 May 2021, Session 5*

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Manse Adjudication Committee Regulations (Regulations III 2013), shall be amended as follows:

1. *In section B, paragraph 2(a), delete the existing wording and substitute: "the MAC shall comprise two representatives of the General Trustees, one of whom shall be the Convener, and two representatives of the Faith Nurture Forum;"*
2. *In section B, paragraph 2(b) and 2(c), delete "the Secretary and Clerk to the General Trustees" and substitute "the Chief Executive of the General Trustees".*
3. *In section B, paragraphs 2(b), 3(b) and 3(c) delete "the Secretary of the Faith Nurture "Forum" and substitute "the Head of the Faith Nurture Forum".*
4. *In section B, paragraph 3(a), delete the existing wording and substitute "the MAC shall comprise four representatives of the Faith Nurture Forum, one of whom shall be appointed as Convener;"*
5. *In section E, delete "Appeals Committee of the Commission of the Assembly" and substitute "Ministries Appeal Panel" and delete references to the Appeals Act and substitute references to the Ministries Appeal Panel Act (Act VI 2007).*
6. *In section E, delete paragraph 3 and substitute "An appeal must be made on the basis of one of the following grounds of appeal: (a) that in the course of the MAC Hearing there were irregularities in the process, (b) that the final decision of the MAC Hearing was influenced by incorrect material fact, or (c) that the MAC Hearing acted contrary to the principles of natural justice."*
7. *In section E, paragraph 6(a), delete "Short Assured Tenancy" and substitute "Private Residential Tenancy".*
8. *In the Schedule Part 2 add a new paragraph 6 "The MAC Hearing may take place by audio and/or video conference call or other appropriate medium."*

II LOCAL MISSION CHURCH REGULATIONS (REGS II 2021)*Edinburgh 26 May 2021, Session 8***Definitions**

1. In these Regulations:
 - (a) The term "charge" shall have the meaning given to it in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021);
 - (b) "Leadership Team" shall mean those persons who have the responsibilities in relation to the Local Mission Church outlined in section 6;
 - (c) "Presbytery" shall mean the presbytery of the bounds within which the Local Mission Church is located.

Local Mission Church

- 2(1) A Local Mission Church shall be a Christian community whose purpose is to worship, witness and serve in a distinct geographical setting.

- 2(2) A Local Mission Church shall be established in terms of these Regulations and a Basis of Local Mission Church. The form of the Basis shall be prescribed from time to time by the Faith Nurture Forum after consultation with the Legal Questions Committee.

- 2(3) A Local Mission Church shall not own any property, heritable or moveable, or have any legal personality. It shall not have a Kirk Session and shall not have the right to call a minister. The creation or sustaining of a Local Mission Church is not dependent on the provision of a church building.

Creation of a Local Mission Church

3. The process to create a Local Mission Church shall be as specified in the Guidance accompanying the Presbytery Mission Plan Act.

Role of Kirk Session of charge

4. A Local Mission Church shall exist within the territorial boundaries of a charge. All legal and governance matters affecting the Local Mission Church shall be the responsibility of the Kirk Session of the charge. In particular, the Kirk Session shall:
 - (a) ensure that all requirements of the law of the Church of Scotland and of civil law are fulfilled in relation to the Local Mission Church;
 - (b) be the owner/title-holder of all property whether heritable or moveable, used by or within the possession of the Local Mission Church;
 - (c) administer all offerings and other monies collected at or in relation to the Local Mission Church;
 - (d) apply such monies in the first instance to meet the costs of the Local Mission Church for as long as it exists, after discussion with the Leadership Team, and thereafter as the Kirk Session determines.

Oversight by Presbytery

5. A Local Mission Church shall be subject to the oversight of the Presbytery. In particular, a review of a Local Mission Church and its place in the Mission Plan shall be conducted by the Presbytery at least once every five years but without prejudice to annual evaluation and development of the Mission Plan.

Leadership Team

- 6(1) A Local Mission Church shall have a Leadership Team as set out in the Basis and this Team shall include one or more representatives of each of the Kirk Session and the Presbytery.
- 6(2) The life and witness of the Local Mission Church shall be co-ordinated by its Leadership Team, subject to the oversight of the Kirk Session and the Presbytery. Without prejudice to this generality, the Leadership Team shall be responsible for:
 - (a) developing appropriate expressions of worship, witness and service;
 - (b) ensuring that the Local Mission Church is adequately organised;
 - (c) ensuring good communication with the Kirk Session; and
 - (d) assisting with the upkeep of buildings (if any), subject always to strict adherence to sections 7(a) and (b) below. Any contracts shall be entered into by the Kirk Session.

Further provisions

7. The following further provisions shall apply to a Local Mission Church:
 - (a) Neither a Leadership Team nor any person acting on behalf of a Local Mission Church shall have any authority or power to enter into contracts or to incur liabilities on behalf of the Kirk Session.
 - (b) Neither a Leadership Team nor any person acting on behalf of a Local Mission Church shall conduct themselves in such a way (including silence) that might cause an inference contrary to section 7(a) to be drawn by any person.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2021

List of Members of Standing Committees

* = Reappointed

APPEALS COMMITTEE OF THE COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY

Philip Brodie* (2020-2024), William Hewitt (2019-2023), *Conveners*
 Janet Foggie (2020-2023), J G Grahame Lees* (2020-2023), *Vice-Conveners*

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Ministers Alison Mehigan | | Sheila Kirk* | John Ferguson Michael Mair* |
| Elders Graeme Roberts | | James Houston | |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener, 2 members of the Legal Questions Committee (Convener and another member involved more in judicial matters to be nominated by the Legal Questions Committee), a further 6 members made up of ministers and elders with experience of the General Assembly, with the following members ex officio: the Moderator and the Moderator Designate, the Principal Clerk, the Depute Clerk, the Solicitor, the Procurator and the General Treasurer.</i> | | | |

Donald McCorkindale, *Convener* (2020-2023)
 Susan Pym, *Vice-Convener* (2020-2022)

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| Ministers Anikó Schütz Bradwell< | | David Cameron Barry Hughes Peter McEnhill |
| Members Philip Ziegler | Jean Couper Linda Irvine Geoff Miller | Ann Nelson* |
| <i>12 trustees appointed in accordance with the Constitution and Remit approved at the General Assembly of 2019 (from which shall be drawn the Convener, Vice-Convener, and Administrative Trustee), plus 2 ex officio members: the Convener of the Assembly Business Committee and the Chair of the General Trustees. <Initial Trustees appointed to serve from June 2019. The Trustees first appointed shall be eligible to serve a second term, non-renewable, after an interval of three years.</i> | | |

John Chalmers<, *Convener* (2019-2022)
 David Harrison, *Vice-Convener* (2021-2024)
 James McNeill<, *Administrative Trustee* (2019-2022)

AUDIT COMMITTEE

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|--|---------------------------------|------|----------------|
| Ministers | | | Graeme Glover* |
| Members | Kenneth Baldwin Douglas Horn | | |
| <i>Convener, who shall not be an Assembly Trustee, three voting members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, all of whom shall be independent of the Unincorporated Entities and at least one of whom shall have recent and relevant financial experience, and two additional voting members be appointed by the Assembly Trustees. The quorum shall be three voting members, at least one of whom is a Trustee member. The Chief Officer and the General Treasurer shall attend without a right to vote or make a motion. In addition, other officials, as required by the Committee, may be in attendance from time to time without a right to vote or make a motion. Representatives of the External and Internal Auditors, shall be entitled to attend all meetings but without a right to vote or make a motion.</i> | | | |

Andrew Croxford, *Convener* (2018-2022)

CHAPLAINS TO HER MAJESTY'S FORCES COMMITTEE

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Ministers James Aitchison Shuna Dicks William McLaren | Alen McCulloch | | |
| Members Morag Crawford DCS Eric Fraser | Alexander Bolland* Colin Hogg* | Jacqueline Thomson DCS | Andrew Tait |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 16 members appointed by the General Assembly. There are also 2 non-voting members: one representative from and appointed by each of the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums.</i> | | | |

Marjory MacLean, *Convener (2018-2022)*
John Duncan, *Vice-Convener (2020-2023)*

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND INVESTORS TRUST

| | |
|--|--|
| Members Robin Black Susan Boyd David D Campbell* Elaine Crichton John G L Millar Gordon A Young | Jean McKeown Rodger Nisbet* Thomas Walker* Grant Wilson Michael Yuille |
| <i>Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.</i> | |

Brian Duffin, *Chair*
Robert Burgon, *Vice-Chair*

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND INVESTORS TRUST

| | |
|--|--|
| Ministers John Chalmers Iain Cunningham* Lorna Hood George Whyte | Members Morag Angus* Angus Bethune John Hodge Christopher Mackay* Leon Marshall* |
| <i>Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.</i> | |

Thomas Watson, *Chair*
Stuart Lynch, *Vice-Chair*

COMMITTEE TO NOMINATE THE MODERATOR

| | |
|--|--|
| Ministers and Deacons Stephen Blakey Alison Burnside Robert Craig Dorothy Getliffe DCS Graeme Glover Alison Meikle Anne Mulligan DCS Christine Murdoch | Elders Alison Armstrong Angus Grant Jean Hunter Stuart Kelly John McCafferty Norma Rolls Colin Russell |
| <i>Up to 8 ministers and deacons and up to 7 elders appointed by the General Assembly, to create a Committee which is representative of the diversity of the whole Church. The Committee is to be convened by the immediate past-Moderator of the General Assembly, failing which by another former Moderator of the General Assembly.</i> | |

Martin Fair, *Convener*

DELEGATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Clerks of Assembly, the Principal Clerk as Chairman, the Procurator and the Solicitor of the Church, ex officii.

**DISCIPLINE TRIBUNAL (for cases commencing after 1 June 2019) /
PRESBYTERIAL COMMISSION**

David Burns* (2019-2023), Shona Haldane (2021-2025),
Roddy John MacLeod (2018-2022), Ian Miller* (2018-2022), *Conveners*
Jonathan Brodie (2018-2022), Andrew Stevenson (2018-2022), *Vice-Conveners*

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Ministers John McMahon | Ross Blackman* David Coulter | Nikki Macdonald* Gary Peacock | |
| Members Pauline Weibye | Ian Russell | | Gemma King* |
| <p><i>a) 8 members appointed by the General Assembly one to be attached, for the purposes of ecumenical accompaniment, to each of the Faith Nurture Forum, the Faith Impact Forum, the Social Care Council, and the Theological Forum. b) Convener who will act as a personal support for the Ecumenical Officer (EO) and Vice-Convener, appointed by the General Assembly. c) A representative of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland appointed by the Bishops' Conference and 1 representative from each of 3 churches drawn from among the member churches of ACTS and the Baptist Union of Scotland, each to serve for a period of 4 years. d) The Committee shall co-opt Church of Scotland members elected to the central bodies of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE, formerly the Leuenberg Fellowship of Churches). e) The General Secretary of ACTS shall be invited to attend as a corresponding member. f) For the avoidance of doubt, while only those persons appointed under paragraphs a) and b) above shall be entitled to vote, before any vote is taken the views of members representing other churches shall be ascertained. The Convener shall be entitled to call a meeting of the voting members.</i></p> | | | |

Alexander Horsburgh, *Convener* (2018-2022)
Eileen Miller, *Vice-Convener* (2020-2023)

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--|---|---|
| Ministers Richard Baxter< Stuart Fulton< Karen Hendry< | Peter Johnston< Peter Nimmo< Justin Taylor< | Alistair Drummond |
| Members Peter Lloyd< Valerie Macniven< | Rebecca Gebauer< | Martin Ashing Marian Macintyre Gordon Sharp |
| <p><i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 13 members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly. <Initial Members appointed by Commission of the General Assembly May 2020. Members shall serve for three years, renewable for one further term on special cause shown, save that, of the members first appointed, five shall serve until General Assembly 2021, five including the first Vice Convener until General Assembly 2022 and five including the first Convener until General Assembly 2023, in each case non-renewable.</i></p> | | |

Susan Brown<, *Convener* (2020-2023)
Alan Miller<, *Vice-Convener* (2020-2022)

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|--|---|---|
| Ministers Scott McCarthy< Andrew Morrice< | Alan Hamilton< | Catherine Beattie Robert Hamilton Grant MacLaughlan Robin McAlpine |
| Members Richard Lloyd< Ruth Mackenzie< | Lesley-Ann Calvert< Barbara Finlayson< Stefanie Fowler< Murdo Macmillan< | |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 13 members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly. <Initial Members appointed by Commission of the General Assembly in May 2020. Members shall serve for three years, renewable for one further term on special cause shown, save that, of the members first appointed, five shall serve until General Assembly 2021, five including the first Vice Convener until General Assembly 2022 and five including the first Convener until General Assembly 2023, in each case non-renewable.</i> | | |

Rosemary Frew<, Convener (2020-2023)
Karen Campbell<, Vice-Convener (2020-2022)

GENERAL TRUSTEES

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Ministers James Cutler Sheila Kirk Neil MacGregor Kenneth MacKenzie Scott Rennie | Elders Robert Balfour Walter Barbour Richard Bell Robert Bell Michael Cunliffe Manliffe Goodbody William Hall Nigel Hicks Alan Kennedy Douglas Kerr William Lawrie | J G Grahame Lees John Maddock David Menzies Robin Stimpson Donald Thomas D Stewart Toy Ian Trushell Kenneth Wright | Advisory Members A Graham Biggerstaff Laura Dunlop Isobel Gray Chris Johnstone Ian Lochhead Hamish McBean Tom Nelson Deborah Nicol Michael Norval Iain Ogilvie Bahar Raeisi Dehkordi David Taverner Rosalind Taylor |
| <i>Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.</i> | | | |

Ian Townsend, Chair
Fiona Mathieson, Vice-Chair

HOUSING AND LOAN FUND

| | |
|---|---|
| Ministers Joanne Hood Allan McCafferty Bruce Sinclair | Members Walter Barbour James Erskine Harry Findlay* Sharon Anne Ho Iain Mowat Eilidh Renwick |
| <i>Up to 3 ministers and 1 member appointed by the Faith Nurture Forum, who having served a term of 4 years shall be eligible for reappointment for a second 4 year term; Up to 4 appointed by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trustees, who having served a term of 4 years shall be eligible for reappointment for a second 4 year term; Up to 3 appointed by the Baird Trust, for a term of office determined by that Trust. Any Trustee (other than one appointed by the Baird Trust) may serve for up to a further two four-year terms if elected also as Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.</i> | |

MaryAnn Rennie, Chair
Dorothy Anderson, Deputy Chair

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|------|
| Ministers David McLachlan* Alan Miller | | Willie Strachan | |
| Members | Joanna Love DCS* Maggie Mackay | | |
| <i>Convener and 5 members appointed by the General Assembly; 6 members appointed by and from the Iona Community, 2 changing each year; The Leader of the Iona Community; 1 member appointed by and from the Presbytery of Argyll. In addition the Board will invite 6 member churches of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) to appoint a representative member to the Board, such members being eligible to serve for a maximum period of 4 years.</i> | | | |

Tom Gordon, Convener (2019-2023)

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

James Drummond Young (2021-2025), Richard McFarlane (2018-2022),
Morag Ross* (2018-2022), *Conveners*
William Hewitt* (2021-2024), Colin Renwick* (2019-2022), *Vice-Conveners*

JUDICIAL PANEL

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|--|---|--|
| Ministers Catherine Beattie | Marjory McPherson | John Christie* Robin Hill* | Gordon McCracken* Ian McLean Jan Mathieson* MaryAnn Rennie* |
| Elders and Deacon Alan Cox | Tim Edward David McClements Robert McDougall | David Alexander* William Imlay* Leslie Moffat* Sam Scobie* | Fiona Drysdale Chris Dunn* Douglas Hamill* Pauline Weibye* |
| <i>20 people being ministers, elders and deacons 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. Notwithstanding SOs 114 and 118, the members of the Judicial Panel shall initially be appointed for a term of four years, and shall be eligible for reappointment for further terms of four years.</i> | | | |

JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS PANEL

| 2022 | | |
|--|--|--|
| Ministers Hugh Conkey* Sara Embleton Alan Garrity* | Tom Gordon Jane Howitt* Anne Logan | Ian McLean* Thomas Pollock ¹ Fiona Smith* |
| Elders and Deacons Hazel Hastie* Richard Henderson ¹ Robert Hynd* | Helen McLeod* Anne Mulligan DCS ¹ Aileen Nimmo* | Janette Wilson William Windram* |
| <i>A Panel of ministers, elders and deacons appointed by the General Assembly who are suitably experienced in the law and practice of the Church and whose number shall, in accordance with the Discipline of Ministry Act (Act III, 2001), section 1(1)(e), be determined, from time to time, by the Legal Questions Committee. Notwithstanding SOs 114 & 118, appointments shall be for three years with the option of further consecutive terms. In calculating how many Panel members may be appointed, no account shall be taken of any members whose current term has expired but who are deemed to remain as members of the Panel by operation of the Discipline of Ministry Act (Act III, 2001), section 1(1)(f).</i> ¹ The Discipline of Ministry Act (Act III 2001) provides that anyone who has an active case remains on the JPP until their case is complete. | | |

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Ministers | Alan Reid* | Marjory McPherson | Adam Dillon* Euan Glen |
| Members Richard Henderson | Gilbert Anderson Andrew Gibb* | David McClements Katherine Taylor | John Ritchie |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 10 members appointed by the General Assembly, the Clerks of Assembly, the Procurator and the Solicitor of the Church.</i> | | | |

Grant Barclay, Convener (2019-2023)
Victoria Linford, Vice-Convener (2021-2024)

LIFE AND WORK ADVISORY COMMITTEE

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|--|------------|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Ministers | Tina Kemp* | Ewen Gilchrist John Paterson | Jane Barron |
| Members Stuart Wilson* | | | Jane Robson |
| <i>Convener and 7 members together with the Principal Clerk as an ex officio member. The members should represent a wide range of theological opinion and perspectives, with an interest and particular gifts to offer the Committee, for example journalism, magazine production, former contributors. The Committee may co-opt members with particular gifts or information.</i> | | | |

James Stewart, Convener (2020-2024)

MINISTRIES APPEAL PANEL

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|--|------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Ministers | | Amos Chewachong | |
| Members | | Andrew Gibb | Isabell Montgomerie* |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 3 members appointed by the General Assembly. At least 1 member shall be legally qualified, at least 1 shall be a minister and at least 1 shall be an elder.</i> | | | |

Robin Stimpson (2020-2024), Convener
Leslie Milton (2020-2023), Vice Convener

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|--|----------------|--|--|
| Ministers Andrew Gardner Alan Greig Malcolm Kinnear | Paraic Reamonn | | Donald Campbell Bryan Kerr Alison Meikle |
| Members Mary Gargrave DCS Isabella McDerment Ian Russell | Daniel Gunn | Christine Mackenzie Iain MacLeod Davie Murie | Fiona Blair DCS Jonathan Buchan Connor MacFadyen |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 18 members appointed by the General Assembly. Notwithstanding SO 118, no member of the Committee, having served a term of 4 years, shall be eligible for re-election until after a period of 4 years, except for special cause shown. The Convenership of the Committee shall be for 3 years.</i> | | | |

Julie Rennick, Convener (2020-2023)
William Wishart, Vice-Convener (2019-2022)

PENSION TRUSTEES

| Trustees Appointed by the General Assembly | Member Nominated Trustees for the Pension Scheme for Staff | Member Nominated Trustees for the Pension Scheme for Ministries Development Staff | Member Nominated Trustees for the Pension Scheme for Ministers and Overseas Missionaries |
|--|---|--|---|
| Adrian Bark Graeme Caughey Robert Coulter Hugh McKee Lin Macmillan Raymond Martin | Anne-Marie Gillon John Montgomery Stuart Stephen | Christine Bohne Ian Gray Gregor McIntyre | Susan Anderson Alan Garrity Pauline Gordon |

Graeme Caughey, *Chair*
Lin Macmillan, *Vice-Chair*

PERSONNEL APPEAL GROUP

| | |
|---|---|
| John Cowie Mary Haddow William Imlay | Sheilagh Stewart Walter Williamson Eilidh Wiseman |
| <i>12 members appointed by the General Assembly with the Solicitor of the Church as Secretary. Members shall not include any former or current members of staff of any of the Church's Employing Agencies (including the Social Care Council), nor any current Council or Committee member.</i> | |

Solicitor of the Church, *Secretary*

REGISTRATION OF MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|--|------|------|------|
| Ministers William McLaren | | | |
| Members | | | |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 3 members. 1 member is appointed by the Legal Questions Committee, 1 member by the Faith Nurture Forum and 3 members by the General Assembly. The Convener and Vice-Convener are appointed by the General Assembly from the General Assembly appointees. One or other of the Clerks to the General Assembly and the Secretary to the Faith Nurture Forum attend the Committee ex officio in an advisory capacity but are not members. The Committee is clerked by a person from the Faith Nurture Forum who is not a member of the Committee.</i> | | | |

Hazel Hastie, *Convener (2021-2025)*
Fiona Smith, *Vice-Convener (2021-2024)*

SAFEGUARDING APPEAL PANEL

| 2022 | 2023 |
|--|--|
| Members John Christie Sheena-Jane Clark Mary Coles David Dick | Hugh McGregor Alan Miller Anne Noble |
| <i>A Panel of 6 persons appointed by the General Assembly, being persons with Safeguarding and other relevant experience, and including at least two persons who shall be qualified to practise as lawyers or who are experienced in the law and practice of the Church, and at least two ministers. None of the Panel shall be a current or former employee of any of the Employing Agencies or a current member of the Safeguarding Committee.</i> | |

George Whyte, *Secretary*

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|------|----------------|-----------------|
| Ministers | | Elspeth McKay | Sonia Blakesley |
| Members John Pears* | | Robert McCabe* | Judy Wilson |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 6 members appointed by the General Assembly, 1 representative (voting member) from and appointed by each of the Faith Nurture Forum, the Faith Impact Forum, the Social Care Council, the Solicitor of the Church, the National Adviser (Head of Safeguarding) as Secretary to the Committee, the Chief Officer and up to 4 members co-opted by the Committee for their expertise. For the avoidance of doubt it is declared that only the following persons will be entitled to vote: Convener, Vice-Convener, the six Assembly appointed members and the three representatives from each of the Faith Nurture Forum, the Faith Impact Forum and the Social Care Council.</i> | | | |

Adam Dillon, Convener (2019-2023)
Fiona Reynolds, Vice-Convener (2021-2024)

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---|--|-----------|
| Ministers Ramsay Shields | | | |
| Members John Graham | Jo Elliot Iain Hunter Christine Johnson | Mike Cantlay Douglas Hamilton Susie Lind | Amy Reid* |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 9 members appointed by the General Assembly, with the Chief Executive Officer of CrossReach as a non-voting ex officio member. At least one member shall be a Church of Scotland minister.</i> | | | |

Thomas Riddell, Convener (2020-2024)
Sarah Wood, Vice-Convener (2020-2023)

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

| |
|---|
| Ministers Alexander Forsyth Frances Henderson Alexander Horsburgh Moira McDonald |
|---|

Derek Browning, Convener

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ETHICAL INVESTMENT

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Members Thomas Kisitu | Members Ewan Brown Hannah Dunlop Alasdair Ronald |
|---------------------------------|--|

Val Brown, Chair

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

| 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ministers Hector Morrison | Lynn McChlery Ruth Morrison* | Lance Stone* | John Carswell Paul Middleton* |
| Members Andrew Torrance | Jennifer Stark | Paul Nimmo Glen Pettigrove | Joshua Ralston |
| <i>Convener, Vice-Convener and 11 members appointed by the General Assembly, the membership being selected to provide an appropriate balance of (a) ministers of Word and Sacrament, (b) members of academic staff from the Divinity Schools (or equivalent) of Institutions of Higher Education in Scotland, (c) elders and (d) members drawn from the wider membership of the Church chosen for their particular expertise, experience or provenance.</i> | | | |

Liam Fraser, Convener (2021-2025)
Susan Hardman Moore, Vice-Convener (2021-2024)



The Church of Scotland

PART IV –
A – ROLL OF MEMBERS
B – MINUTES OF THE
PROCEEDINGS
C – OVERTURES FROM
PRESBYTERIES
D – STANDING ORDERS

Jesus said:

Follow Me!

**and I will make you
fish for people.**

**AND IMMEDIATELY
THEY LEFT THEIR NETS
AND FOLLOWED HIM.**

General Assembly **2021**

SECTION A – ROLL OF MEMBERS

Roll of Members

| | |
|------------|---|
| 32/1..... | Assembly Office-Bearers and Procedure Committee |
| 32/2..... | Index of Presbyteries |
| 32/3..... | Roll of Commissioners |
| 32/11..... | Delegates from other Churches |
| 32/11..... | Delegates from Ecumenical Bodies |
| 32/12..... | Delegates from other Countries |
| 32/12..... | Corresponding Members |
| 32/13..... | Youth Representatives |

SECTION A - ROLL OF MEMBERS**Assembly Office-Bearers and Procedure Committee**

| ASSEMBLY OFFICE-BEARERS | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Title | Name | No |
| Moderator | Rt Rev Dr Martin Fair | 739 |
| Moderator-Designate | Lord Wallace of Tankerness | 744 |
| Chaplains | Rev Dr Marjory A MacLean | 740 |
| | Rev Gordon Fraser H MacNaughton | 742 |
| Principal Clerk | Rev Dr George J Whyte | 745 |
| Depute Clerk | Ms Christine Paterson | 743 |
| Procurator | Ms Laura Dunlop QC | 738 |
| Law Agent | Miss Mary MacLeod | 741 |
| Precentor | Rev Colin Renwick | |
| Chief Steward | Mr Alexander F Gemmill | |
| Depute Steward | Mr Neil Proven | |
| Assembly Officer | Mr William Mearns | |
| Depute Assembly Officer | Mrs Karen McKay | |

| PROCEDURE COMMITTEE | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| Title | Name | No |
| Convener | Rev Donald McCorkindale | 746 |
| Vice-Convener | Mrs Susan Pym | 747 |

Index of Presbyteries

| | | | |
|----|----------------------------|----|------------------------|
| 31 | Aberdeen and Shetland | 6 | Jedburgh |
| 36 | Abernethy | 49 | Jerusalem |
| 30 | Angus | | |
| 7 | Annandale and Eskdale | 32 | Kincardine and Deeside |
| 12 | Ardrossan | 13 | Lanark |
| 19 | Argyll | 44 | Lewis |
| 10 | Ayr | 38 | Lochaber |
| | | 42 | Lochcarron – Skye |
| 34 | Buchan | 3 | Lothian |
| | | | |
| 41 | Caithness | 4 | Melrose and Peebles |
| 14 | Clyde | 35 | Moray |
| | | | |
| 8 | Dumfries and Kirkcudbright | 45 | Orkney |
| 29 | Dundee | | |
| 27 | Dunkeld and Meikle | 28 | Perth |
| 5 | Duns | | |
| | | 39 | Ross |
| 1 | Edinburgh | | |
| 47 | England | 23 | Stirling |
| | | 40 | Sutherland |
| 22 | Falkirk | | |
| 24 | Fife | 43 | Uist |
| | | | |
| 16 | Glasgow | 2 | West Lothian |
| 33 | Gordon | 9 | Wigtown and Stranraer |
| | | | |
| 17 | Hamilton | | |
| | | | |
| 48 | International Charges | | |
| 37 | Inverness | | |
| 11 | Irvine and Kilmaronock | | |

Roll of Commissioners**1. Presbytery of Edinburgh****Minister**

1. Rev Ian W Alexander, Interim Head of the Faith Impact Forum *
2. Very Rev Dr Russell Barr, (Edinburgh: Cramond)
3. Very Rev Dr Derek Browning, Edinburgh: Morningside
4. Rev Christine Clark, (Healthcare Chaplain)
5. Rev Joanne G Foster, Edinburgh: Inverleith St Serf's
6. Rev Neil N Gardner, Edinburgh: Canongate
7. Rev Keith E Graham, Edinburgh: Murrayfield
8. Rev Peter Graham, (Presbytery Clerk)
9. Rev James J Griggs, Edinburgh: Corstorphine St Anne's
10. Rev Dr Jared W Hay, (Edinburgh: Priestfield)
11. Rev Elizabeth M Henderson, Edinburgh: Richmond Craigmillar
12. Rev Dr James A P Jack, Edinburgh: Duddingston
13. Rev Dr Thomas Kisitu, Edinburgh: St Nicholas' Sighthill
14. Rev Ian A MacDonald, Edinburgh: Holy Trinity
15. Rev Dr Rosie Magee, Edinburgh: St Andrew's and St George's West
16. Rev Michael Mair, Edinburgh: St David's Broomhouse
17. Rev Cheryl McKellar-Young, Edinburgh: Fairmilehead
18. Rev Russell McLarty, Edinburgh: Meadowbank
19. Rev Marjory McPherson, Presbytery Clerk
20. Rev Peter Nelson, Edinburgh: St John's Colinton Mains
21. Rev Sheena Orr, Prison Chaplain*
22. Rev Malcolm Ramsay, Edinburgh: Willowbrae
23. Very Rev Colin A M Sinclair, Edinburgh: Palmerston Place
24. Very Rev Prof Iain R Torrance Kt, (University of Aberdeen)
25. Rev Samuel A R Torrens, Edinburgh: Slateford Longstone*
26. Rev Dr Fiona Tweedie, Mission Statistics Coordinator, OLM
27. Rev Ian J Wells, Ratho

Elder

28. Mrs Joanne Baird, Edinburgh: Leith St Andrew's
29. Mr Andrew Bathgate, Edinburgh: Craiglockhart
30. Ms Matilda Boulogne, Edinburgh: Juniper Green
31. Mr Ian R Buckingham, Edinburgh: Broughton St Mary's
32. Mrs Lesley Burt, Balerno
33. Mr James R Byers, Edinburgh: Corstorphine St Ninian's
34. Mrs Adrienne Burgess, Edinburgh: St Andrew's and St George's West
35. Mrs Andrena Crawford, Edinburgh: St Andrew's and St George's West
36. Mr George B Dickson, Edinburgh: St David's Broomhouse
37. Mr Duncan Douglas, Dalmeny
38. Mr David Drummond, Edinburgh: Corstorphine Old
39. Mr John Duncan, Edinburgh: Palmerston Place
40. Dr Alison Elliot, Edinburgh: Greyfriars

41. Mrs Isobel Gray, Edinburgh: Meadowbank
42. Dr Hazel Hastie, Edinburgh: Drylaw
43. Mrs Doreen Jones, Edinburgh: Duddingston
44. Mr David MacLennan, Edinburgh: Gorgie Dalry Stenhouse
45. Mr Hugh McDiarmid, Edinburgh: Newhaven
46. Mr William McKay, Kirkliston
47. Mr Chris McNeil, Edinburgh: Morningside
48. Mrs Deirdre Shishodia, Edinburgh: Cramond
49. Mrs Sandra Steedman, Edinburgh: St Andrew's Clermiston
50. Mr Ian A J Thom, Edinburgh: Greenbank
51. Mrs Carol Turnbull, Edinburgh: Corstorphine Craigsbank*
52. Mrs Sheila Ward, Edinburgh: Slateford Longstone
53. Mr Duncan Wilson, Edinburgh: Fairmilehead*
54. Mr Gary C Winney, Edinburgh: High (St Giles')

Deacon

55. Mrs Margaret Gordon DCS, Edinburgh: (Currie)
56. Miss Elspeth McPheat DCS, (CrossReach)

2. Presbytery of West Lothian**Minister**

57. Rev Alistair Cowper, Kirknewton and East Calder
58. Rev Derek R Henderson, Abercorn l/w Pardovan, Kingscavil and Winchburgh
59. Rev W. Richard Houston, Linlithgow: St Ninian's Craigmailen
60. Rev A Scott Marshall, Abercorn l/w Pardovan, Kingscavil and Winchburgh
61. Rev Dr Ian D Maxwell, Uphall: South
62. Rev Allison Quilter, Polbeth Harwood l/w West Kirk of Calder, OLM
63. Rev Thomas S Riddell, Linlithgow: St Michael's, Auxiliary Minister*

Elder

64. Mr Hugh Brown, Broxburn
65. Mr David Cameron, Uphall: South
66. Mr Alan Carruthers, Abercorn
67. Mrs Jean Kershaw, Pardovan, Kingscavil and Winchburgh*
68. Mr John McFadzean, Whitburn: South
69. Mr Darren Philip, Livingston: United
70. Mr Keith Stirling, Torphichen

Deacon

71. Mrs Kay McIntosh DCS, Edinburgh: Mayfield Salisbury, Pastoral Assistant

3. Presbytery of Lothian**Minister**

72. Rev Robin N Allison, Cockenzie and Port Seton: Chalmers Memorial
73. Rev Geoff T Berry, Army Chaplain
74. Very Rev Dr John B Cairns, (Aberlady l/w Gullane)
75. Rev Hayley L Cohen, Musselburgh: Northesk
76. Rev Suzanne G Fletcher, Dunglass

77. Rev Dr David J Graham, Dirleton l/w North Berwick: Abbey
78. Rev Ruth D Halley, (Logie)
79. Rev Dr Robin E Hill, Gladsmuir l/w Longniddry
80. Rev Keith L Mack, Dalkeith: St John's and King's Park
81. Rev Louise I Purden, Bonnyrigg*
82. Rev Gordon Stevenson, Dunbar
83. Rev John D Vischer, Garvald and Morham l/w Haddington: West

Elder

84. Mr A William Bell, Garvald and Morham*
85. Mr Robert D Burgon, North Berwick: Abbey
86. Mrs Joan E Cape, Penicuik: St Mungo's
87. Mrs Mary T Gordon, Cockenzie and Port Seton: Chalmers Memorial
88. Mrs Mary S M Graham, North Berwick: Abbey
89. Mr Connor MacFadyen, Tranent
90. Mr John D McCulloch, Presbytery Clerk
91. Mrs Abigail Morrison, Longniddry
92. Mr Alexander P M Nightingale, Dunglass
93. Mrs Emma T Stewart, Musselburgh: St Andrew's High
94. Mr Iain J Thomson, Bonnyrigg
95. Mr Kenneth M Wright, Gullane

Deacon

96. Mrs Marilyn J Steele DCS, (Edinburgh: Granton)

4. Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles

Minister

97. Very Rev David Arnott, (St Andrews: Hope Park with Strathkinness)
98. Rev Fraser Edwards, Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn
99. Rev Rosemary Frew, Bowden and Melrose
100. Very Rev Dr Finlay Macdonald, (Principal Clerk)
101. Rev Sheila W Moir, Maxton and Mertoun l/w Newtown l/w St Boswells*
102. Rev Margaret D J Steele, Ashkirk l/w Ettrick and Yarrow l/w Selkirk

Elder

103. Dr Patsy Campbell, Carlops
104. Mrs Frances Heafield, Ashkirk
105. Mrs Isobel Hunter, Skirling
106. Mr Peter Sandison, Galashiels: Old and St Paul's
107. Mr Robert Scott, Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn
108. Mr Robert G Turnbull, Earlston*

5. Presbytery of Duns

Minister

109. Rev Andy Haddow, Coldingham and St Abbs l/w Eyemouth*
110. Rev Mike A Taylor, Chirnside l/w Hutton and Fishwick and Paxton

Elder

111. Mrs Susan Patterson, Ayton and District Churches*
112. Mr David S Philp, Presbytery Clerk

6. Presbytery of Jedburgh

Minister

113. Rev Stephen Manners, Kelso Country Churches*
114. Rev Anna S Rodwell, Kelso: North and Ednam
115. Rev Rachel Wilson, Hobkirk and Southdean l/w Ruberslaw

Elder

116. Mr R S Elliot, Hawick: Burnfoot*
117. Mr Stuart Kelly, Cheviot Churches
118. Mrs Morag McKeand, Oxnam

7. Presbytery of Annandale and Eskdale

Minister

119. Rev Morag Crossan, Canonbie United
120. Rev Elsie Macrae, Kirkpatrick Juxta l/w Moffat: St Andrew's l/w Wamphray
121. Rev Dr Robert Pickles, Langholm, Eskdalemuir, Ewes and Westerkirk
122. Rev David Whiteman, Annan: Old l/w Dornock*

Elder

123. Mr David Boncey, Kirkpatrick Juxta
124. Mrs Elaine I Irving, Hoddum, Kirtle-Eaglesfield and Middlebie
125. Mr Anthony Lane, Canonbie United*
126. Mr Ian Scott, Lochmaben

8. Presbytery of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright

Minister

127. Rev Dr David Bartholomew, Balmaclellan, Kells and Dalry l/w Carsphairn
128. Rev Donald Campbell, Dumfries: St George's*
129. Rev John Notman, Dumfries: Troqueer
130. Rev Valerie J Ott, Gatehouse and Borgue l/w Tarff and Twynholm
131. Rev Mark Smith, Dunscore l/w Glencairn and Moniaive
132. Rev Fiona Wilson, Dalbeattie and Kirkgunzeon l/w Urr

Elder

133. Mrs Louise Finch, Kirkcudbright*
134. Mrs Thelma Hart, Kirkcudbright
135. Mrs Andrea Houston, Kirkmichael, Tinwald and Torthorwald
136. Mr Robert J McBride, Kirkmahoe
137. Mrs Elizabeth Tanner, Dumfries: St Mary's Greyfriars'
138. Mr David Townsend, Dumfries: Northwest

9. Presbytery of Wigtown and Stranraer

Minister

139. Rev Eric Boyle, Kirkcowan l/w Wigtown*
140. Rev Alexander I Currie, Glasserton and Isle of Whithorn l/w Whithorn: St Ninian's Priory
141. Rev Stephen Ogston, Inch l/w Luce Valley

Elder

142. Mr Angus Carrick-Buchanan, Ervie Kirkcolm*
143. Mrs Sandra McDowall, Wigtown
144. Mrs Elma Carle, Glasserton and Isle of Whithorn l/w Whithorn: St Ninian's Priory

10. Presbytery of Ayr**Minister**

- 145. Rev Lynsey Brennan, Dundonald
- 146. Rev Kenneth Elliott, Presbytery Clerk
- 147. Rev Brian Hendrie, Ayr: St Leonard's l/w Dalrymple
- 148. Rev Dr David Hume, Alloway, OLM
- 149. Rev Neil McNaught, Alloway*
- 150. Rev John Paterson, Lugar l/w Old Cumnock: Old
- 151. Rev Dave Prentice-Hyers, Troon: Old
- 152. Rev Mandy Ralph, Annbank l/w Tarbolton
- 153. Rev Alastair Symington, Depute Presbytery Clerk
- 154. Rev Allan Vint, Mauchline l/w Sorn

Elder

- 155. Dr James Anderson, Girvan: South
- 156. Mr Bill Duncan, Alloway*
- 157. Mr Gordon MacDonald, Prestwick: Kingcase
- 158. Mr Sandy Mavor, Dundonald
- 159. Mrs Irene McCallum, Annbank
- 160. Mrs Maureen McNae, Tarbolton
- 161. Mr Ian Watt, Mauchline
- 162.
- 163.
- 164.

11. Presbytery of Irvine and Kilmarnock**Minister**

- 165. Rev Taylor Brown, Kilmarnock: South
- 166. Very Rev William Hewitt, (Presbytery Clerk: Glasgow)
- 167. Very Rev Dr David Lacy, (Kilmarnock: Kay Park)
- 168. Rev George Lind, (Irvine: Mure l/w Irvine: Relief Boutreehill)
- 169. Rev Alison McBrier, Caldwell
- 170. Rev James McNaughtan, Kilmarnock: St Andrew's and St Marnock's
- 171. Rev John Urquhart, Kilmaurs: St Maur's Glencairn
- 172. Rev Alec Wark, Presbytery Clerk*

Elder

- 173. Mr Alan Beattie, Kilmarnock: St Andrew's and St Marnock's
- 174. Mr William Bremner, Irvine: St Andrew's
- 175. Mrs Margaret Hamilton, Kilmarnock: South*
- 176. Mrs Jane Johnston, Kilmarnock: St John's Onthank
- 177. Mr Les Kirk, Dunlop
- 178. Mr Robbie Menzies, Kilmaurs: St Maur's Glencairn
- 179. Mrs Loraine Strang, Caldwell
- 180. Mr David Whitelaw, Irvine: Old

Deacon

- 181. Mrs Barbara Urquhart DCS, (Deacon)

12. Presbytery of Ardrossan**Minister**

- 182. Rev David Albon, Dalry: St Margaret's
- 183. Rev Scott Cameron, Stevenston: High
- 184. Rev James McNay, West Kilbride
- 185. Rev David Watson, Largs: Clark Memorial*

- 186. Rev David Sutherland Stevenston: Ardeer l/w Stevenston: Livingstone

Elder

- 187. Mr Archie Currie, Kilbirnie: Auld*
- 188. Ms Veronica A M Fitzpatrick, Kilwinning: Abbey
- 189. Mrs Jean Hunter, Presbytery Clerk
- 190. Mrs Bea Nicholson, Saltcoats: St Cuthbert's
- 191. Mr Magnus Ross, Largs: Clark Memorial

Deacon

- 192. Miss Fiona Blair DCS, Beith

13. Presbytery of Lanark**Minister**

- 193. Rev Iain D Cunningham, Carluke: Kirkton
- 194. Rev Bryan Kerr, Lanark: Greyfriars*
- 195. Rev Louise E Mackay, Lanark: St Nicholas'
- 196. Rev Andrew D Rooney, Kirkmuirhill

Elder

- 197. Mrs Lesley Ewing, Carluke: Kirkton
- 198. Mr Scott M Paget, Lanark: Greyfriars*
- 199. Mr David M Waters, Kirkmuirhill
- 200.

14. Presbytery of Clyde**Minister**

- 201. Rev Gordon Armstrong, Paisley: Oakshaw Trinity
- 202. Rev Dr Sonia Blakesley, Paisley: St Mark's Oldhall
- 203. Rev William Boyle, Port Glasgow: New
- 204. Rev Stuart Davidson, Pioneer Minister Paisley: North End
- 205. Rev Gray Fletcher, Elderslie Kirk
- 206.
- 207. Rev Dr Christine Goldie, Bearsden: Westerton Fairlie Memorial*
- 208. Rev Pamela Gordon, Barrhead: Bourrock
- 209. Rev Kenneth Gray, Bridge of Weir: Freeland
- 210. Rev Dr Alan J Hamilton, Bearsden: Killermont
- 211. Rev Karen Harbison, Greenock: Westburn
- 212. Very Rev Dr Lorna Hood OBE, (Renfrew: North)
- 213. Rev C Ian W Johnson, Dumbarton: Riverside l/w Dumbarton: St Andrew's l/w Dumbarton: West Kirk
- 214. Rev Margaret McArthur, Cardross
- 215. Rev Dr Peter McEnhill, Presbytery Clerk*
- 216. Rev Christine M Murdoch, Craigrownie l/w Garelochhead l/w Rosneath: St Modan's
- 217. Rev Gary Noonan, Houston and Killellan
- 218. Rev Alastair Shaw, Johnstone: St Paul's
- 219. Rev Ramsay B Shields, Milngavie: St Luke's

Elder

- 220. Mrs Sheila Atkinson, Baldernock
- 221. Mrs Ima Burnett, Barrhead: St Andrew's
- 222. Mrs Christine Cavanagh, Bearsden: Killermont
- 223. Mrs Linda Dye, Barrhead: Bourrock*
- 224. Mrs Elma Farr, Barrhead: St Andrew's
- 225. Mr John O Hawthorn, Gourock: Old Gourock and Ashton

226. Mr Robert M Kinloch, Lomond*
227. Mr John Kitson, Paisley: Abbey
228. Mr David Linley, Bearsden: Baljaffray
229. Miss Celia Massicks, Dumbarton: Riverside
230. Ms Anne McGregor, Kilmacolm: Old
231. Mr Campbell McGregor, Renfrew: North
232. Mr Alan Nimmo, Arrochar
233. Mrs Eileen Nish, Bridge of Weir: Freeland
234. Mr Derek W Smith, Clydebank: Kilbowie St Andrew's
235. Mrs Elizabeth Stewart, Dalmuir: Barclay
236. Mr Douglas Thomson, Bonhill
237. Mrs Moira Thomson, Bonhill
238. Mrs Maureen Walker, Cardross

16. Presbytery of Glasgow

Minister

239. Rev Norman Afrin, Glasgow: Sandyhills
240. Rev Dr S Grant Barclay, Interim Presbytery Clerk
241. Rev Scott Blythe, Netherlee and Stamperland
242. Rev James A S Boag, Broom
243. Rev Richard Cameron, Glasgow: Scotstoun
244. Rev Stuart J Crawford, Newton Mearns
245. Rev Jane M Denniston, Campsie*
246. Rev Ruth Forsythe, Spiritual Formation Advisor
247. Rev Ian F Galloway, Glasgow: Gorbals
248. Rev James Gemmell, Glasgow: Carnwadric*
249. Rev David Gray, Glasgow: Govan and Linthouse
250. Rev Roy J M Henderson, Glasgow: Pollokshaws
251. Rev Karen E Hendry, Glasgow: Yoker
252. Rev Derek Hughes, Glasgow: Easterhouse
253. Rev Margaret H Johnston, Glasgow: Kinning Park
254. Rev Mark Johnston, University of Glasgow: Pastoral Studies Tutor
255. Rev Jonathan A Keefe, Glasgow: Robroyston
- 256.
257. Rev Stuart Love, Glasgow: Clincarthill
258. Very Rev Dr David W Lunan, (Presbytery Clerk: Glasgow)
259. Rev Dr Kleber Machado, Glasgow: St Andrew's West
260. Rev Alasdair R MacMillan, Glasgow: Cathcart Trinity
261. Rev Elaine H MacRae, Glasgow: St Enoch's Hogganfield
262. Rev Gordon MacRae, Stepps
263. Rev Stuart C Matthews, Glasgow: Maryhill
264. Rev I Scott McCarthy, Glasgow: Garthamlock and Craigend
265. Rev (James) Andrew McIntyre, Glasgow: Partick South
266. Rev David N McLachlan, Glasgow: Langside
267. Rev T Alastair McLachlan, Craiglinsh with Kilbrandon and Kilchattan l/w Kilniver and Kilmelford
268. Rev Alan McWilliam, Glasgow: Ruchazie
269. Rev Peter Nimmo, Cambuslang
270. Rev John S Purves, Glasgow: Drumchapel St Andrew's
271. Rev Christopher J Rowe, Glasgow: Colston Milton

272. Rev Robert M Silver, Glasgow: Croftfoot
273. Rev Aquila R Singh, Fernhill and Cathkin*
274. Rev David G Slater, Gartcosh l/w Glenboig
275. Rev Ian Taylor, Bishopbriggs: Springfield Cambridge*

Elder

276. Mrs Catherine Arbuckle, Glasgow: St James' Pollok
277. Mrs Wendy Armstrong, Eaglesham
278. Mr Graeme D I Barrie, Glasgow: Easterhouse*
279. Mr Alastair Borthwick, Glasgow: Baillieston Mure Memorial
280. Mrs Christina L Brownlie, Glasgow: Cardonald
281. Mrs Carole Campbell, Glasgow: Baillieston St Andrew's
282. Miss Morag Campbell, Glasgow: St David's Knightswood
283. Mrs Fiona Crawford, Newton Mearns
284. Mr Anthony C D Crow, Glasgow: Sandyford Henderson Memorial
285. Mrs Agnes Dick, Glasgow: Shettleston New
286. Mrs Brenda Dickie, Glasgow: Cathcart Old
287. Ms Jane Drummond, Glasgow: Broomhill Hyndland
288. Mr Andrew Dunn, Glasgow: Tron St Mary's
289. Ms Rebecca Gebauer, Glasgow: Wellington
290. Mrs Elizabeth Glen, Glasgow: Blawarthill
291. Mr Bill Gray, Glasgow: Torrance
292. Ms Fiona Hay, Glasgow: Balshagray Victoria Park
293. Ms Una L Heaney, Glasgow: Sherbrooke Mossbank
294. Mr Robin C Hutchison, Glasgow: St John's Renfield
295. Mr Raymond Jenkins, Glasgow: King's Park
296. Mr Ross Johnstone, Williamwood
297. Mr Peter Liddell, Greenbank
298. Mr Robert Macdonald, Glasgow: Yoker
299. Mr Gordon J MacFarlane, Glasgow: Clincarthill
300. Ms Patricia Mackenzie, Broom
301. Mrs Isabel McDerment, Glasgow: Scotstoun*
302. Mr David McLachlan, Glasgow: Shawlands Trinity
303. Mrs Janette McMaster, Glasgow: Barlanark Greyfriars
304. Mrs Margaret O'Neil, Glasgow: Thornliebank
305. Ms Lorraine Robertson, Stepps
306. Mrs Margaret Robertson, Williamwood
307. Mr Harry Sime, Glasgow: Robroyston
308. Miss Jean O Smith, Glasgow: Dennistoun New
309. Mrs Helen Sturrock, Glasgow: Wellington*
310. Mrs Fiona L Watson, Glasgow: Kelvinside Hillhead
311. Ms Edith Watt, Glasgow: Bridgeton St Francis in the East
312. Mr Andrew Wilkin, Kirkintilloch: St David's Memorial Park

Deacon

313. Ms Ann Lyall DCS, Parish Assistant Glasgow: Baillieston Mure Memorial l/w Glasgow: Baillieston St Andrew's
314. Miss Anne MacDonald DCS, Glasgow Royal Infirmary: Hospital Chaplain
315. Mrs Margaret D McLellan DCS, (Glasgow: Merrylea)

17. Presbytery of Hamilton**Minister**

- 316. Rev Ross Blackman, Hamilton: Old
- 317. Rev John Brewster, East Kilbride: Greenhills
- 318. Rev Leslie N Brunger, Uddingston: Burnhead
- 319. Rev Stewart Cutler, Stonehouse: St Ninian's LEP
- 320. Rev Dr Peter H Donald, Airdrie: Cairnlea l/w Calderbank
- 321. Rev Lorna Fyfe, Coatbridge: New St Andrew's OLM*
- 322.
- 323. Rev Lorna I MacDougall, Overtown
- 324. Rev Iain M T Majcher, Bothwell
- 325. Rev Dr Alistair S May, Motherwell: Dalziel St Andrew's*
- 326. Rev Dr Gordon A McCracken, Presbytery Clerk
- 327. Rev Fiona Nicolson, Coatbridge: New St Andrew's
- 328. Rev Gordon R Palmer, East Kilbride: Claremont
- 329. Rev Dr Shaw J Paterson, Strathaven: Trinity
- 330. Rev Graham Raeburn, Newmains: Bonkle l/w Newmains: Coltness Memorial
- 331. Rev Ecilo Selemani, Hamilton: South l/w Quarter
- 332.

Elder

- 333. Mr David S Alexander, Uddingston: Viewpark
- 334. Mr Samuel Clark, Bellshill: West
- 335. Mr David Findlay, Calderbank
- 336. Mrs Susan Forbes, Overtown
- 337. Mr William Howson, Hamilton: St John's
- 338. Mrs Roberta E Hutton, Wishaw: Craigneuk and Belhaven
- 339. Mrs June Irvine, Newmains: Coltness Memorial
- 340. Mrs Lynette Jardine, Uddingston: Old
- 341. Ms Marion McElroy, Airdrie: St Columba's
- 342. Mr John McGeary, Wishaw: South Wishaw
- 343. Mr Hugh R McGregor, Larkhall: Trinity
- 344. Dr David Moreland, Strathaven: Avendale Old and Drumclog
- 345. Miss Zandra Swan, Bellshill: Central
- 346. Mr Douglas Pearson, Uddingston: Burnhead
- 347. Mr Steven Preston, East Kilbride: Claremont
- 348. Mr George Robertson, Hamilton: Old*
- 349. Mr Andrew Williamson, Blantyre: St Andrew's

Deacon

- 350. Mr Colin Ogilvie DCS, Coatbridge: Calder l/w Coatbridge: Old Monkland, Locum

19. Presbytery of Argyll**Minister**

- 351. Rev David Carruthers, Ardrishaig l/w South Knapdale
- 352. Rev William Crossan, Campbeltown: Lorne and Lowland
- 353. Rev Chris Fulcher, Team Minister, South Argyll, OLM
- 354. Rev Steve Fulcher, South Kintyre
- 355. Rev Elizabeth A Gibson, North Mull
- 356. Rev Dr Robert K Mackenzie, Upper Cowal*

- 357. Rev Lyn Peden, Skipness l/w Tarbert, Loch Fyne and Kilberry

- 358. Rev Sibyl Tchaikovsky, Rothesay: Trinity

Elder

- 359. Mr Douglas Lindsay, Bute: United
- 360. Miss Maureen M Mackinnon, North and West Islay
- 361. Mr Ron McInnes, Ardrishaig
- 362. Mr James I Miller, Strathfillan
- 363. Ms Helen Pearson, Kilmore and Oban
- 364. Mrs Maura Rae, Kilbrandon and Kilchattan
- 365.
- 366. Mrs Jeneffer Zielinski, Cowal Kirk

22. Presbytery of Falkirk**Minister**

- 367. Very Rev Albert O Bogle, Sanctuary First
- 368. Rev James Cowan, (Barrhead: St Andrew's)
- 369. Rev Dr Jean Gallacher, Dunipace
- 370. Rev Aftab Gohar, Grangemouth: Abbotsgrange
- 371. Rev Elspeth McKay, Cumbernauld: Old*
- 372. Rev Andrew J Moore, Bothkennar and Carronshore
- 373. Rev Julie Rennick, Larbert: West
- 374. Rev William Thomson, Stenhouse and Carron
- 375. Rev Kipchumba Too, Denny: Westpark
- 376. Rev David Wandrum, Carriden
- 377. Rev Anne White, Falkirk: Grahamston United

Elder

- 378. Mr Alastair Blackstock, Camelon
- 379. Miss Alison Cooke, Denny: Westpark
- 380. Mrs Anne Coulter, Airth
- 381. Mrs Janette M Craig, Slamannan
- 382. Mr Christopher Dunn, Cumbernauld: Kildrum
- 383. Mrs Helen Moir, Cumbernauld: Condorrat
- 384. Mrs Rena C Moore, Blackbraes and Shieldhill
- 385. Mrs Eleanor Neilson, Grangemouth: Kirk of the Holy Rood
- 386. Mrs Morag M Patterson, Stenhouse and Carron*
- 387. Ms Isleen Campbell, Falkirk: Bainsford
- 388. Mr Eric C Smith, Brightons

Deacon

- 389. Mr David Nicholson DCS, Deacon, Cumbernauld Kildrum l/w St Mungo's

23. Presbytery of Stirling**Minister**

- 390. Rev Dr Valerie L Allen, Presbytery Chaplain
- 391. Rev Alison E P Britchfield, Tillicoultry*
- 392. Rev Dr Anthony Foley, Dollar
- 393. Rev Barry Hughes, Stirling: St Mark's
- 394. Rev Alison M Jack, New College
- 395. Rev Dawn A Laing, Alloa: Ludgate
- 396. Rev Sigrid Marten, Balfron
- 397. Rev Scott McInnes, Stirling: North
- 398. Rev Alan F Miller, Presbytery Clerk

399. Rev Colin C Renwick, Dunblane Cathedral

Elder

- 400. Mr David Briggs, Stirling: North
- 401. Mrs Marjory Davidson, Tullibody: St Serf's
- 402. Mrs Mary Gillies, Tullibody: St Serf's
- 403. Mr Daniel Gunn, Dunblane: St Blane's*
- 404. Mr Ian McVean, Balfron
- 405. Miss Isobel Munro, Menstrie
- 406. Mrs Val Rose, Alloa: Ludgate
- 407. Mr David Scott, Dunblane Cathedral
- 408. Mr Michael G S Yuille, Dunblane: St Blane's
- 409.

Deacon

- 410. Mrs Jean T Porter DCS, Stirling: St Mark's

24. Presbytery of Fife

Minister

- 411. Rev Jane Barron, Moderator of the Presbytery of Fife*
- 412. Rev Graeme Beebee, Cameron l/w St Andrew's: St Leonard's
- 413. Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, (Principal Clerk)
- 414. Rev Amos Chewachong, Newport-on-Tay
- 415. Rev Douglas Creighton, East Neuk Trinity l/w St Monans
- 416. Rev Andrew C Donald, Kirkcaldy: Pathhead
- 417. Rev John Duncan, Leuchars: St Athernase
- 418. Rev Elizabeth A Fisk, Culross and Torryburn
- 419. Rev Dr David Coulter, Presbytery Clerk
- 420. Rev Donald Lawrie, Auchterderran: Kinglassie
- 421. Rev Jeffrey Martin, Cupar: Old and St Michael of Tarvit l/w Monimail
- 422. Rev Eileen Miller, Glenrothes: St Margaret's
- 423. Rev Andrew Morrice, Dunfermline: East
- 424. Rev Allan Morton, Kennoway, Windygates and Balgonie: St Kenneth's
- 425. Rev Gillian Paterson, Methil: Wellesley
- 426. Rev Alec Shuttleworth, Tulliallan and Kincardine l/w Saline and Blairingone*
- 427. Rev David J Smith, Glenrothes: St Ninian's
- 428. Rev Muriel F Willoughby, Dunfermline: St Andrew's Erskine

Elder

- 429. Ms Marion J Baldie, Falkland
- 430. Lady Sheila Boyd, Leuchars: St Athernase
- 431. Miss Elizabeth Bracher, East Neuk Trinity*
- 432. Mrs Sheena S T Briggs, Glenrothes: St Ninian's
- 433. Mrs Ella Brown, Ceres, Kemback and Springfield
- 434. Mr Kenneth Brown, Dunfermline: East
- 435. Mrs Clementina B Dodds MBE, Culross and Torryburn
- 436. Mr Louis Douglas, Dunfermline: St Andrew's Erskine
- 437. Mrs Margaret Dow, Kelty*
- 438. Mrs Linda Gartshore, Methil: Wellesley
- 439. Mr Ian Hamilton, Auchterderran: Kinglassie
- 440. Mr William Henderson, Aberdour

441. Mr Hugh Mackenzie, Kirkcaldy: Pathhead

442. Mr Philip Owen, Newport-on-Tay

443. Mr George G Owenson, Dalgety

444. Miss Iona M Pringle, Kennoway, Windygates and Balgonie: St Kenneth's

445. Mrs Catriona J Reidpath, Glenrothes: St Margaret's

446. Mr Peter Robinson, Cameron

Deacon

- 447. Mrs Pamela Scott DCS, Lochgelly and Benarty

27. Presbytery of Dunkeld and Meigle

Minister

- 448. Rev Benjamin Abeledo, Blairgowrie
- 449. Rev Michael J Erskine, Alyth*
- 450. Rev Peggy Ewart-Roberts, Kinclaven l/w Caputh and Clunie
- 451. Rev Neil M Glover, Aberfeldy l/w Dull and Weem l/w Grandtully, Logierait and Strathtay

Elder

- 452. Mr Clifford Cooke, Blairgowrie
- 453. Mr Alan Dunlop, Aberfeldy
- 454. Mrs Sheila Mannion, Dunkeld
- 455. Mr Steven Tait, Alyth*

28. Presbytery of Perth

Minister

- 456. Rev Marc F Bircham, St Madoes and Kinfauns
- 457. Rev Grant MacLaughlan, Community Worker with Tulloch Net
- 458. Rev Dr Lynn McChlery, Auchterarder
- 459. Rev Alex M Millar, Presbytery Clerk*
- 460. Rev Elisabeth M Stenhouse, Fossoway: St Serf's and Devonside l/w Cleish
- 461. Rev Anne E Stewart, Chaplain at HMP Castle Huntly
- 462. Rev Anne Stott, Community Minister, Bertha Park
- 463. Rev Kenneth D Stott, Perth: North

Elder

- 464. Mr Kenith Barclay, Perth: Letham St Mark's
- 465. Mrs Margaret Bell, Dunbarney and Forgandenny
- 466. Miss Marjorie Clark, Perth: St Matthew's*
- 467. Mrs Elizabeth Cunningham, Dundurn
- 468. Mr George G Hayton, Kinross
- 469. Mr Ian A Roy, Crieff
- 470. Mrs Karin Wilson, St Madoes and Kinfauns
- 471.

Deacon

- 472. Ms Patricia M Munro DCS, (Perth: Riverside)*

29. Presbytery of Dundee

Minister

- 473. Rev Colin Brough, Dundee: Fintry*
- 474. Rev Gordon A Campbell, Chaplain, Dundee University
- 475. Rev Dr James Connolly, Dundee: West
- 476. Rev Donna Hays, Fowlis and Liff l/w Lundie and Muirhead
- 477. Rev Anita Kerr, Dundee: Meadowsides St Paul's l/w Dundee: St Andrew's

478. Rev Marc Prowe, Invergowrie
 479. Rev Graham Taylor, (Dundee: Broughty Ferry St Luke's and Queen Street)
 480. Rev James Wilson, Dundee: Whitfield

Elder

481. Mr James Colville, Broughty Ferry New Kirk
 482. Miss Catherine Coull, Dundee: Chalmers-Ardler
 483. Mr Ken McAra, Lundie and Muirhead
 484. Mr Gordon McBean, Dundee: Lochee
 485. Mrs Margaret McVean, Fowlis and Liff
 486. Mr Tim Podger, Monikie and Newbigging and Murroes and Tealing*
 487. Mr Alastair Robertson, Monifieth
 488. Mr Timothy Xenophontos-Hellen, Dundee: St Andrew's

30. Presbytery of Angus

Minister

489. Rev Stephen Blakey, The Isla Parishes
 490. Rev Fiona C Bullock, Dun and Hillside
 491. Rev Michael S Goss, Barry l/w Carnoustie
 492. Rev Christine Hay, Arbroath: West Kirk
 493. Rev Dr Ian A McLean, Presbytery Clerk*
 494. Rev Brian Ramsay, Aberlemno l/w Guthrie and Rescobie
 495. Rev Geoffrey Redmayne, Montrose: South and Ferryden

Elder

496. Mrs Elizabeth Aiken, Arbroath: West Kirk
 497. Mrs Joyce Brown, Carnoustie: Panbride
 498. Mrs Meg Cowan, Montrose: South and Ferryden
 499. Mr Douglas Gow, Edzell Lethnot and Glenesk
 500. Mrs Elizabeth Kidd, Brechin: Gardner Memorial
 501. Mr Ronald Leslie, Forfar: Lowson Memorial
 502. Mrs Irene McGugan, Dunnichen, Letham and Kirkden*

31. Presbytery of Aberdeen & Shetland

Minister

503. Rev Keith Blackwood, Aberdeen: Mannofield
 504. Rev Dr John A Ferguson, Presbytery Clerk*
 505. Rev Dr Frances Henderson, Transition Minister, Shetland
 506. Rev David S Hutchison, (Chaplain, University of Aberdeen)
 507. Rev J Peter N Johnston, Aberdeen: Ferryhill
 509. Rev Manson C Merchant, Dyce
 510. Rev Scott M Rennie, Aberdeen: Queen's Cross
 511. Rev David J Stewart, Aberdeen: South Holburn
 512. Rev Prof John Swinton, University of Aberdeen
 513. Rev Maggie Whyte, Aberdeen: St Stephen's

Elder

514. Miss Pauline M Alexander, Aberdeen: Woodside
 515. Mr Jim Donald, Shetland*
 516. Mr Robert Gunn, Dyce
 517. Mrs Hazel Hewitt, Aberdeen: South St Nicholas
 518. Mr Ronald Johnstone, Aberdeen: South Holburn

519. Mrs Eunice McConnach, Aberdeen: Rubislaw
 520. Miss Alice Merrilees, Aberdeen: Ferryhill
 521. Mr William Rae, Aberdeen: Ruthrieston West
 522. Dr J Graeme Roberts, Aberdeen: Ferryhill
 523. Mr Michael Cheyne Leys, Aberdeen: Queen's Cross

32. Presbytery of Kincardine and Deeside

Minister

524. Rev David Barr, Glenmuick*
 525. Rev Dr Melvyn Griffiths, Maryculter Trinity
 526. Rev Andrew Morrison, Arbuthnott, Bervie and Kinneff
 527. Rev Brian D Smith, West Mearns
 528. Rev Holly Smith, Mid Deeside

Elder

529. Mr James M Clark, Glenmuick
 530. Mr David E Laing, Banchory-Ternan: East*
 531. Mrs Marion McNeil, Drumoak-Durris
 532. Mr David Middleton, West Mearns
 533. Mrs Gloria Potter, Stonehaven: Fetteresso

33. Presbytery of Gordon

Minister

534. Rev Dr John A Cook, Howe Trinity*
 535. Rev Dr Mary Cranfield, Culsalmond and Rayne l/w Daviot
 536. Rev Dr Kay Gauld, Inch-Leslie-Premnay-Oyne
 537. Rev Euan Glen, Presbytery Clerk
 538. Rev Douglas McNab, New Machar
 539. Rev Sheila Mitchell, Echt and Midmar
 540. Rev Dr William Stalder, Methlick

Elder

541. Miss Ann Brown, Kemnay*
 542. Mrs Anne M Campbell, Inch-Leslie-Premnay-Oyne
 543. Ms Susan E S Hogg, Daviot
 544. Mrs Pat Patrone, Meldrum and Bourtie
 545. Mrs Somersal Shepley, Howe Trinity
 546. Mrs Jeannie Price, Methlick
 547.

34. Presbytery of Buchan

Minister

548. Rev James M Cook, Turriff: St Andrew's l/w Monquhitter and New Byth
 549. Rev David I W Locke, Banff l/w King Edward
 550. Rev Dr Alan Macgregor, Marnoch
 551. Rev Aileen McFie, Maud and Savoch l/w New Deer: St Kane's
 552. Rev Colin A Strong, New Pitsligo l/w Strichen and Tyrie*
 553. Rev Sean Swindells, Cruden
 554. Rev Dr Jeffrey Tippner, St Fergus

Elder

555. Mrs Isabel Cumming, Maud and Savoch
 556. Mrs Maureen H Esson, Cruden
 557. Mr Robert M Esson, Cruden
 558. Miss U Ruth R Mackenzie, Peterhead: New

559. Mr Kenneth Sim, Sandhaven*
 560. Mrs Elizabeth Slaven, Longside
 561. Mr Steven Wilson, Strichen and Tyrie

35. Presbytery of Moray

Minister

562. Rev Jennifer M Adams, Duffus, Spynie and Hopeman
 563. Rev Anne Attenburrow, (Auxiliary Minister, Duffus, Spynie and Hopeman)
 564. Rev Eduard Enslin, Cabrach and Mortlach
 565. Rev Richard G Moffat, Dyke and Edinkillie
 566. Rev Douglas F Stevenson, Cullen and Deskford*
 567. Rev Wiekus Van Straaten, Keith: St Rufus Botriphnie and Grange

Elder

568. Mrs Ann M C Bowie, Bellie and Speymouth
 569. Mrs Iona Kielhorn, Lossiemouth: St Gerardine's High
 570. Mr Stuart Lynch, Elgin: St Giles' and St Columba's South*
 571. Mr Alastair Rossetter, St Andrew's-Llanbryde and Urquhart
 572. Mrs Jane Rossetter, St Andrew's-Llanbryde and Urquhart
 573. Mr Roy Anderson, Forres: St Leonard's

Deacon

574. Miss Margaret R King DCS, (Bellie and Speymouth)

36. Presbytery of Abernethy

Minister

575. Rev Graham Atkinson, Abernethy l/w Boat of Garten, Carrbridge and Kincardine
 576. Rev Charles Finnie, Alvie and Insh l/w Rothiemurchus and Aviemore*

Elder

577. Mrs Margaret Dick, Cromdale and Advie*
 578. Mrs Wilma Grierson, Alvie and Insh

37. Presbytery of Inverness

Minister

579. Rev Robert E Brookes, Cawdor l/w Croy and Dalcross
 580. Rev Thomas M Bryson, Auldearn and Dalmore l/w Nairn: St Ninian's
 581. Rev Ian A Manson, Kilmorack and Erchless
 582. Rev Alison C Mehigan, Nairn: Old*
 583. Rev Fiona E Smith, Inverness: Ness Bank
 584.

Elder

585. Mrs Annie Burtwell, Nairn: Old*
 586. Miss Christine Mackenzie, Inverness: Old High St Stephen's
 587. Mrs Grace McCloy, Auldearn and Dalmore l/w Nairn: St Ninian's
 588. Mr Michael Ronaldson, Inverness: Trinity
 589. Mr Geoffrey Thomson, Inverness: Ness Bank
 590.

Deacon

591. Mrs Dorothy Getliffe DCS, Inverness: Old High St Stephen's

38. Presbytery of Lochaber

Minister

592. Rev Sandy Stoddart, Duror l/w Glencoe: St Munda's*
 593. Rev Ann Winning, (Morvern)

Elder

594. Mr John Arnold, North West Lochaber
 595. Mrs Mabel W Wallace, Fort William: Kilmallie*

39. Presbytery of Ross

Minister

596. Rev Andrew Fothergill, Fearn Abbey and Nigg l/w Tarbat*
 597. Rev Michael J Macdonald, Alness
 598. Very Rev Dr Alan D McDonald, (Cameron l/w St Andrews: St Leonard's)
 599. Rev James Munro, (Urray and Kilchrist)
 600. Rev Bruce Dempsey, Dingwall: St Clement's

Elder

601. Mrs Cath Chambers, Presbytery Clerk*
 602. Mr Duncan Cromb, Urray and Kilchrist
 603. Mr Douglas Gordon, Fearn Abbey and Nigg l/w Tarbat
 604. Mr Peter McLoughlin, Alness
 605.

40. Presbytery of Sutherland

Minister

606. Rev Andrea M Boyes, Durness and Kinlochbervie
 607. Very Rev Dr Susan M Brown, Dornoch Cathedral
 608. Rev Dr Beverly W Cushman, Altnaharra and Farr
 609. Rev Hilary M Gardner, Kincardine, Croick and Edderton
 610. Rev Lorna Tunstall, Clyne*

Elder

611. Mrs Rachel Allan, Rogart
 612. Mrs Angela DeBoer, Durness and Kinlochbervie
 613. Mrs Ina Macpherson, Kildonan and Loth Helmsdale
 614. Mrs Kim McCarthy, Dornoch Cathedral
 615. Mrs Fiona Risk, Clyne*

41. Presbytery of Caithness

Minister

616. Rev Andrew Barrie, Wick: Pultneytown and Thrumster*
 617. Rev David Malcolm, Thurso: St Peter's and St Andrew's
 618. Rev Lyall Rennie, Pentland. OLM

Elder

619. Mrs Sheila Cormack, Halkirk Westerdale
 620. Mrs Angela Lewis, Pentland
 621. Mrs Lorraine Sinclair, Latheron*

42. Presbytery of Lochcarron – Skye

Minister

622. Rev Sandor Fazakas, Portree
 623. Rev Dr Rory A R MacLeod, Strath and Sleat*
 624. Rev Stuart J Smith, Gairloch and Dundonnell

Elder

625.
 626.
 627.

43. Presbytery of Uist**Minister**

628.

629. Rev Ishie Macdonald, OLM, Benbecula*

Elder

630.

631. Mrs Cherrie McKinlay, Benbecula*

44. Presbytery of Lewis**Minister**

632. Rev Iain M Campbell, Kinloch*

633. Rev William Heenan, Stornoway: St Columba's

634. Rev Hugh M Stewart, Lochs-in-Bernera l/w Uig

Elder

635. Mr Murdo Afrin, Stornoway: St Columba's

636. Mr John Cunningham, Presbytery Clerk*

637. Mr David Maciver, Kinloch

45. Presbytery of Orkney**Minister**

638. Rev John Butterfield, Stromness

639. Rev June Freeth, Flotta l/w Hoy and Walls l/w Orphir and Stenness, OLM

640. Rev Iain D MacDonald, Westray l/w Papa Westray*

641. Rev Julia M Meason, Kirkwall East l/w Shapinsay

Elder

642. Mrs Sally Bartkowiack, Stromness

643. Mrs Jean Gillespie, Hoy and Walls

644. Mr Colin Gunn, Kirkwall: East*

645. Mr Alan Sharp, Westray

47. Presbytery of England**Minister**

646. Rev Alistair Cumming, Presbytery Clerk*

647. Rev Dr James Francis, Army Chaplain

648. Very Rev Dr John H McIndoe, (London: St Columba's)

649. Rev John McMahon, Healthcare Chaplain

650. Rev Prof Paul Middleton, University Lecturer

651. Rev Pauline Steenbergen, Ecumenical Pioneer Minister

652.

Elder

653. Mrs Katie Bennie, Jersey: St Columba's

654. Miss Elizabeth Fox, London: St Columba's*

655. Ms Elspeth Gordon, London: Crown Court

656. Mrs Caroline J Ludlow, Jersey: St Columba's

657. Dr Peter Mills, London: St Columba's

658. Miss Ethel Robb, Guernsey: St Andrew's in the Grange

659. Mr Angus Sneddon, Corby: St Andrew's

48. Presbytery of International Charges**Minister**

660. Rev Alistair Bennett, Bermuda: Christ Church, Warwick

661. Rev Derek Lawson, Depute Presbytery Clerk*

662. Rev Ewen MacLean, Gibraltar: St Andrew's

663. Rev Gillean MacLean, Lausanne: The Scots Kirk

664. Rev Lance Stone, Amsterdam: English Reformed Church

Elder

665. Mr Jeremy Gomez, Gibraltar: St Andrew's

666. Mrs Cynthia Gunn, Lausanne: The Scots Kirk

667. Mrs Martha Kirkland, Bermuda: Christ Church, Warwick

668. Mrs Heleen Koning, Amsterdam: English Reformed Church

669. Mr Scott MacSween, Paris: The Scots Kirk*

49. Jerusalem**Minister**

670. Rev Dr John McCulloch, Jerusalem and Tiberias: St Andrew's*

Elder

671.

** denotes membership of the Commission of Assembly 2021-2022***DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES****UK****The Presbyterian Church of Wales**

679. Rev Marcus Wyn Robinson, Moderator

The United Reformed Church

678. Mr Peter Pay, Moderator

The United Reformed Church (National Synod of Scotland)

681. Rev Paul Whittle, Moderator

Church of England

676. Rt Rev James Newcombe, Bishop of Carlisle

The Baptist Union of Scotland

672. Rev Frances Bloomfield, Convener

The Methodist Church in Scotland

680. Rev Mark Slaney, Chair of the Methodist Church in Scotland

Religious Society of Friends – General Meeting for Scotland682. Adwoa Bittle (*Saturday*)683. Elizabeth Allen, Clerk of the General Meeting for Scotland (*Monday and Tuesday*)702. Mary Woodward (*Wednesday and Thursday*)**Scottish Episcopal Church**

677. Rt Rev Ian Paton, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane

The United Free Church of Scotland

675. Rev John Fulton, Moderator

Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland

674. Most Rev Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh

The Salvation Army

673. Major David Cavanagh, Assistant Secretary for Scotland

The Congregational Federation in Scotland

800. Rev. Thomas R. Wilson, Chair

DELEGATES FROM ECUMENICAL BODIES**Action of Churches Together in Scotland**

686. Miss Carole Hope

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

684. Mr Bob Fyffe, General Secretary

Churches Together in England

685. Rev Dr Paul Goodliff, General Secretary

DELEGATES FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

AFRICA

Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa

696. Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, General Secretary

Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan

697. Rev Tut Mai Nguoth, Deputy Executive Director,
Presbytery Relief and Development Agency

Uniting Church of Zambia

693. Mr Bornface Mafwela, Projects Secretary

AMERICAS

Presbyterian Church in Canada

700. Rev Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary

Presbyterian Church (USA)

802. Rev Dr Y Dianna Wright, Director of Ecumenical and
Inter-religious Relations

THE CARIBBEAN

Uniting Church of Jamaica and the Caymen Islands

694. Ms Janet McConnell, Human Resource and Mission
Resources Agency

ASIA

Church of Bangladesh

699. Rev John Probhudan Hira, Hon Synod Secretary

Church of South India

692. Prof Dr Mathew Koshy Punnackad, Honorary Director
of Ecological Concerns

The Amity Foundation, China

691. Ms She Hongyu, Associate General Secretary

United Mission to Nepal

688. Mr Joel Hafvenstein, Executive Director

EUROPE

Spanish Evangelical Church

687. Rev Israel Flores Olmos, General Secretary

Evangelical Church of Westphalia

695. Rev Dr Ulrich Moeller, Head of Department for
Ecumenism, Mission and Global Responsibility

MIDDLE EAST

Evangelical Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile

689. Rev Dr Hani Hanna, President Elect of Evangelical
Theological Seminary of Cairo

Middle East Council of Churches

701. Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, Dr
Bernard Sabella, Executive Secretary

National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon

690. Rev Salam Hanna, Moderator of the Ecclesiastical and
Spiritual Committee

PACIFIC

Uniting Church in Australia

698. Dr Deirdre Palmer, President

CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

Assembly Trustees

703. Prof Elizabeth Ashcroft

705. Mr Alan Campbell

707. Mrs Jean Couper

710. Mr David Harrison

712. Ms Linda Irvine

723. Mr James McNeill

725. Mr Geoff Miller

726. Ms Ann Nelson

728. Mrs Norma Rolls

729. Rev Anikó Schuetz Bradwell

735. Mr Raymond Young

737. Mr Philip Ziegler

Chief Officer

713. Mr Dave Kendall

Head of Faith Action

730. Rev Dr Scott Shackleton

Church of Scotland Pension Trustees

718. Ms Lin Macmillan

Deputy Treasurer

731. Ms Leanne Thompson

Ecumenical Relations Committee

724. Rev Dr John L McPake

711. Rev Alexander Horsburgh

Faith Nurture Forum

720. Rev Angus R Mathieson

706. Rev Dr Karen K Campbell

Faith Impact Forum

709. Ms Carol Finlay

General Treasurer

716. Mrs Anne Macintosh

General Trustees

732. Mr Ian T Townsend

Head of Communications

717. Ms Ruth MacLeod

Head of Human Resources

721. Mrs Elaine McCloghry

Legal Questions Committee

714. Rev Victoria Linford

Life and Work Editor

722. Mrs Lynne McNeil

Nomination Committee

736. Rev Bill Wishart

Safeguarding Committee

719. Ms Julie Main

Scottish Churches' Parliamentary Officer

704. Mr David Bradwell

Social Care Council

708. Mrs Viv Dickenson

734. Mrs Sarah Wood

The Guild

733. Mr Iain Whyte

Theological Forum

715. Rev Dr Donald MacEwan

Trustees of the Housing and Loan Fund

727. Rev MaryAnn Rennie

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES

Youth Representatives appointed by Faith Nurture Forum

- 754. Mx Iona Kimmitt
- 765. Ms Ishbel Wright
- 764. Miss Joanne Whyte

PRESBYTERY YOUTH REPRESENTATION

Edinburgh

- 748. Mx Chloe Black

West Lothian

- 751. Mr Scott Gilchrist

Lothian

- 755. Ms Kate MacFadyen

Jedburgh

- 761. Mr Greg James Robertson

Clyde

- 760. Miss Fiona Reid

Irvine and Kilmarnock

- 757. Ms Charlotte Murray

Glasgow

- 763. Miss Rebecca Stewart

Hamilton

- 752. Ms Megan Graham

Falkirk

- 762.

Fife

- 750. Miss Hannah Dunlop

Stirling

- 758. Mrs Bethany Pringle

Angus

- 753. Miss Carla Ingram

Aberdeen & Shetland

- 749. Mr Fraser Borland

Kincardine and Deeside

- 759. Ms Rebekka Read

England

- 756. Miss Iris Maxfield

SECTION B - MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Minutes

33/1.....Convened at Edinburgh, 22 May 2021

33/5.....Convened at Edinburgh, 24 May 2021

33/8.....Convened at Edinburgh, 25 May 2021

33/11.....Convened at Edinburgh, 26 May 2021

33/15.....Convened at Edinburgh, 27 May 2021

SECTION B - MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

Convened at Edinburgh, 22 May 2021

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings, on the 22nd day of May 2021 at 10.00 am.

SESSION 1

After worship conducted by the Right Rev Dr Martin Fair BA BD DMin, Moderator of the General Assembly, the Commissioners elected as members of the General Assembly appointed to be held this day convened via video-conference, and the General Assembly was duly constituted with prayer.

The Roll of Commissioners was laid on the table.

The General Assembly proceeded to the election of a Moderator, when it was unanimously agreed that James Robert Wallace, Baron Wallace of Tankerness, PC, QC, FRSE be appointed Moderator.

The appointment was intimated to Lord Wallace who was welcomed by the Moderator, and, after the Prayer of Consecration, took the Chair.

Her Majesty's Commission to **His Royal Highness The Prince William Arthur Philip Louis, Duke of Cambridge, Earl of Strathearn, KG, KT, PC** appointing him to represent Her Royal Person in this Assembly, was then read with all due honour and respect and ordered to be recorded.

Her Majesty's Gracious Letter to the General Assembly was also read with all due honour and respect and ordered to be recorded.

His Royal Highness, The Lord High Commissioner, addressed the General Assembly in a speech from the Throne, and the Moderator made suitable reply.

The Very Rev Dr Martin Fair BA BD DMin, Retiring Moderator, addressed the General Assembly, and was thanked by the Moderator for his distinguished and valued service during his year of office.

The Very Rev Dr James Simpson addressed the General Assembly and welcomed the Moderator in the name of the former Moderators of the General Assembly.

A Committee was appointed to prepare an answer to Her Majesty's Gracious Letter, viz:

Rev Gillian Paterson (425)
Mrs Dorothy Getliffe DCS (591)
Mr John Cunningham (636)
Very Rev Dr Martin Fair, *Convener* (739)

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Standing Committee on Commissions, which was given in by the Principal Clerk who reported that all commissions had been received and were in order.

The Principal Clerk reported that the Standing Orders of the General Assembly were laid on the table and had been circulated to Commissioners.

The General Assembly appointed a Procedure Committee to arrange the Order of Business, viz:

Rev Donald McCorkindale, *Convener*
Mrs Susan Pym, *Vice-Convener*
Moderator
Principal Clerk
Depute Clerk
Procurator
Law Agent

The General Assembly appointed a Committee to prepare a Minute on Deceased Ministers, Missionaries and Deacons, viz:

Very Rev Dr Martin Fair (739)
Principal Clerk
Depute Clerk

Intimation was given of the arrangements for the Celebration of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall and online via video-conference on Monday 24 May 2021 at 10.00am.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 11.20am until 11.53am.

The General Assembly received the following Delegates:

The Presbyterian Church of Wales
Rev Marcus Wyn Robinson, Moderator

The United Reformed Church
Mr Peter Pay, Moderator

The United Reformed Church (National Synod of Scotland)
Rev Paul Whittle, Moderator

The Church of England
Rt Rev Bishop James Newcombe, Bishop of Carlisle

The Baptist Union of Scotland
Rev Frances Bloomfield, Convener

Religious Society of Friends – General Meeting for Scotland
Adwoa Bittle, (Saturday); Elizabeth Allen, Clerk of the General Meeting for Scotland (Monday and Tuesday); Mary Woodward (Wednesday and Thursday)

The Scottish Episcopal Church
Rt Rev Ian Paton, Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane

The United Free Church of Scotland
Rev John Fulton, Moderator

The Congregational Federation in Scotland
Rev. Thomas R. Wilson, Chair

Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland
Most Rev Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh

The Salvation Army
Major David Cavanagh, Assistant Secretary for Scotland

Action of Churches Together in Scotland
Miss Carole Hope

Churches Together in England
Rev Dr Paul Goodliff, General Secretary

AFRICA
Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa
Rev Dr Lungile Mpetsheni, General Secretary

Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan
Rev Tut Mai Nguoth, Deputy Executive Director, Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency

Uniting Church of Zambia
Mr Bornface Mafwela – Projects Secretary

AMERICAS
Presbyterian Church in Canada
Rev Ian Ross-McDonald, General Secretary

Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev Dr Y Dianna Wright, Director of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations

THE CARIBBEAN
Uniting Church of Jamaica and the Caymen Islands
Rev Janet McConnell, Human Resource and Mission Resources Agency

ASIA

Church of Bangladesh

Rev John Probhudan Hira, Honorary Synod Secretary

Church of South India

Prof Dr Mathew Koshy Punnackad, Honorary Director of Ecological Concerns

The Amity Foundation, China

Ms She Hongyu, Associate General Secretary

United Mission to Nepal

Mr Joel Hafvenstein, Executive Director

EUROPE

Spanish Evangelical Church

Rev Israel Flores Olmos, General Secretary

Evangelical Church of Westphalia

Rev Dr Ulrich Moeller, Head of Mission, Ecumenical Relations and Global Responsibility.

MIDDLE EAST

Evangelical Church of Egypt, Synod of the Nile

Rev Dr Hani Hanna, President Elect of Evangelical Theological Seminary of Cairo

Middle East Council of Churches Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees

Dr Bernard Sabella, Executive Secretary

National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon

Rev Salam Hanna, Moderator of the Ecclesiastical and Spiritual Committee

PACIFIC

Uniting Church in Australia

Dr Deirdre Palmer, President

The reception of the Delegates being completed, the Moderator welcomed them on behalf of the General Assembly.

The Most Rev Leo Cushley and the Rev Dr Ulrich Moeller addressed the General Assembly in the name of the Delegates and were thanked by the Moderator.

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The Report of the Procedure Committee was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS

Section 2 of the Proposed Deliverance of the Report of the Legal Questions Committee was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

2. Amend Standing Orders as detailed in section 4 and Appendix B of the Report of the Assembly Business Committee.

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Assembly Business Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of the following sections of proposed Deliverance, it was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the order of business for the first two days.
3. Appoint Rev Colin Renwick to be Precentor until May 2022.
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 24 May at 12pm, nomination(s) of Commissioner(s) to serve on the Selection Committee.

OVERTURE - PRESBYTERIES OF EDINBURGH AND WEST LOTHIAN ANENT UNION

The General Assembly took up consideration of an Overture from the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian anent union.

In terms of Standing Order 52 the General Assembly agreed to treat section 2 of the proposed Deliverance of the Overture as a proposed new section of the Deliverance of the Assembly Business Committee.

The Rev Marjory McPherson moved the Deliverance as follows:

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian to form the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian, as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.

OVERTURE - THE PRESBYTERIES OF ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE, ARDROSSAN, AYR, DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT, IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK, AND WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER ANENT UNION

The General Assembly took up consideration of an Overture from the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer anent union.

In terms of Standing Order 52 the General Assembly agreed to treat section 2 of the proposed Deliverance of the Overture as a proposed new section of the Deliverance of the Assembly Business Committee.

The Rev Kenneth Elliott moved the Deliverance as follows:

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer, to form the Presbytery of the South West as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.

OVERTURE - PRESBYTERIES OF HAMILTON AND LANARK ANENT UNION

The General Assembly took up consideration of an Overture from the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark anent union.

In terms of Standing Order 52 the General Assembly agreed to treat section 2 of the proposed Deliverance of the Overture as a proposed new section of the Deliverance of the Assembly Business Committee.

The Rev Ross Blackman and Mr Scott M Paget moved the Deliverance as follows:

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark to form the Presbytery of Lanarkshire as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.

The Moderator offered thanks for and appreciation of the work of the constituent and united Presbyteries.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.36pm until 13.06pm.

SESSION 2

OVERTURE – THE PRESBYTERY OF LEWIS

The General Assembly took up consideration of an Overture from the Presbytery of Lewis anent Presbytery Restructuring.

In terms of Standing Order 52 the General Assembly agreed to treat section 2 of the proposed Deliverance of the Overture as a proposed new section of the Deliverance of the Assembly Business Committee.

The Rev Hugh Stewart moved the Deliverance as follows:

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Without prejudice to those Presbyteries who have already united or who may be united by this General Assembly, agree that the process to establish new regional Presbytery structures in Scotland should be paused for a period of 12 months until General Assembly 2022, in order to consider the implications for the Barrier Act and to allow sufficient time for thoughtful reflection on the implications of the process, adequate consultation in the regions and a fuller consideration of any unintended consequences.

On a vote being taken For or Against section 1 of the Overture, it carried For.

On a vote being taken For or Against section 2 of the Overture, there voted For 43 and Against 439.

The General Assembly resumed consideration of the proposed Deliverance of the Assembly Business Committee.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

6. Approve the Overture amending the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000) as set out in Appendix C and transmit the same to Presbyteries for their consideration under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2021.
7. Pass as an Interim Act the text of the Overture amending the Church Courts Act (Act III 2000) as set out in sections 1 and 2 only (but not section 3) of Appendix C.
8. Instruct the Committee to develop the fast tracking of deliverance approval necessitated by online Assemblies and continue in future Assemblies.
9. Instruct the Committee to continue its work on General Assembly reform, including engagement with the Legal Questions Committee's work on the Church Courts Act, reflection on the report of the Special Commission on the Effectiveness of the Presbyterian Form of Church Governance, and to share proposals with Presbyteries for early consultation, prior to reporting to the General Assembly of 2022.
10. Invite the Legal Questions Committee to explore the feasibility of legislation enabling all or part of future General Assembly business to be conducted online, and report to a subsequent General Assembly with draft legislation if appropriate.

SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY

11. Urge the Scottish Bible Society to pursue its ongoing efforts to address the challenge of global Bible translation and distribution.

12. Support the Society in its desire to work in partnership with congregations to improve people's experience of the Bible and its impact on their life.
13. Endorse the Society in its efforts to encourage confidence in the Gospel and in providing Scripture resources for mission purposes.
14. Commend the Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

On votes being taken on sections 6 and 7 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of Section 10:

Delete "explore the feasibility of legislation" and substitute "prepare legislation" and at the end delete "with draft legislation if appropriate".

On a vote being taken For or Against the amendment, there voted For 273 and Against 204.

Section 10 as amended was then agreed.

On behalf of the Directors of the Scottish Bible Society, Ms Elaine Duncan had sent a Bible and a Gaelic New Testament to the Moderator and to the Retiring Moderator who gave thanks for their gifts and the work of the Society, wishing it well for the future.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 14.15pm until 14.20pm.

DELEGATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Delegation of Assembly which was given in by the Principal Clerk, Chair.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of the following sections of proposed Deliverance, it was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders:

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.

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report and Supplementary Report of the Assembly Trustees (except section 9 of the Deliverance which will be taken during the Report of the Faith Nurture Forum) which was given in by the Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and Supplementary Report.
2. Acknowledge with gratitude the work and ministry of the Church at all levels during the Covid-19 pandemic.
3. Receive the 2020 Report and Accounts of the Church of Scotland Unincorporated Entities.
4. Note the challenging financial situation facing the Church as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and, while acknowledging the necessity of setting a Covid-19 recovery budget for 2021, reaffirm the need for

- budgetary prudence and the priority of resourcing Presbytery reform and supporting the growth of the local Church.
5. Thank the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr and the Ministries and Mission Review Group for their work and approve Giving to Grow as the new Ministries and Mission Allocation scheme to replace the current Ministries and Mission scheme.
 6. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to report to the General Assembly of 2022 with further details in relation to:
 - (i) the funding models which will apply to the new Presbyteries;
 - (ii) the intended size, scope, terms and conditions of the proposed Transition Fund;
 - (iii) a comprehensive communication strategy for the implementation of Giving to Grow; and
 - (iv) the criteria and process for an annual review process for Giving to Grow.
 7. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to present Regulations for Giving to Grow to the General Assembly of 2022 with a view to implementing Giving to Grow from 1 January 2023.
 8. Lift the moratorium on increasing Ministries and Mission contributions imposed by the General Assembly of 2019.
 9. *Consideration of section 9 was deferred until Session 5.*
 10. Acknowledge that much has been learned through the consultations carried out on behalf of the Trustees by the Special Group (D10) which was exploring the most effective and efficient way of delivering the work of the Faith Action Plan and note that the Trustees, building on the lessons learned, will continue this work in a spirit of collaboration, bringing a final report to the General Assembly of 2022.
 11. Note the recommendations contained in Appendix 2 and, for the time being, approve the placing of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and of the Theological Forum within the Office of the General Assembly.
 12. Approve the placing of the Gaelic Group within the Faith Nurture Forum.
 13. Approve the reduction in the number of members of the Nomination Committee from 24 to 18 in addition to the Convener and Vice-Convener.
 14. Agree to increase the size of the Personnel Appeal Panel to twelve persons, each appointed to serve a four year term with the option of appointment for a further four year term and grant powers to the Convener and Vice Convener of the Nomination Committee to approve the co-option of new members of the group.
 15. Thank those involved in the External Communications Review and welcome the setting up of the Communications Strategy Board.
 16. Approve the decision of the Assembly Trustees to suspend the work on the future of the George Street buildings for two years whilst ensuring a basic maintenance programme commences.
 17. Encourage Kirk Sessions to participate in a National Gift Day during Harvest time in 2021, promoting the offering of thanksgiving gifts to God for sustaining the Church through these challenging times.
 18. Urge congregations to engage with the National Stewardship Programme, using the Narrative of Generosity resource to embrace a whole life of stewardship.
 19. Note the appointment from 15 October 2020 of Gillian Elizabeth Coghlan as Depute Treasurer and confer upon the said Gillian Elizabeth Coghlan, Depute Treasurer, full power to discharge all legacies, bequests or donations which may have been or may be left, bequeathed or made to the Church of Scotland, or any of the Schemes, Councils, Forums, Committees or agencies thereof, or which may have been or may be left, bequeathed or made to the United Free Church of Scotland or to any of the Schemes, Boards or Committees or agencies thereof and which in terms of the Agreement with the continuing United Free Church of Scotland fall to the Church of Scotland or its Schemes, Councils, Forums, Committees or agencies, and to sign all Discharges, Agreements, Indemnities, Undertakings, and other Deeds which may be necessary in connection therewith.
 20. Approve the amended remit of the Legal Questions Committee set out in Appendix 3.
 21. Receive the 2020 Report and Accounts of The Church of Scotland Unincorporated Councils and Committees.
 22. Approve the total to be contributed by congregations in 2022 of £42,000,000 based on the projection of congregational income for 2022 and its disposition among local congregational expenditure, the Parish Ministries Fund and the Mission and Renewal Fund.
 23. Note the indicative budget for 2022.
 24. Urge Presbyteries to prioritise the use of the 2022 Discretionary Allowance towards reducing the amounts of Ministries and Mission contributions payable by congregations which are struggling financially. (Section 2.6)
 25. Approve the reappointment of Ann Nelson as an Assembly Trustee for a second term; and approve the appointment of David Cameron, Barry Hughes and Peter McEnhill as Assembly Trustees.
- There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.*
- On votes being taken on sections 4 and 6 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.*
- There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19 and 20 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.*
- On a vote being taken on section 15 of the proposed Deliverance, it carried For.*
- It was moved and seconded:
- Add a new Section 16 and renumber:*
- Instruct the Assembly Trustees to create a group with strategic oversight on the engagement with and support of under-40s in line with the Radical Action Plan, throughout the Church at a national level; this will be convened by someone who is under 40 and should not be a staff member accountable to a Forum or Committee of the Church, and should include a balanced membership with a focus on under 40s themselves, and this group should report to the General Assembly of 2022.
- On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed new section it carried Against.*
- On a vote being taken on section 16 of the proposed Deliverance in the print, it carried For.*
- It was moved and seconded:
- Add a new Section 17 and renumber:*

Given the urgency of the need to institute new forms of Church and to engage in pioneer mission:

- (i) Instruct the Assembly Trustees to establish, as part of the Faith Action Plan, a Pioneer Mission Fund aimed at supporting local church growth, with a particular emphasis on church planting and the establishment of 100 new worshipping communities;
- (ii) Encourage wide-ranging support for contributions to be made to this Fund, including contributions from individuals, businesses and outside bodies, and as soon as circumstances permit allocate central financial resources to this important work; and
- (iii) Instruct the Assembly Trustees to make appropriate provision for the efficient management and evaluation of the Fund and the projects it supports.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment to the new section 17(i):

After the words local church growth ADD "

Fresh Expressions and pioneer practitioners associated with Presbyteries, "

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

The new Section 17 as originally proposed was then agreed to.

On a vote being taken on Section 17 of the proposed deliverance in the print, it carried For.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new Section 21 and renumber:

Urge the Assembly Trustees, in consultation with all relevant bodies, to expedite the exploration into allowing the proceeds from the sale of redundant buildings to be used more widely than at present, especially for purposes of Ministry and Mission.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 21 and 22 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

On votes being taken on Sections 23 and 24 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.

It was moved and seconded:

In Section 25, add at the end "and approve the appointment of Philip Ziegler as an Assembly Trustee until the General Assembly of 2022."

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

Section 25 as amended was then agreed.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed on the understanding that section 9 would be considered as part of the Report of the Faith Nurture Forum.

MINUTES OF APPEAL HEARINGS BEFORE THE MINISTRIES APPEAL PANEL

The General Assembly called for the Minutes of the Appeal Hearings before the Ministries Appeal Panel which were laid on the table and had been circulated to Commissioners.

The General Assembly adjourned at 4.14pm pm to meet again in this Hall, and online via video-conference, on Monday 24 May at 1pm for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
and online via video-conference
EDINBURGH, 22 May 2021, 4.14pm

Convened at Edinburgh, 24 May 2021

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings on the 24th day of May 2021 at 1.00 pm.

SESSION 3

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

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Procedure Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener who also expressed his thanks to the Moderator for the celebration of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall and online at 10.00am and to the Moderator and his Chaplain the Rev Dr Marjory MacLean for their Reflections from the Quay on Assembly Sunday.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Agree the Order of Business for the third to the fifth day.

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee appointed to prepare a Reply to the Gracious Letter from Her Majesty the Queen which was given in by the Very Rev Dr Martin Fair.

The Reply to Her Majesty's Gracious Letter was submitted and approved for signature and transmission to Her Majesty.

The Reply was in the following terms:

TO THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

May it please Your Majesty We, Your Majesty's loyal subjects convened in General Assembly, have received with pleasure Your Majesty's gracious letter to us.

We greatly value Your Majesty's continuing pledge to maintain the historic rights and privileges of the Church of Scotland.

Your Majesty has been continuously in our thoughts since the passing of the Duke of Edinburgh. We know that you will have been sustained by your Christian Faith yet your loss will have been keenly felt and we wish to assure Your Majesty that many people in the Church of Scotland and beyond have prayed for you and members of the Royal Family in these testing times. In due course, and when pandemic restrictions allow, we will gather in St Giles' Cathedral to give thanks for the Duke's life and his contribution to the nation of Scotland.

We are grateful for Your Majesty's concern and prayers for the people of this land as they have journeyed through the pandemic. These have indeed been difficult days shadowed by illness, bereavement, unemployment and economic damage. We would want to humbly acknowledge Your Majesty's steadfastness throughout these troubled times – leadership that has never been wanting throughout the years of your reign. We have sensed always your desire to serve and in that we are minded that Our Lord came not to be served but to serve.

As Your Majesty has acknowledged, the Church has also been deeply affected and in this General Assembly we will be seeking to find where God will lead us as we look to heal and support the various communities which we are privileged to serve.

The depredations brought by Covid-19 have made it essential to forge the links to which Your Majesty has alluded. We are already beginning to see how we might build on these relationships as, God willing, we leave behind emergency restrictions.

We take encouragement from Your Majesty's appreciation of our commitment to the care of this planet. Along with other churches and faith groups we will seek to bring that sense of stewardship and responsibility to the delegates from around the world who will gather in Glasgow for COP26 later this year.

Finally, we commend Your Majesty to the unfailing grace and protection of Almighty God, and as we begin our deliberations we pray that God will continue to bestow favour upon Your Majesty, that you may long reign over us.

Your Majesty's most faithful and loyal servants.

THE MINISTERS, ELDERS AND DEACONS OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND CONVENED IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Signed in our name, in our presence and at our appointment by the Lord Wallace of Tankerness, Moderator of the General Assembly on this 24th day of May 2021

SPECIAL COMMISSION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Special Commission on the Effectiveness of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government which was given in by the Very Rev Dr Derek Browning, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct Kirk Sessions to study the Report, especially Section 2, and consider the questions raised as they apply to their own mission strategies, or as part of their process of developing mission strategies.
3. Instruct Presbyteries to study the Report, especially Section 3, and consider the questions raised alongside their plans for reshaping the newly formed Presbyteries and developing mission strategies.
4. Instruct the agencies of the General Assembly to study the Report, and consider the questions raised, particularly around how these will impact the shaping and functioning of the General Assembly and the agencies of the General Assembly and their developing mission strategies, and also the relationship these bodies will have with each other, Presbyteries and the local Church, and in particular instruct (1) the Legal Questions Committee to consider these matters when framing the new Church Courts Act, (2) the Assembly Business Committee to consider these matters when looking at questions of General Assembly reform, and (3) the Assembly Trustees to consider including appropriate reporting on these matters in their report to the General Assembly of 2022.
5. Thank all those who have engaged with the Special Commission.
6. Thank and discharge the Special Commission.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 2:

Delete the word "Instruct" and substitute the word "Invite".

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

The section as amended was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

Instruct the Assembly Trustees, the Assembly Trustees' Webinar Group and related stakeholders to host a national day webinar on the opportunities presented by the Report, inviting participation from all levels of church life, this event to take place before 30th November 2021.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Moderator thanked the Very Rev Dr Derek Browning, Convener, and the members of the Special Commission on the Effectiveness of the Presbyterian Form of Church Government on behalf of the General Assembly.

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Legal Questions Committee (except section 6 of the Deliverance which will be taken during the Report of the Faith Nurture Forum and section 2 which had already been taken during Session 1) which was given in by the Rev Dr S Grant Barclay, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. *Consideration of section 2 was dealt with in Session 1.*
3. Note the intention of the Committee to bring a Church Courts Overture to the General Assembly of 2022 and encourage Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and others to engage with the Committee in the preceding consultation process.
4. Note the work done by the Committee in relation to the solemnisation of same sex marriages including the draft Overture set out in Appendix A and the Procurator's Supplementary Opinion at Appendix B.
5. Instruct the Committee, in consultation with others, to continue to develop a process of Presbytery Review and report to the General Assembly of 2024.
6. *Consideration of Section 6 was deferred until Session 5.*
7. Note that (1) the Vacancy Protocol and the arrangements for Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to meet and vote by video-conferencing or audioconferencing or a combination of the two, agreed by the Commission of Assembly on 7 July 2020, (2) the three Protocols agreed by the General Assembly of October 2020 (the Congregational Meetings on Bases of Adjustment Protocol, the Congregational Meetings for Adopting the Unitary Constitution Protocol and the Congregational Meetings on Sale or Disposal of Church Buildings Protocol) and (3) the arrangements for Financial Boards to meet and vote by videoconferencing or audio-conferencing or a combination of the two, have all proved useful and continue these arrangements until the General Assembly of 2022.
8. Instruct that while the Covid-19 pandemic regulations prevent an in person congregational meeting taking place:
 - (a) Kirk Session shall have power to appoint to the Congregational Board members of the congregation who are not members of the Kirk Session to fill vacancies which have arisen, which appointments shall last only until such time as the Stated Annual Meeting is next held in person; and
 - (b) if in the Committee's view, at any time before the next General Assembly, alternative arrangements become necessary to enable elections to take place to Congregational Boards, the Committee shall have power to produce a Protocol to enable elections to Congregational Boards.
9. Pass an Act amending the Discipline Act (Act I 2019) as set out in Appendix C.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed

under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

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

Add a new section 5 and renumber:

Approve the Solemnisation of Same-Sex Marriage Overture as set out in Appendix A and transmit the same to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk by 31 December 2021.

It was moved and seconded as a counter-motion to the new section 5:

Given the significant change in the Church's Theological understanding of biblical marriage which this entails, remit the draft Overture contained in Appendix A to the Theological Forum for consideration and instruct them to bring a report to a future General Assembly.

On a vote being taken between the motion (the new section 5) and the counter-motion there voted For the motion 320 and For the counter-motion 211 and the General Assembly resolved accordingly.

On a vote being taken For or Against the proposed new section 5 there voted For 319 and Against 217.

Rev Michael S Goss 491 entered his dissent with regard to the General Assembly's decision to approve the new section 5, to which the following Commissioners adhered:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Rev Ian A MacDonald | 014 |
| Mr John Duncan | 039 |
| Rev Keith L Mack | 080 |
| Rev Gordon Stevenson | 082 |
| Rev David Whiteman | 122 |
| Rev Dr Allan S Vint | 154 |
| Rev David Albon | 182 |
| Rev James McNay | 184 |
| Rev Andrew D Rooney | 196 |
| Rev Stuart Davidson | 204 |
| Rev Ramsay B Shields | 219 |
| Rev Norman Afrin | 239 |
| Rev Richard Cameron | 243 |
| Rev James Gemmell | 248 |
| Rev (James) Andrew McIntyre | 265 |
| Rev David G Slater | 274 |
| Miss Morag Campbell | 282 |
| Mr Anthony C D Crow | 284 |
| Ms Fiona Hay | 292 |
| Rev Gordon R Palmer | 328 |
| Rev David Carruthers | 351 |
| Rev James Cowan | 368 |
| Rev Aftab Gohar | 370 |
| Rev Kipchumba Too | 375 |
| Rev Scott McInnes | 397 |
| Rev David J Smith | 427 |
| Rev Benjamin Abeledo | 448 |
| Rev Colin Brough | 473 |
| Rev Gordon A Campbell | 474 |
| Rev Anita Kerr | 477 |
| Rev Douglas McNab | 538 |
| Rev Colin A Strong | 552 |
| Mr Steven Wilson | 561 |
| Rev Andrew Fothergill | 596 |
| Rev Michael J Macdonald | 597 |
| Rev Bruce Dempsey | 600 |
| Rev Andrew Barrie | 616 |
| Rev David Malcolm | 617 |
| Rev Dr Rory A R MacLeod | 623 |
| Mrs Cherrie McKinlay | 631 |
| Rev Ewen MacLean | 662 |

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 3.46 pm until 4.15 pm.

SESSION 4

On a vote being taken on section 9 of the proposed Deliverance, it carried For.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed on the assumption that section 6 would be considered during the Report and Supplementary Report of the Faith Nurture Forum and noting that section 2 had been agreed during Session 1.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

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

The Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Bishop of Moray, Ross and Caithness, addressed the General Assembly and the Moderator gave a suitable reply.

Mr Bob Fyffe, General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland expressed his appreciation of the ecumenical work of the Rev Dr John McPake, Ecumenical Officer, and the Rev Dr George Whyte, Principal Clerk.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the Committee to engage with the reformed Presbyteries of the Church and report to a future General Assembly.
3. Instruct the Committee to facilitate a conference to explore the establishing of a cooperative partnership to enable Christian mission and service to the people of Scotland.
4. Note the establishing of the Scottish Church Leaders' Forum and welcome the development of an effective ecumenical forum during the Covid-19 pandemic.
5.
 - a) Approve the Saint Andrew Declaration, consisting of mutual Acknowledgements and Commitments between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church.
 - b) Instruct the Committee, in partnership with the Inter-church Relations Committee of the Scottish Episcopal Church, to oversee the implementation of the Commitments in the Saint Andrew Declaration and to set up the Working Group proposed by it.
6. Agree to 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.
7. Welcome the appointment of the Very Rev Dr Russell Barr as Co-Chair of the Columba Declaration Contact Group on behalf of the Church of Scotland and the Rt Rev James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle as Co-Chair on behalf of the Church of England.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 2 and 4 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 3:

Remove "a" before "cooperative", and make plural the word "partnership" and then at the end, add the words ", taking heed amongst other possibilities of regional Covenant partnerships and local Mission Communities."

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

Section 3 as amended was then agreed.

On votes being taken on sections 5, 6 and 7 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The General Assembly adjourned at 5.20 pm to meet again in this Hall and online via video-conference tomorrow at 1.00 pm for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
and online via video-conference
EDINBURGH, 24 May 2021, 5.20 pm

Convened at Edinburgh, 25 May 2021

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings, on the 25th day of May 2021 at 1.00 pm.

SESSION 5

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

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Procedure Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

The following Commissioners had been nominated to the Selection Committee:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Rev Neil Glover (Convener) | 451 |
| Mr Darren Philip | 069 |
| Mr Connor MacFadyen | 089 |
| Rev Sheila Moir | 101 |
| Mrs Thelma Hart | 134 |
| Rev Mandy Ralph | 152 |
| Rev Louise Mackay | 195 |
| Mrs Linda Dye | 223 |
| Rev David Slater | 274 |
| Mrs Jeneffer Zielinski | 366 |
| Rev Aftab Gohar | 370 |
| Mrs Jean Porter DCS | 410 |
| Mr George Owenson | 443 |
| Rev Anne Stewart | 461 |
| Mrs Irene McGugan | 502 |
| Mr William Rae | 521 |
| Rev Jennifer Adams | 562 |
| Rev Andrew Barrie | 616 |
| Mr John Cunningham | 636 |
| Rev Alistair Cumming | 646 |

The Minutes of Sessions 1-2, being available in the Assembly Paper, were submitted and approved.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

The General Assembly called for the Report and the Supplementary Report of the Faith Nurture Forum (including section 9 of the Deliverance on the Report of the Assembly Trustees, section 6 of the Deliverance on the Report of the Legal Questions Committee and the Overture from the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland) which was given in by the Rev Rosie Frew, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Note the work done on discipleship and urge Kirk Sessions to utilise the resources provided in order to respond to the clear call to refocus and reshape around the two-part call of discipleship, to follow Christ and to enable others to follow Christ.

3. Instruct the Forum to develop the first modules of a lay training programme, with a view to launching an entry level course in January 2022.
4. Instruct the Forum to review the training expectations for Ordained Local Ministers.
5. Note the current mix of unrestricted and reviewable charges and instruct the Forum to keep questions around call and tenure under review.
6. Note the work which has taken place to date on developing a Capability Procedure for Ministers and instruct the Forum to bring detailed proposals for such a procedure to the General Assembly of 2022.
7. Instruct the Forum to bring a revised Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of 2022.
8. (a) Affirm the commitment of the Church to place priority for the poorest at the heart of all that it does, recognising the mission of Priority Area congregations in this.
(b) Instruct the Forum to continue to develop and deliver this key priority – implementing the whole Church strategy of prioritising support for those living in poverty and at the margins – within the Faith Action Plan, through the Priority Areas Implementation Group and Priority Areas Team.
9. Note the research project on Pioneer Ministry, and instruct Presbyteries to consider the findings as they engage in planning new ways of being church.
10. Note the work being done on developing intergenerational church life and instruct all Presbyteries to consider this in their planning.
11. *Consideration of section 11 was deferred until Session 8.*
12. Instruct the Forum to work with the Diaconate Council, the Legal Questions Committee, and other stakeholders, 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.
13. Pass an Act amending the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010, in terms of Appendix 2.
14. Pass a Regulation amending the Manse Adjudication Committee Regulations (Regulations III 2013) and Schedule, as set out in Appendix 3.
15. *Consideration of section 15 was deferred until Session 8.*
16. *Consideration of section 16 was deferred until Session 8.*
17. *Consideration of section 17 was deferred until Session 8.*
18. *Consideration of section 18 was deferred until Session 8.*
19. *Consideration of section 19 was deferred until Session 8.*
20. *Consideration of section 20 was deferred until Session 8.*
21. *Consideration of section 21 was deferred until Session 8.*
22. *Consideration of section 22 was deferred until Session 8.*

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 2, 4, 10, 12, 13 and 14 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 3:

Delete "with a view to launching an entry level course in January 2022" and substitute ", fulfilling the objectives in section 3.4 of the Report, that is delivered in local congregation/Presbytery settings".

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

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

Add at the end "and encourage the Assembly Trustees to explore with the Forum funding models for this training which would allow the training to be delivered at no cost to the participant or their congregation and report to the General Assembly of 2022."

Section 3 as amended was then agreed.

It was moved and seconded:

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

Instruct the Forum to develop a programme for continuous training of facilitators of Lay Training programme within Presbyteries.

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

OVERTURE - PRESBYTERY OF ABERDEEN AND SHETLAND

The General Assembly took up consideration of an Overture from the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland anent Selection and Training.

In terms of Standing Order 52 the General Assembly agreed to treat section 2 of the proposed Deliverance of the Overture as a proposed new Section of the Deliverance of the Faith Nurture Forum.

Rev J Peter Johnston moved the Deliverance as follows:

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Pass an Act amending the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004) (as amended) as set out in the Appendix.

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

Amend section 2 by adding at the end:

"subject to the following amendment to the draft Act: delete "who has demonstrated at National Assessment a Call to full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and yet who believes and can demonstrate a Calling to continue in their current role" and substitute "who intends to continue in their current role," so that this section reads "22A. In the special circumstance of an individual being accepted as a Candidate for the Full Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament (FTWS), who is currently employed as a Chaplain though not currently Ordained, and who intends to continue in their current role, the committee have in their powers the option of modifying the training requirement of Full-Time Probationary Placement in the following terms:..."

On a vote being taken For or Against section 1 of the Overture, it carried For.

On a vote being taken For or Against section 2 of the Overture, as amended, it carried Against.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 3.47 pm until 4.15 pm.

SESSION 6

The General Assembly resumed consideration of the proposed Deliverance of the Faith Nurture Forum.

It was moved and seconded:

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

Instruct the Forum, along with any other relevant bodies, to explore the possibility of granting greater flexibility in designating Probationary Placement requirements (including

part-time arrangements), especially for those already working in church and ministry settings, or who would otherwise find it difficult to embark upon a full-time Probationary Placement, and report to the General Assembly of 2022.

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

It was moved and seconded as a counter-motion to section 5:

Note the current mix of unrestricted and reviewable charges and instruct the Forum and Legal Questions Committee to explore questions around call and tenure with a view to bringing a deliverance(s) to the General Assembly of 2022 which would allow Presbyteries to review the tenure of unrestricted charges where adjustment is required to ensure that Presbytery Plans can be implemented by 2025.

On a vote being taken between the motion and the counter-motion the motion carried and the General Assembly resolved accordingly.

Section 5 in the print was then agreed.

It was moved and seconded:

Add a new section 6 and renumber:

Instruct the Forum to include full-time chaplains in the planning and development of new ways of working, recognising chaplains as valuable resources and as integral members of the church.

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

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 6 in the print:

after the words "instruct the Forum" add "in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee".

Section 6 as amended was then agreed.

On votes being taken on sections 7, 8 and 9 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 10 and renumber:

Note the insights gained from Path of Renewal and encourage the continuation of this project.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 11 and renumber

Instruct the Forum to consider how the voices and opinions of young people can be gathered on a range of topics and shared widely, following on from the success of the Listening Project carried out by the Assembly Trustees, and the lessons learned from the 2019 Youth Attitudes Survey, and report to the General Assembly of 2022.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 11 and renumber:

Instruct the Forum to reassert the Church's commitment to young people by revisiting and acting upon the sections of deliverance from 2019 and 2020 concerning young people and young adults (of Mission and Discipleship Council in 2019 deliverances 7-13 and 18-20 and Faith Nurture Forum in 2020 deliverance 15) with a view to being able to report actions taken to future General Assemblies.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 11 and renumber:

Urge congregations to adopt the ACORN Programme as a means to help members practise mission at grass roots level, and through support in small groups, to gain confidence in effective discipleship.

The General Assembly resolved to suspend consideration of the proposed Deliverance of the Faith Nurture Forum, and to return to it during Session 8.

TRUSTEES OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HOUSING AND LOAN FUND FOR RETIRED MINISTERS AND WIDOWS AND WIDOWERS OF MINISTERS

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Trustees of the Church of Scotland Housing and Loan Fund which was given in by the Rev MaryAnn Rennie, Chair.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1 and 2, being the whole of the proposed Deliverance, the proposed Deliverance was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and thank the Trustees and Staff.
2. Appoint Mrs Sharon Anne Ho as a Trustee of the Fund.

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Guild which was given in by Mrs Mabel Wallace, National Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Welcome the Guild's Strategy for 2021-24, "Look Forward in Faith" and its annual themes, "Lights and Bushels", "Wee Seeds, Big trees" and "New Wine, New Wine Skins".
3. Commend the Guild on its efforts to maintain contact with and involvement of its membership during the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. Commend the Guild on its fund-raising and twinning.
5. Celebrate the success of the Guild's Partnership Projects from 2018-21 and the raising of over £516 000.
6. Note and welcome the Guild's new Partnership Projects for 2021-24.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 2, 3 4 and 6 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 5:

Delete "£516,000" and substitute "£551,434".

Section 5, as amended, was then agreed.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

Mabel Wallace on her retiral as National Convener of the Guild was thanked by the Moderator for her noteworthy service to the Guild and the General Assembly.

REGISTRATION OF MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Registration of Ministries Committee which was given in by the Rev Dr Neil Dougall, Convener.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of section 1, being the whole of the proposed Deliverance, the proposed Deliverance was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

The Rev Neil Dougall on his retiral as Convener of the Registration of Ministries Committee was thanked by the Moderator for his noteworthy service to the Committee and the General Assembly.

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Theological Forum which was given in by the Rev Donald MacEwan, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report
2. Commend Section 3 "Being Confirmed, Professing the Faith, Sharing Communion" as an exploration of Profession of Faith/Confirmation and church membership.
3. Receive the report "Westminster, Confessions and the Church" (Appendix) as an interim response to the instruction given by the General Assembly of 2018.
4. Encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to discuss the questions laid out in Section 23 of "Westminster, Confessions and the Church" (Appendix) and respond to the Theological Forum by 31 December 2021.
5. Instruct the Theological Forum to bring firm proposals regarding the confessional standards of the Church to the General Assembly of 2022.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of section 1 of the proposed Deliverance, this section was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

On votes being taken on sections 2 and 3 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

Invite the Theological Forum to facilitate knowledge of the Westminster Confession by producing video resources on the Confession to allow Church leaders and members to study the Confession if they so wished; such material to assist the Church in gaining an understanding of its subordinate standard and thus allow engagement with the consultation which the Forum seeks.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 4 in the print:

In section 4 after "Westminster, Confessions and the Church" (Appendix) add "along with any further or additional comments".

Section 4 as amended was then agreed.

On a vote being taken on section 5 of the proposed Deliverance, it carried For.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The Rev Dr Donald MacEwan on his retiral as Convener of the Theological Forum was thanked by the Moderator for his noteworthy service to the Forum and the General Assembly.

The General Assembly adjourned at 6.34 pm to meet again in this Hall and online via video-conference tomorrow at 1.00 pm for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
and online via video-conference
EDINBURGH, 25 May 2021, 6.34 pm

Convened at Edinburgh, 26 May 2021

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings, on the 26th day of May 2021 at 1.00 pm.

SESSION 7

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

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Procedure Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

The Minutes of Sessions 3-4, being available in the Assembly Paper, were submitted and approved.

The Moderator congratulated the Rev Dr George Whyte, Principal Clerk, on the 40th anniversary of his Ordination as a Full-time Minister of Word and Sacrament and wished him well in the continuation of his Ministry in the future.

FAITH IMPACT FORUM

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Faith Impact Forum which was given in by the Very Rev Dr Susan Brown, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. 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.
3. Recognise and give thanks for the critical role of the voices, concerns, and passion of young people involved in the life of the Church of Scotland who have campaigned for disinvestment from fossil fuels; and urge congregations to provide an opportunity to listen to young people in the congregation, or in the local community, to hear about their concerns.
4. Urge congregations to prepare for the COP26 UN Climate Summit due to take place in Glasgow in November 2021 by using the Climate Sunday prayer and worship resources (www.climatesunday.org); and consider how they can respond in prayer and action.
5.
 - (i) Instruct the Forum to work with the Trustees, the General Trustees, the Social Care Council, the Faith Nurture Forum, and others as appropriate, to use the "Net Zero by 2030" framework to develop plans and activities for the Church to work towards meeting this ambition, and to report annually to the General Assembly
 - (ii) Urge all congregations and Presbyteries to consider the implications of Net Zero for their own buildings, activities, procurement and finances, and to start long-term planning for the changes that will be required.
6. Welcome the agreement with the Church of Scotland Trust that, as a matter of principle, the portfolios of investments managed should align with the UN Paris Agreement in pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognising that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change.
7. Welcome the fact that no oil and gas company shares are currently held; and note that any future investment in oil and gas would only follow agreement between the Church of Scotland Investors Trust and the Faith Impact Forum that there were good evidence that its strategy and implementation was aligned with the stringent targets set by the Paris Agreement.
8.
 - (i) 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.
 - (ii) Instruct the Selection Committee to consider carefully the range of skills and diversity of backgrounds required for this task and present the names for this Special Committee on ethical investment practice to a later session of this General Assembly.
9. Urge the UK Government to do all that it can to ensure Covid-19 vaccines are available throughout the world, particularly in resource-poor countries, on the basis of clinical need to preserve human life.
10. Invite Kirk Sessions to arrange a public meeting to consider themes and ideas for a just and green future following the Covid-19 pandemic, and identify the implications for their parish, the wider community, for Scotland and the world, and instruct the Forum to support Kirk Sessions in this.
11. Instruct the Forum to call for the development of safe and legal routes for people desperately seeking sanctuary so that they can travel, live, work and contribute to our society with respect and dignity.
12. Urge the UK Government to reverse its policies regarding migrants crossing the English Channel, the accommodation of asylum seekers in former army camps or other institutions rather than in the community, and the plans to increase the deportation of asylum seekers to other countries.
13. Call on the UK Government and Parliament to continue to provide a minimum of 0.7% of Gross National Income as Overseas Development Assistance in line with the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Act 2015 and all main parties' 2019 manifesto commitments.
14. Welcome the cross-Church work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and of engaging with the experience of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people within the Church of Scotland; and instruct the Forum, the Faith Nurture Forum and the Assembly Trustees to consider how best to ensure the necessary resources are available to act on the outcomes.
15. Urge Kirk Sessions to take part in the basic training provided by Integrity – the Church of Scotland's Violence Against Women Task Group.
16. Instruct the Forum, in consultation with the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to renew and strengthen ecumenical dialogue, partnership and collaboration on public affairs with: (1) the Church of England; (2) through the new Scottish Christian Forum; and (3) within the Joint Public Issues Team.
17. Urge congregations to support the Reset the Debt campaign; instruct the Forum to promote the campaign, and to call on the UK Government to establish a Jubilee Fund to provide grants to pay off and cancel unavoidable debt accrued by households because of the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions.
18. Instruct the Forum to promote the Meet Your MSP resources and encourage congregations to approach their MSPs, especially those newly elected to the Scottish Parliament, in order to establish and strengthen relations with elected representatives.

19. Commend the report on Artificial Intelligence; urge the Church to engage with the issues raised, especially in relation to pastoral care, worship and mission; and instruct the Forum to provide resources to support this engagement.
20. Urge all parts of the Church of Scotland to continue to support Christian Aid as an expression of the Church of Scotland's solidarity and commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide.
21. Urge congregations and Presbyteries to seek ways to listen and learn from partner churches around the world in relation to issues such as poverty, climate change, migration, HIV, recovery from Covid-19 and interfaith activities, and to develop partner and twinning relationships.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 2, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 3:

Delete the words "who have campaigned for disinvestment from fossil fuels" and add at the end "including those about climate change".

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

Section 3 of the Deliverance in the print was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 4:

Add at the end "and to support congregations to sign the 'Scottish Churches COP26 Pledge'."

Section 4 as amended was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 5:

Add at the end "iii) Urge congregations and Presbyteries to join Eco-Congregation Scotland, and other ecumenical environment networks, so they may experience the benefits of expert advice and support, as well as the opportunity to join local and regional ecumenical networks to share information and ideas about how to reach Net Zero goals."

Section 5 as amended was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 6 and renumber:

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 6:

Delete the words "as a matter of principle".

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

Section 6 of the Deliverance in the print was then agreed.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 7:

Delete the words "Welcome the fact that no oil and gas company shares are currently held and note" and substitute "Agree".

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

Section 7 of the Deliverance in the print was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 13:

Amend section 13 by adding at the start "Deplore the decision of the UK Government to cut overseas aid programmes and".

Section 13, as amended, was then agreed.

On votes being taken on sections 9, 15 and 16 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.

The deliverance as amended was then agreed.

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Iona Community Board which was given in by the Rev Tom Gordon, Convener.

Ruth Harvey, the new Leader of the Iona Community, also addressed the General Assembly and the Moderator congratulated her on her appointment.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report
2. Welcome the appointments of Ruth Harvey as Leader and Sarah Metcalfe as Executive Director and wish them well at this important stage in the life of the Iona Community.
3. Note with gratitude the completion of the renovation of the living quarters of Iona Abbey as a place of welcome, worship and the renewal of the common life for the whole Church.
4. Rejoice with the Iona Community in the coming into force of the United Nations Nuclear Ban Treaty and affirm the call for the UK Government to join in signing it.
5. Affirm the work of the Community in supporting action towards Climate Justice.
6. Commend the Unlocked programme to Presbyteries, Congregations and wider ecumenical partners.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, being the whole of the proposed Deliverance, the proposed Deliverance was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Social Care Council which was given in by the Rev Thomas Riddell, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Commend the dedication, commitment and exceptional effort of all CrossReach staff who have worked throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and have continued to deliver high quality services, in Christ's name, to the people who rely on them for support; expressing particular appreciation and thanks to all of those who have worked on the front line.
3. Express alarm at the high rate of drugs deaths in Scotland and instruct CrossReach to work in collaboration with the Faith Impact Forum to hold the Scottish Government to account on its promise to reduce drug deaths and to ensure that the appropriate resources are put in place.
4. Celebrate the completion of the Care and Education restructure and commend those involved for working through the significant challenges it has posed.
5. Endorse the efforts being made by CrossReach to keep 'The Promise' which has been made to children who have experience of the care system; infants, children, young people, adults and their families - 'that every child grows up loved, safe and respected, and able to realise their full potential'; encourage Presbyteries, congregations and individuals in joining with CrossReach to commend this initiative and to do all they can to combat the discrimination and stigma which exists the current children's care system.

6. Note the significant financial challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the additional strain this has caused to CrossReach; celebrate the generous response to the Emergency Coronavirus Appeal from local and international partners without which the organisation would have struggled to offer all that it has to the people it cares for; and encourage Presbyteries, congregations and individual members to continue to offer support through proactive and tangible means.
7. Recognise The Guild for their outstanding support of their Project Partners and commend them for working alongside CrossReach to tackle loneliness and isolation over the past three years.
8. Note the satisfactory position of the closed Church of Scotland pension scheme in regard to CrossReach and commend the Pension Trustees for their efforts.
9. Welcome the findings of the Scottish Parliament commissioned Independent Review into Adult Social Care and those of the Parliament's Health and Sport Committee; note the recommendations made which are needed to improve the current situation for supported people, the social care workforce and unpaid carers; urge Presbyteries, congregations and individuals to get involved in raising awareness of the inequalities in the current system by all possible means and to call for the necessary resources which will begin address these.
10. (a) Note the human and financial impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on CrossReach and the steps being taken to recover;
(b) note too, the likely future impact of the recommendations of the recent reviews into the structure and funding of the adult social care sector in Scotland; and
(c) Instruct the Council to report to the General Assembly of 2022 outlining a way forward which takes account of both of these factors and which puts CrossReach on a sustainable footing.
4. Note the work being undertaken by the Safeguarding Committee to better understand the needs and experiences of survivors of abuse.
5. Direct that advice given by the Safeguarding Service, when framed as an instruction, must be followed by all Agencies of the General Assembly and by all Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Safeguarding Coordinators, office-holders, staff and volunteers involved in work with Vulnerable Groups (as defined in the Safeguarding Act), and pass an Act amending the Safeguarding Act (Act XVI 2018) accordingly as set out in Appendix A.
6. Note the good, ongoing working relationships with CrossReach, the Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade and the United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland.
7. Note the ongoing work in relation to International Development issues and the development of overseas protocols.
8. Note that work is ongoing to implement an online solution for the Congregational Register (SG7), Audit Checklist (SG11), and Presbytery Register.
9. Instruct the Safeguarding Service in collaboration with the Faith Nurture Forum to undertake work to scope out a mandatory advanced safeguarding training programme for ministers, and report to the General Assembly of 2022. In the interim, instruct ministers to attend local Introductory Safeguarding Training and record attendance on the Presbytery Register if they have not attended such a course in the last three years.
10. Instruct Presbyteries to co-operate with the Safeguarding Service in a compliance audit of Safeguarding data in readiness for the implementation of the Disclosure Act.
11. Thank all the volunteers who give of their time to promote and embed good safeguarding practices across the Church and express gratitude for the excellent work they undertake.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

On a vote being taken on section 7 of the proposed Deliverance, it carried For.

The Very Rev Dr John Chalmers spoke, recognising the pressure that CrossReach staff had been under and appreciating their work during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Moderator thanked CrossReach staff on behalf of the General Assembly, recognising the human and financial impacts of the pandemic upon them.

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Safeguarding Committee which was given in by the Rev Adam Dillon, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Note the Safeguarding Service Annual Statistical Report.
3. Encourage congregations to mark Safeguarding Sunday' with those of other denominations on Sunday 10th October 2021 or on any other suitable day in October.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 11 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

On votes being taken on sections 3, 6 and 8 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

The General Assembly resumed consideration of the proposed Deliverance of the Faith Nurture Forum, starting at section 11.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

11. a) *Note that Heart and Soul will no longer be part of future General Assemblies and give thanks for all who have contributed to it over the years and for all whose experience of the Church and its life have been enriched by their involvement.*
b) *Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to report to a future General Assembly on how stories can be shared and lessons learned, having consulted with the Faith Impact Forum and the Assembly Trustees.*
1. Receive the Supplementary Report.
15. (2) Pass the Presbytery Mission Plan Act as set out in Appendix 1.
16. (3) Instruct Presbyteries to complete the process of developing and gaining final approval of their Presbytery Mission Plan by 31 December 2022

noting that Presbyteries which are in the process of union with other Presbyteries may seek to form a shared Presbytery Mission Plan with them as the fulfilment of this instruction.

17. (4) Agree the number of ministry posts allocated to each Presbytery set out in Appendix 4 and instruct that this be the figure used in the forming of any Presbytery Mission Plan.
18. (5) Instruct that all Presbytery Plans agreed and approved in terms of the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003) be suspended from 1 June 2021.
19. (6) Instruct that from 1 June 2021
 - a) only vacancies and readjustments processed in terms of section 9(2) of Act VII 2003 (which require, for the avoidance of doubt, the approval of the Presbytery of the bounds and the concurrence of the Faith Nurture Forum) may proceed and
 - b) any vacancies and readjustments given permission to proceed through this exception shall be Reviewable Charges.
21. (8) Instruct that from 1 June 2021 all outstanding appeals under section 6 of Act VII 2003 related to Presbytery Plans shall be suspended, but that this shall be without prejudice to any right to initiate a review in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act in due course.
22. (9) Pass the Local Mission Church Regulations as set out in Appendix 5.

It was moved and seconded as a counter-motion to section 11a:

- 11 a). *In section 11a) in the print, add the words "funded by the Forum as a" after "will no longer be" so that 11a) reads as follows: a) Note that Heart and Soul will no longer be funded by the Forum as a part of future General Assemblies and give thanks for all who have contributed to it over the years and for all whose experience of the Church and its life have been enriched by their involvement; Also add a new section 11b) as follows: b) Instruct the Forum to open discussions with The Parish Church of St Cuthbert and other interested parties with a view to St Cuthbert's and others organising a Heart and Soul event in May 2022 and 2023 to coincide with the General Assembly and at no cost to central funds; And thirdly renumber the existing paragraph b) in the print as c)."*

On a vote being taken between the motion and the counter-motion the motion carried and the General Assembly resolved accordingly.

Section 11 in the print was then agreed.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 14 and renumber:

Thank Catherine Wallace, D.C.S, for her service as Honorary Secretary to Diaconate Council since her appointment in 2017.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 15 and renumber:

Instruct the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee to undertake a review of section 18 (Retirement of Ministers of Word and Sacrament) of the Parish Ministry Act (Act II 2018) and report to the General Assembly of 2022.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 15 and renumber:

Instruct the Forum to explore the possibilities of developing a 3 year Gaelic Language Plan [2022 – 2025] that includes a particular emphasis on Gaelic Ministry and Mission to children and young people and to bring a report to the General Assembly of 2022.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 15 and renumber:

Acknowledge and give thanks for those who have served in the name of the Church of Scotland, in paid and unpaid Chaplaincy in this past year of the Covid-19 Pandemic, sharing the Love of God in a variety of challenging settings.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 3.52 pm until 4.15 pm.

SESSION 8

On a vote being taken on section 1 of the Supplementary Report, it carried For.

The General Assembly received section 9 of the proposed Deliverance of the Assembly Trustees which was moved by the Very Rev Dr John Chalmers, Convener.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Note the work done in projecting both the future availability and affordability of ministries across the Church of Scotland and set as a realistic aim that Presbyteries should seek to implement by 2025 Presbytery Plans based around 600 fulltime equivalent ministries and a target of no more than 60 further charges vacant at any one time.

It was moved and seconded as a counter-motion to section 4 of the Supplementary Report (section 17 of the Faith Nurture Forum Report):

Agree that the proposed allocation of the number of ministry posts set out in Appendix 4 shall be assessed by the Forum for its likely impact on Ministry and Mission contributions as a result of loss of congregational income following a reduction in the number of congregations, and instruct the Forum, based on that analysis, to present a further report to a Commission of Assembly (to meet no later than 31st October 2021); this Report to offer at least two alternative versions of the allocation from which the Commission may choose to determine the allocations for Presbytery Mission Plans.

On a vote being taken there voted for the motion 374 and for the counter-motion 163 and the General Assembly resolved accordingly.

Section 4 (section 17) in the print was then agreed.

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

Subject to the following amendment to section (i) of Appendix 1: after "Five Marks of Mission shall mean:" and before "1. To proclaim...." add "The mission of the Church is the mission of Christ".

Section 2 as amended was then agreed.

Section 6 of the proposed Deliverance of the Legal Questions Committee was moved by the Rev Dr S Grant Barclay, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

In relation to appeals: (Sections of deliverance to be moved if the Presbytery Mission Plan Act and Local Mission Church Regulations are not agreed to by the General Assembly)

- a) instruct the Committee to consider introducing a bespoke process for Presbytery Planning appeals and to report to a future General Assembly;

- (b) instruct the Faith Nurture Forum, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee and the Presbytery Clerks' Forum, (i) to prepare a manual of good practice for Presbyteries to follow in terms of Presbytery Planning procedures; and (ii) to consider good procedural practice in the process of PPTG deciding on concurrence with a Presbytery Plan and to introduce such changes as it may think appropriate and to bring a report to the General Assembly of 2022 on progress; and
- (c) instruct the Committee to consider bringing proposed amendments to the Appeals Act to allow early consideration of the competency and relevancy of any Grounds of Appeal and to bring any proposals to the General Assembly of 2022.

OR (Sections of deliverance to be moved if the Presbytery Mission Plan Act and Local Mission Church Regulations are agreed to by the General Assembly)

- (a) instruct the Faith Nurture Forum, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee and the Presbytery Clerks' Forum, to prepare a manual of good practice for Presbyteries to follow in terms of Mission Plan procedures; and
- (b) instruct the Committee to consider bringing proposed amendments to the Appeals Act to allow early consideration of the competency and relevancy of any Grounds of Appeal and to bring any proposals to the General Assembly of 2022.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

In section 6, delete the words "and Local Mission Church Regulations are" where they appear twice in this section and substitute "is".

The Convener confirmed that as the Presbytery Mission Plan Act has now been passed, only the second alternative is moved. Section 6 as so amended was then agreed.

The General Assembly resumed consideration of the proposed Deliverance of the Faith Nurture Forum.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 3 to the Supplementary Report and renumber:

Instruct the Forum when developing principles for Presbytery Mission Planning, to include a principle of ecumenical working, bearing in mind the Lund Principle and the encouragement to form Local Mission Communities and regional Covenant Partnerships presented in the report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 3 to the Supplementary Report and renumber:

Instruct the Forum to explore whether there may be some downward variance in the 0.25 FTE being allocated to every Guardianship in the provisions of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act, whilst maintaining principles of mission and financial sustainability, and report to the General Assembly of 2022.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 4 to the Supplementary Report and renumber:

Instruct the Forum to ensure that Presbyteries receive adequate Guidance on the implementation and operation of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act to enable them to commence planning from 30 June 2021, and to consult the Presbytery Clerks' Forum before issuing further Guidance.

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 6 to the Supplementary Report and renumber:

Instruct the Forum, in consultation with the Assembly Trustees, to provide appropriate financial and pastoral support to Graduate Candidates and those involved in the Familiarisation Programme who are adversely affected by the suspension of current Presbytery Plans, such provision to be reviewed at six-monthly intervals from this General Assembly, until all Presbytery Mission Plans have been approved.

On votes being taken on sections 3, 5, 6 and 8 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 9 of the Supplementary Report:

Add at the end: "whilst instructing the Forum to consult with small congregations involved in missional work and with the Legal Questions Committee, and to consider bringing an amendment to the Regulations to the General Assembly of 2022 regarding whether or not Local Mission Churches could have a legal personality but not a Kirk Session."

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

Section 9 of the Deliverance in the print was then agreed.

Consideration of section 7 of the proposed Deliverance of the Supplementary Report of the Faith Nurture Forum was deferred until Session 9.

The General Assembly adjourned at 7.16 pm to meet again in this Hall tomorrow at 1.00 pm and online via video-conference tomorrow for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
and online via video-conference
EDINBURGH, 26 May 2021, 7.16 pm

Convened at Edinburgh, 27 May 2021

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings on the 27th day of May 2021, at 1.00pm.

SESSION 9

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

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Procedure Committee which was given in by the Rev Donald McCorkindale, Convener.

The Minutes of Sessions 5-6, being available in the Assembly Paper, were submitted and approved.

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HER MAJESTY'S FORCES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces which was given in by the Rev Dr Marjory MacLean, Convener.

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank those who serve in Her Majesty's Forces as Chaplains for their service to Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel, their families and the wider military community.
3. Recognise the particular service of those Chaplains who have served in support of the contribution of the Armed Services to efforts relating to Covid-19 in the past year and give thanks for the support of their families.
4. Commend to the prayers of the Church all Chaplains, and all those whom they serve.

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.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, being the whole of the proposed Deliverance, the proposed Deliverance was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

Air Marshal Richard Knighton CB was invited by the Moderator to address the General Assembly.

The Moderator then addressed those Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces who were present online.

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

The General Assembly resumed consideration of the proposed Deliverance of the Faith Nurture Forum.

The Convener undertook to make corrections to and to publish as soon as possible a revision of the table of Allocation of Ministries Numbers (referred to in section 4 of the Deliverance of the Supplementary Report) and apologised to the congregations affected.

With the agreement of the General Assembly, the Convener withdrew section 7 (20) in the print and proposed a new section 7 (20) and two further new sections 8 (21) and 9 (22):

The General Assembly:

- 7 (20). Pass an Act temporarily amending Act VIII 2003 as follows: [] ACT TEMPORARILY AMENDING THE VACANCY PROCEDURE ACT (ACT VIII 2003) (AS AMENDED) Edinburgh, [] May 2021, Session [] The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003), as amended, shall be further amended as follows: 1. Add the following words at the end of section 28: "Notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, where permission to call in terms of section 8 of this Act has been given prior to 1 June 2021 the vacancy process in a charge may continue after 1 June 2021 but if that process has not led to the preaching of a nominee in terms of section 22 of this Act by 30 September 2021, such a vacancy process shall be discontinued at that date unless agreement is reached between the Presbytery of the bounds and the Faith Nurture Forum that the process may be continued thereafter in terms of this Act. For the avoidance of doubt the unamended provisions of this section shall once again apply when the Presbytery has gained final approval in terms of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act ZZ 2021) for a Mission Plan covering the vacant charge." 2. Delete the words "the Presbytery Plan in accordance with the Appraisal and Adjustment Act (Act VII 2003)" where they appear in section 28 and substitute "the Mission Plan in accordance with the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act ZZ 2021)".
- 8 (21). Instruct that as from 1 June 2021 no Presbytery shall grant permission to Call in terms of section 8 of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003) unless agreement has been reached with the Forum.
- 9 (22). Instruct the Forum in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee to carry out a review of the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII 2003) in the light of the passing of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act and report to the General Assembly of 2022.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 7 (20):

Delete the words "30 September 2021" and replace them with the words "31 March 2022".

It was also moved and seconded as an amendment of section 7 (20):

Delete the words "30 September 2021" and replace them with the words "31 December 2021"

On a vote being taken between the two proposed amendments, the second amendment (ie the date "31 December 2021") carried.

It was moved and seconded as an amendment of section 7 (20):

Delete the words "30 September 2021" and replace them with the words "31 December 2021"

On a vote being taken on the proposed amendment, it carried For.

The new section 7 (20) as amended was then agreed.

On votes being taken on the proposed new sections 8 and 9 (21 and 22), they carried For.

The deliverance as amended was then agreed.

GENERAL TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the General Trustees which was given in by Mr Raymond Young, Chair.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and the 2019 and 2020 Accounts of the General Trustees.
2. Welcome progress on the Land & Buildings Plan in respect of: -
 - (a) the Presbytery Planning Toolkit for Land & Buildings
 - (b) the appointment of a Presbytery Buildings Officer
 - (c) the creation of a Historic Property Portfolio and associated Fund.
3. Welcome the intention to consult on proposed changes to Parliamentary Acts and General Assembly Acts and Regulations.
4. Welcome organisational changes including the adoption of a quorum of five for meetings of the Trustees' Board.
5.
 - (a) Appoint Mr Ian T Townsend as Chair and Rev Fiona M Mathieson as Vice-Chair for the ensuing year
 - (b) Authorise payment of £1,900 to each of Mr Raymond K Young as Chair and Mr Ian T Townsend as Vice-Chair for their services over the past year
6. Note the revised investment policy in respect of the Consolidated Stipend Fund.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 3, 4 and 6 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

It was moved and seconded:

Add a new section 3 and renumber:

Encourage the General Trustees in collaboration with the Faith Impact Forum and other relevant parties:

- 1) to monitor innovative energy-related projects across the Church, publicising examples of best practice in the field;
- 2) to give greater priority to promoting the work of Eco-Congregation Scotland across all charges;
- 3) to alert congregations to available energy Consultancy opportunities; and 4) to report to the General Assembly of 2022 on establishing as a matter of urgency firm and realistic targets for achieving carbon neutrality across the church locally, regionally and nationally.

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

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 6 and renumber:

- a) Express the gratitude of the Church for the 24 years of service that Mr David Robertson has given through his work with the General Trustees, and
- b) Thank Mr Raymond Young for his vigorous and energetic Chairing of the General Trustees during a time of significant change.

It was moved and seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 6 and renumber:

Express the thanks of the Church to Mr Brian Auld, Head of Building Safety, Risk and Compliance, for the crucial role he has played in responding to the consequences of Covid-19 on the life and work of our congregations.

On votes being taken on sections 2 and 5 of the proposed Deliverance, they carried For.

The deliverance as amended was then agreed.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND PENSION TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Pension Trustees which was given in by Mr Graeme Caghey, Chair.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

On a vote being taken on section 1 of the proposed Deliverance, it carried For.

The deliverance was then agreed.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Nomination Committee which was given in by the Rev Julie Rennick, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank those who responded to the call for nominations and encourage members, Elders, Deacons and Ministers to consider nomination for the 2021-22 process.
3. Invite each of the Standing Committees to reconsider its constitution and confirm the appropriate number of General Assembly appointed members which is required.
4. Note that Candidates in Training, Probationers and Ministers in their first year after ordination will not normally be nominated to serve on Standing Committees.
5. Make alterations to the Unincorporated Entities of the Church as set forth in the Report.

6. Appoint James Drummond Young as a Convener of the Judicial Commission.
7. Appoint Shona Haldane as a Convener of the Discipline Tribunal.
8. Appoint Hazel Hastie as Convener of the Registration of Ministries Committee.
9. Appoint Liam Fraser as Convener of the Theological Forum.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of sections 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the proposed Deliverance, these sections were moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

On a vote being taken on section 2 of the proposed Deliverance, it carried For.

It was moved and seconded:

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

Instruct the Nomination Committee to work with all bodies that report to the General Assembly to ensure that membership of subgroups, committees, project boards and similar of the Assembly Trustees, Forums, Committees, Trusts and Statutory Corporations are representative of the life of the Church.

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

It was moved, seconded and agreed:

Add a new section 4 and renumber:

Urge the Nomination Committee to consider adding additional information to the form to ensure a diverse range of voices is facilitated and included on Committees; such as Age brackets, Previous experience, Length of service on National Committees, Preferred method of attendance (in person or online) including hybrid option enabled for all to improve inclusion.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of section 5:

Add at the end: "subject to the following addition: Add: Legal Questions Committee Minister Appointed Euan Glen (Cluny linked with Monymusk)".

Section 5 as amended was then agreed.

The deliverance as amended was then agreed.

SELECTION COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Selection Committee which was given in by the Rev Neil Glover, Convener.

It was moved and seconded:

The General Assembly:

1. Appoint the following five persons to serve on the Special Committee on Ethical Investment:

Val Brown (Chair)
Sir Ewan Brown
Hannah Dunlop
Rev Dr Thomas Kisitu
Alasdair Ronald

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of section 1, being the whole of the proposed Deliverance, the proposed Deliverance was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

CHURCH HYMNARY TRUSTEES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church Hymnary Trustees which was given in by Lord Philip H Brodie, Chairman.

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of section 1, being the whole of the proposed Deliverance, the proposed Deliverance was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND TRUST

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Trust which was given in by Mr Thomas Watson, Chairman.

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Thank the members of the Trust for their diligence.
3. Re-appoint Mrs Morag Angus and Mr Leon Marshall as members of the Trust from 1 June 2021.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of section 1, 2 and 3 being the whole of the proposed Deliverance, the proposed Deliverance was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND INVESTORS TRUST

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Church of Scotland Investors Trust which was given in by Mr R D Burgon, Vice Chairman.

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the reappointment of Mr R H Nisbet as a member of the Investors Trust from 1 June 2021.
3. Approve the appointment of Mr J G L Millar and Mrs J McKeown from 1 June 2021.
4. Receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Investors Trust for 2019 and 2020.

There being no notices of motion or requests to speak lodged in respect of section 1, 2, 3 and 4 being the whole of the proposed Deliverance, the proposed Deliverance was moved, seconded and agreed under the "fast-track procedure" applying under amended Standing Orders.

The General Assembly adjourned at 3.36 pm to meet again in this Hall and online via video-conference this afternoon at 4.00 pm, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 27 MAY 2021

At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall, and also via video-conference using Zoom Meetings, on the 27th day of May 2021 at 4.00pm.

SESSION 10

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

DECEASED MINISTERS, MISSIONARIES AND DEACONS

The General Assembly called for the Report anent Deceased Ministers, Missionaries and Deacons, which was given in by the Very Rev Dr Martin Fair, Convener and the Very Rev Colin Sinclair as follows:

2019

April

- 26 Rev John Anthony Campbell, formerly of Irvine: St Andrew's

May

- 6 Mr Daniel Flucker Anderson, formerly of Foreign Mission: Livingstonia

- 14 Miss Isabelle Ritchie, formerly Missionary in India
- 22 Miss Dorothy Wallace, formerly Missionary in Darjeeling and Kalimpong
- 25 Rev Thomas Wilkinson McGill, formerly of Portpatrick linked with Stranraer St: Ninian's
- 26 Rev Dr Ian Bruce Doyle, formerly Secretary, Department of National Mission

June

- 1 Miss Sheila Mitchell, formerly Missionary at Tabeetha School, Israel
- 7 Rev Ronald McNish Maxton, formerly of Dollar linked with Glendevon linked with Muckhart as Associate Minister
- 15 Rev Arthur David Courtenay Greer, formerly of Barra
- 21 Rev David William Anderson, formerly Foreign Mission: South Africa
- 28 Rev Stanley Scoular, formerly of Rosyth

July

- 7 Mr David Douglas Duncan, formerly Missionary in Calabar, Nigeria
- 24 Rev Norman Iain MacRae, formerly of Inverness: Trinity
- 31 Rev William James Lethem Galbraith, formerly of Kilchrenan and Dalavich linked with Muckairn

August

- 3 Rev Peter David Thomson, formerly of Comrie linked with Dundurn
- 8 Rev Christine Houghton, formerly of Whitburn: South
- 13 Miss Rhoda Elizabeth Drummond DCS, formerly Chaplain's Assistant (RAF)
- 21 Rev David Dudley John Logan, lately of Caerlaverock linked with Dumfries: St Mary's-Greyfriars
- 26 Miss Margaret Fowler, formerly Missionary in Jamaica
- 30 Rev Ronald Johnstone, formerly of Thurso: West

September

- 3 Rev Robert Bell Donaldson, formerly of Kilchoman linked with Portnahaven
- 7 Rev John Hubert Innes-Watt, formerly of Mochrum
- 20 Rev Alasdair Bothwell Gordon, formerly of Aberdeen: Summerhill
- 21 Rev Clifford Strong, formerly of Creich, Flisk and Kilmany linked with Monimail
- 30 Rev Alastair Edward Ramage, formerly of Bearsden: Westerton Fairlie Memorial as Auxiliary Minister

October

- 1 Dr Andrew Buchanan Young, formerly Mission Partner in Chogoria, Kenya
- 7 Rev William Neilson Thomson Hodge, formerly of Longside
- 9 Rev Mary Dallas Wilson, formerly Auxiliary Minister in the Presbytery of Sutherland
- 14 Rev David Cowser Gordon, formerly of Gigha and Cara
- 14 Rev Donald Moxon, formerly of Foreign Mission: Livingstonia
- 16 Rev Andrew Maltman McCance, formerly of Coatbridge: Middle
- 29 Rev Patrick Hamilton Cashman, formerly of Dirleton linked with North Berwick: Abbey

November

- 9 Rev Dr Norman Maciver, formerly of Newhills
- 19 Rev Alice Harkins Kirkpatrick, formerly of Northmavine
- 30 Rev Joseph Brown, formerly of Linton linked with Morebattle and Hownam linked with Yetholm

December

- 7 Rev Henry Reay Sefton, formerly of Christ's College, University of Aberdeen
- 9 Rev Stuart Franklyn Astley Pryce, formerly of Dumfries: St George's
- 30 Rev Francis Charles Collier, formerly of Forgue-Inverkeithny linked with Ythanwells Auchaber

2020

January

- 1 Rev Ian Wilkie, lately of Falkirk: Grahamston United
- 13 Rev Ainslie Walton, formerly Lecturer, Christ's College, University of Aberdeen
- 25 Rev John Barr, formerly of Kilmacolm: Old
- 26 Rev Stewart Duncan Jeffrey, formerly of Banff linked with King Edward
- 30 Rev Robert David Higham, formerly of Tiree

February

- 3 Rev James Edward Hunter, formerly of Blantyre: Livingstone Memorial
- 12 Rev Peter James Macdonald, lately of Edinburgh: Broughton St Mary's
- 17 Rev Donald Angus MacLennan, formerly of Kinloch
- 25 Rev James Harvey Sinclair formerly of Auchencairn and Rerrick linked with Buittle and Kelton
- 26 Miss Jane (Janie) Martin DCS, formerly of Dundee: Chalmers Ardler
- 27 Rev Thomas James Grant Seath, formerly of Motherwell: Manse Road

March

- 3 Rev William Edwards Wilkie, formerly of Aberdeen: South of St Nicholas Kincorth
- 11 Rev James George Stewart Blyth, formerly of Glenmuick
- 12 Rev Shirley Ann Thomas, formerly Auxiliary Minister at Dunnichen, Letham and Kirkden
- 12 Rev William George Neill, formerly of Ayr: St Andrew's
- 14 Rev Ada Vanbeck MacLeod, lately of Hurlford
- 25 Rev William Hannah, formerly of Muirkirk
- 30 Rev Richard Cecil Allan Fowler, formerly of Gask linked with Methven

April

- 5 Rev Robert Stewart Frizzell, formerly of Wick: Old
- 6 Rev Brock Ainslie White, formerly of Kirkcaldy: Templehall
- 4 Rev John Christopher Wigglesworth, formerly of Board of World Mission and Unity as General Secretary
- 5 Rev Alan Henry Worbey Lamb, formerly of Fort Augustus linked with Glengarry as Associate Minister
- 12 Rev Duncan Cameron McPhee, formerly of Department of National Mission
- 13 Rev John McCallum, formerly of Falkirk: Camelon Irving

- 15 Rev William McLeish Alexander, formerly of Berriedale and Dunbeath linked with Latheron
- 19 Rev George McCabe, formerly of Airdrie: High
- 23 Rev Glyn Rees Taverner, formerly of Maxton and Mertoun linked with St Boswells
- 28 Rev David Dominic Smart, formerly of Aberdeen: Gilcomston South

May

- 6 Rev Robert Alexander Jones, formerly of Marnoch
- 20 Rev Bertalan Tamas, formerly Minister of Budapest: St Columba's
- 21 Rev Gordon Christopher Macleod Currie, formerly of Linlithgow: St Michael's as Assistant Minister
- 22 Rev Peter Youngson, formerly of Kirriemuir: St Andrew's

June

- 13 Rev Alistair Gerald Crichton McGregor formerly of Edinburgh: Leith North

July

- 2 Rev Colin Campbell Reith Macpherson, formerly of Dunfermline: St Margaret's
- 3 Rev Andrew Whittingham Rae, formerly of Annan: St Andrew's Greenknowe Erskine
- 4 Rev Angus Cameron Mackenzie, formerly of Biggar
- 6 Rev William Crawford Anderson, formerly of Aberdeen: Ruthrieston West
- 7 Mrs Iona Mary Burns Beckett, formerly Missionary in Jaffa
- 22 Rev William Graham Alston, formerly of Glasgow: North Kelvinside
- 25 Rev Malcolm Wright, formerly of Craigrownie linked with Roseneath St Modan's

August

- 24 Rev John Turnbull, formerly of Balfron linked with Fintry
- 24 Rev James Ross, formerly of Kilsyth Anderson
- 28 Rev James Hastie Brown, formerly of Helensburgh: Park
- 30 Rev Anthony Livesley formerly of Kiltarn

September

- 9 Rev David Keith Paterson Bennett, formerly of Kirkpatrick: Irongray linked with Lochrutton linked with Terregles
- 15 Rev John Elvin Gravatt, formerly Community Minister for Paisley
- 20 Mary Elizabeth Angelini, formerly of Malawi Blantyre Synod
- 24 Rev Robert Anderson, formerly of Glasgow: Calton Parkhead

October

- 13 Rev Eric Vallance Hudson, formerly of Bearsden: Westerton Fairlie

Memorial

- 20 Rev Peter Carstairs Douglas, formerly of Boarhills linked with Dunino
- 21 Rev Peter Brown, formerly of Holm

November

- 10 Rev Gordon Oliver, formerly of The Parish of Latheron

- 17 Dr George Dimond Earngey Morris, formerly of Foreign Mission: South Arabia
- 18 Rev Sally Margaret Frew Russell, lately of Corsock and Kirkpatrick Durham linked with Crossmichael, Parton and Balmaghie
- 19 Rev James Currie, formerly of Laggan
- 22 Rev James Stenhouse Dick, formerly of Glasgow: Ruchazie
- 24 Rev William Colville Thomas, formerly of Edinburgh: Granton
- 26 Rev Albert Caie, formerly of Glenmuick (Ballater)
- 26 Rev Thomas Caldwell Houston, formerly of Glasgow: Priesthill and Nitshill as Associate Minister
- 27 Rev John Bruce Thomson, formerly of Scone: Old December
- 11 Rev Norman Livingstone Faulds, formerly of Aberlady linked with Gullane
- 23 Rev Brian Conlan, formerly of Glenelg linked with Glenshiel linked with Kintail as Associate Minister
- 2021
- January
- 2 Rev James William Hill, formerly of Edinburgh: Corstorphine St Anne's
- 4 Mrs Moira Cubie, formerly Missionary in Israel
- 22 Rev Eric William Sinclair Jeffrey, formerly of Edinburgh: Bristo Memorial Craigmillar
- February
- 3 Rev Alan Linklater Dunnett, formerly of Cowie and Plean linked with Fallin
- 18 Rev David Livingston Wright, formerly of Stornoway: St Columba's
- 24 Rev John Murrie, formerly of Kirkliston
- March
- 9 Rev Ian Warrender Benzie, lately of Irvine: New Town Girdle Toll linked with Irvine: St Andrew's
- 10 Rev William McGregor, formerly of Auchtergaven and Moneydie
- 21 Miss Annie Wilson McGoff, formerly of Poona St Margaret's Hospital, India
- 28 Rev John Stuart Mill, formerly of Durisdeer linked with Thornhill linked with Penpont Keir and Tynron
- 31 Rev Archibald Lamont, formerly of Kilcalmonell linked with Skipness
- April
- 4 Rev Thomas William Tait, formerly of Rattray
- 5 Miss Emma Lewis MacKinnon, formerly Mission Partner in Calabar
- 11 Rev John Cook, formerly of Edinburgh: Leith St Andrew's
- 25 Rev William Gilchrist McKaig, formerly of Langbank
- May
- 5 Rev Douglas William Bell, formerly of Alexandria: North
- 7 Mr John Buchanan DCS, formerly of Lothian: Musselburgh St Clements

The General Assembly, upstanding, were led in prayer by the Very Rev Dr Martin Fair and the Very Rev Colin Sinclair.

PROTESTATIONS

Protestations were called for but none was taken.

REPORT ON PRINTING OF ACTS

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee on Commissions as to the Printing of the Acts of the General Assembly which was given in by the Principal Clerk, and it was remitted to the Committee on Commissions under Section 26 of the Standing Orders to revise and print the Acts.

The Minutes of Sederunts not yet submitted were held as read and approved.

The Clerks were appointed a Committee to revise the Minutes.

The General Assembly passed an Act appointing a Commission of Assembly in terms of Act VI 1997.

The General Assembly passed an Act appointing the next General Assembly to be held at Edinburgh on 21st May 2022.

The following people were presented online to the General Assembly:

OFFICE OF THE ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

New Staff Members:

Dave Kendall, Chief Officer
Scott Shackleton, Head of Faith Action Programme

GENERAL TRUSTEES

New Staff Members:

Rashell Fordyce, Senior Administrator
Barri Millar, Chief Executive
Emily Walker, Administrator

Retiring Staff Members:

Keith Mason, Depute Secretary
David Robertson, Secretary and Clerk

COMMUNICATIONS

New Staff Member:

Brianne Moore, Web Editor

LAW DEPARTMENT

New Staff Members:

David di Paola, Solicitor
Lauren Gibson, Legal Administrator

FAITH NURTURE FORUM

New Staff Members:

Kay Cathcart, Education and Training Secretary
Lisa Clark, Training Officer
Pam Mellstrom, Young Adults Volunteer Co-ordinator
Lindsay O'Riordan, Senior Administrator

Ministers recently inducted and introduced to their first charge or appointment:

Rev Dr Sonia Blakesley, Paisley: St Mark's Oldhall
Rev Nigel Chikanya, Ardrossan and Saltcoats: Kirkgate
Rev Alan Childs, Edinburgh: Corstorphine Craigsbank
Rev Hayley Cohen, Musselburgh: Northesk
Rev Morag Crossan, Canonbie United l/w Liddesdale
Rev Kathleen Dain, Kilmun, Strone and Ardentiny: The Shore Kirk
Rev Alistair Drummond, Kilmuir and Logie Easter
Rev Erick du Toit, Edinburgh: Kirkliston
Rev Fraser Edwards, Innerleithen, Traquair and Walkerburn
Rev Eduard Enslin, Mortlach and Cabrach
Rev John Gow, Portsoy
Rev Sumit Harrison, Carnwarth l/w Carstairs
Rev Christine Hay, Arbroath: West Kirk
Rev Carl Irvine, Inverurie: St Andrew's
Rev Hanneke Janse van Vuren, Strathbrock
Rev Andrew Kimmitt, Aberlour
Rev Dawn Laing, Alloa: Ludgate
Rev Breda Ludik, St Andrew's - Lhanbryde and Urquhart

Rev Dr Rosie Magee, Edinburgh: St Andrew's and St George's West
 Rev Iain Majcher, Bothwell
 Rev Ronald Matandakufa, Grangemouth Kirk of the Holy Rood
 Rev Timothy Mineard, Barrhead: St Andrew's
 Rev Elsie Macrae, Kirkpatrick Juxta l/w Moffat: St Andrew's l/w Wamphray
 Rev Stanley Okeke, Ayr: St Andrew's
 Rev Jeanette Peel, Hospital Chaplain at Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley (Healthcare Chaplain)
 Rev Louse Purden, Bonnyrigg
 Rev Beata Thane, Malta: St Andrew's Scots Church
 Rev Ben Thorp, Glasgow: Sandyford Henderson Memorial
 Rev Lorna Tunstall, Clyne l/w Kildonan & Loth Helmsdale
 Rev Dorothy Wallace, West Lochfyneside: Cumlodden, Inveraray and Lochgair
 Rev Wiekus van Straaten, Keith: St Rufus, Botriphnie and Grange

Ordained Local Ministers recently introduced to their first appointment:

Rev Fiona Anderson, Strathaven: Trinity
 Rev Simon Crouch, Presbytery of Gordon
 Rev Lorna Fyfe, Coatbridge: New St Andrew's
 Rev Alexander MacPherson, Cowal Kirk
 Rev Beverley Stevenson, Motherwell: Crosshill l/w Motherwell: St Margaret's
 Rev Joan Thorne, Dyce

Recently Appointed Ministries Development Staff:

Peter Anderson, Mission Pioneer, Stewarton 20s to 40s, Presbytery of Irvine and Kilmarnock
 Emily D'Silva, Parish Assistant, Kilmore and Oban
 Stuart Forsyth, Mission Pioneer, Viandrtual Initiative, Presbytery of Irvine and Kilmarnock
 Henry Hudson, Community Project Worker, Edinburgh: Gorgie Dalry Stenhouse
 Rev Rory Macleod, Team Minister, Fort William: Kilmallie l/w Kilmonivaig
 Alison Muir, Mission Pioneer, Towerlands Plant, Presbytery of Irvine and Kilmarnock
 Lorraine Orr, Pioneer and Community Outreach Worker, Linlithgow: St Michael's
 Scott Reynolds, Parish Assistant, Dundee: Monifieth
 Julie Robertson, Children and Youth Worker, Hamilton: Strathaven Trinity
 Michele Simms, Parish Development Worker, Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland
 Neil Slowman, Community Development Worker, Perth: Letham St Mark's
 Katrona Templeton, Mission Pioneer Open Door Initiative, Presbytery of Irvine & Kilmarnock

Recently Retired Ministers:

Rev Fraser Aitken, Ayr: St Columba's
 Rev Dr Ian Barclay, Appin l/w Lismore
 Rev Louis Bezuidenhout, Arrochar l/w Luss
 Rev Alan Birss, Paisley: Abbey
 Rev Robert Calvert, Dundee: The Steeple
 Rev Dr Roderick Campbell, Cumlodden, Lochfyneside and Lochgair l/w Glenaray and Inveraray
 Rev Stuart Duff, Birnie and Pluscarden l/w Elgin: High
 Rev George Fiddes, Mauchline l/w Sorn
 Rev Ruth Halley, Logie
 Rev Elspeth Harley, Caddonfoot l/w Galashiels Trinity
 Rev Dr Mary Henderson, Falkirk: Laurieston linked with Redding and Westquarter
 Rev Wilma Johnson, East Mainland
 Rev Caryl Kyle, Holytown l/w New Stevenston: Wrangholm
 Rev George Macdonald, Bonnybridge: St Helen's
 Rev Malcolm M Macdougall, Eddleston l/w Peebles: Old Rev Campbell MacKinnon, Glasgow: Balshagray Victoria Park
 Rev Campbell MacKinnon, Glasgow: Balshagray Victoria Park
 Rev Alexander Noble, Saltcoats: North
 Rev Fiona Ogg, Acharacle l/w Ardnamurchan
 Rev Barbara Quigley, Glasgow: St Andrew's East

Rev Graham Taylor, Dundee: Broughty Ferry St Luke's and Queen Street
 Rev Alan Telfer, Strathaven: Avendale Old and Drumclog
 Rev Elizabeth Watson, Whiting Bay and Kildonan

Recently Retired Ministries Development Staff:

Jean Hunter, Parish Assistant, Brodick l/w Corrie l/w Lochranza and Pirnmill l/w Shiskine

Recently Retired Deacon

David Nicholson DCS, Deacon, Cumbernauld Kildrum

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

New Staff Members:

Mark Beautyman, Finance Business Partner
 Steven Boyd, HR Business Partner
 Berni Brown, Head of IT
 Elizabeth Dalo, Finance Manager
 Paul Drury, Head of Service Fundraising
 Eoin McDunphy, Director Finance and Resources
 Claire Hay, Director HR and Organisational Development
 Eilidh Macdonald – Harte, Senior Counsellor, Children and Families Services Counselling and Recovery
 Mairi MacNaughton, Clinical Manager, Bluebell Perinatal Service
 Helen McKendry, Manager, Wellhall Residential Care Home
 Kayleigh McLeod, Manager, Oversteps Care Home
 Paula Shiels, Head of Service Children and Families – Counselling and Community
 Sheila Traynor, Finance Business Partner

Retiring Staff Members:

Trevor Barnett, Supporter Development Team
 Nan Boyd, Axis Project Dundee
 Jean Horn, Whinnieknowe Residential Care Home

The Moderator addressed all those who had been presented to the General Assembly, conveying the good wishes of the Assembly to them.

The Moderator addressed the General Assembly.

His Grace addressed the General Assembly and concluded with these words: "Right Reverend and well-beloved, your labours are now at an end and now, in the Queen's name, I bid you farewell".

A verse of the National Anthem was played.

The Moderator and members of the General Assembly having bowed to His Royal Highness, the Moderator, turning to the General Assembly, said "Right Reverend: In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, sole King and Head of the Church, I now dissolve this General Assembly, and appoint the next General Assembly to be held at Edinburgh on the 21st day of May 2022."

The members of the General Assembly, prior to lining the Quadrangle of the College as His Royal Highness passed from the Assembly Hall, concluded their Session at 5.09 pm with the Benediction pronounced by the Moderator.

ASSEMBLY HALL, EDINBURGH
 and online via video-conference
 27 May 2021, 5.09 pm

SECTION C – OVERTURES FROM PRESBYTERIES

Overtures from Presbyteries

- 34/1.....Overture Anent the Union of the Presbyteries of
Hamilton and Lanark
- 34/2.....Overture from the Presbytery of Aberdeen and
Shetland Regarding Training for the Full Time
Ministry of Word and Sacrament
- 34/5.....Overture Anent the Union of the Presbyteries of
Edinburgh and West Lothian
- 34/6.....Overture Anent the Union of the Presbyteries of
Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries
and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and
Wigtown and Stranraer
- 34/7.....Overture Anent Presbytery Restructuring from the
Presbytery of Lewis

SECTION C – OVERTURES FROM PRESBYTERIES

Overture

OVERTURE ANENT THE UNION OF THE PRESBYTERIES OF HAMILTON AND LANARK

From the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark

Whereas the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark have conferred together, and have each come to the view that it is necessary for the effective good government of the Church that they have each other's mutual support and encouragement in a united Presbytery and have agreed the Basis of Union set out in the Appendix to this Overture at meetings of the Presbyteries on the twenty fourth day of March 2021:

It is humbly overtured by the Reverend the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark to the Venerable the General Assembly to enact and ordain as follows:-

ACT ANENT THE UNION OF THE PRESBYTERIES OF HAMILTON AND LANARK

Edinburgh, XX May 2021, Sess. XX

Notwithstanding the terms of Act II 1975, by which the present overall Presbytery structure of the Church was established, and following the decision of the General Assembly of 2019 to reform the number of Presbyteries, the General Assembly in the exercise of power to readjust the said structure as may be required from time to time enact and ordain that:-

1. With effect from 1 January 2022 the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark shall be united in terms of the Basis of Union agreed by them all.
2. The name of the united Presbytery shall be the Presbytery of Lanarkshire Church of Scotland, known as 'Lanarkshire Presbytery' or 'Presbytery of Lanarkshire'
3. The Scottish Charity Number SC048680 shall be retained as the Scottish Charity Number of Presbytery of Lanarkshire Church of Scotland.
4. All ministers and deacons having seats in the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark in terms of Act III 2000 (as amended) shall be members of the Lanarkshire Presbytery.
5. All Presbytery elders, whether commissioned by Kirk Session or appointed by the Presbytery, shall so long as their commission or appointment run be members of the Lanarkshire Presbytery.
6. All property or funds belonging to or held on behalf of the Presbytery of Hamilton or the Presbytery of Lanark shall belong to the Lanarkshire Presbytery. Any trust or other special funds held by either Presbytery shall, from the date of the Union, be dealt with in such a way as is competent and as may be agreed to by the united Presbytery, subject to obtaining of legal advice on any question of difficulty which may arise.

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark to form the Presbytery of Lanarkshire as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.

Appendix

BASIS AND PLAN OF UNION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF HAMILTON AND LANARK

1. The united Presbytery to be created by uniting the existing Presbyteries of Hamilton and Lanark, the new Presbytery to comprise the sixty-four charges as at present or as shall be in place on 31 December 2021.
2. The united Presbytery to be called the Presbytery of Lanarkshire Church of Scotland, known as 'Lanarkshire Presbytery' or 'Presbytery of Lanarkshire'
3. The united Presbytery to meet for its first meeting on 5 February 2022, in a venue to be determined, when the normal pattern of meetings shall be decided.
4. The united Presbytery to appoint a Moderator to serve from 1 January 2022 until September 2023.
5. The united Presbytery to establish a Presbytery Office with a full time Clerk and appropriate administrative assistance along with other staffing which may be appropriate and affordable.
6. The Standing Orders for the united Presbytery shall be approved by the united Presbytery at its first meeting.
7. The united Presbytery to establish Mission Areas/ Locality Groups and their remits and appropriate committees to enable a structure to be developed that commits to a principle of subsidiarity and/ or delegation that allows discussions to take place in the most effective forum.

The provisional objective of the united Presbytery shall be *Supporting congregations to share the Good News of Jesus Christ through working with each other, working for each other and being with each other.*

We work with each other by providing resources, knowledge and training, based on learning and receiving from each other and also being accountable to each other.

We work for each other by doing the things Presbytery can do in order to free up congregations to do what they are energised to do.

Being with each other means knowing each other, listening to each other, learning from each other and supporting each other collaboratively.

We encourage and support congregations to provide:

Opportunities for worship, fellowship, the teaching of the Christian faith, the enriching of community life, ensuring that the views of the local Church are heard on matters of wider concern;

Pastoral care, advice and support to people in each parish.

Overture**OVERTURE REGARDING TRAINING FOR THE FULL TIME MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT****From the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland**

Whereas:

1. The Church of Scotland has four training paths to recognised Ministries, which are Full Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, Ordained Local Ministry, the Diaconate and the Readership.
2. There are no direct training paths to Chaplaincies such as in Healthcare, Prisons and the Army and those who are employed as a Chaplain may have been ordained as a Full Time Minister of Word and Sacrament, as an Ordained Local Minister or as a Deacon.
3. The traditional training for Ministry of Full-Time Word and Sacrament is deliberately left broad in order that candidates move through the years of training, primarily accruing experience of Parish Ministry, yet some upon completion see their calling in the work of Chaplaincy.
4. Armed Force Chaplaincy requires a Chaplain to be Ordained by their Denomination, however the other Chaplaincies (such as those within the National Health Service and Prison Service) do not require Ordination, though these appointments would generally ask for a certain level of training and normally the approval of a Denomination or Faith Group.
5. The scenarios specifically being referred to in this Overture are those in which an individual is in a full or part-time paid appointment (with sufficient contracted hours) and is not serving as a volunteer Chaplain. (Note in some settings the term 'Chaplain' is often used to describe work that is voluntary.)
6. We are referring specifically to individuals who feel called to continue serving and ministering to others in the setting of their existing appointment, but who feel the Call to Ordination, and who have their Call upheld in the Church of Scotland's Discernment and Assessment process.
7. The Church of Scotland Training Programme for Full Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament requires candidates to undertake a 4th placement (Probationary Placement) which is full time. Though generally a fair system, in terms of the entry point to Call and the programme of training for most candidates, this fixed requirement creates an unfair disadvantage to the journey of calling for those individuals already serving as Chaplains.
8. A solution to this anomaly could be for a Chaplain to seek ordination via the Ordained Local Ministry route. However, an OLM is part time, is a voluntary position, is under the Supervision of a minister and the positions which they are placed into are under the auspices of the Presbytery and designated within an agreed Presbytery Plan.
9. To be asked to leave their job to undertake a Probationary Placement, which is solely focused on Parish Ministry, and then hope to return to their existing Chaplaincy appointment seems at odds with the unique experience of discerning a calling and finding a unique vocation within which to serve God. Organisations such as the NHS, Prison Service or an Educational Institution would not hold an individual's job open for them for a period of 15 months. It is entirely possible for an individual, already serving God in the vocation they envisage God has set apart for them, to feel that God is drawing them to continue in this role, but as an Ordained Minister with the full options of 'Sacramental Ministry' open to them in that Pastoral Appointment.
10. Many other denominations allow for the flexibility of an individually orientated pathway within training towards Ordination for selected individuals who are already employed within a Chaplaincy. This includes in the Ministry of Healthcare Chaplaincy for instance, where many denominations have an option open to them to select, train and Ordain someone already in post.
11. Serving as a Chaplain is described by many as a true Calling. Relationships within the care setting are built up and allow for the transference of comfort, encouragement, guidance, and support. Though 'sacramental ministry' is not necessarily an essential requisite for carrying out this vocational role, many Chaplains who are ordained have the additional opportunity for journeying alongside people at important points in their life though the administering of Sacramental graces. Examples include: the baptism of a patient in hospital who feels drawn into God's Love and sharing communion with a person who is terminally ill. In addition, some Chaplains are asked to conduct marriages for people they have grown in relationship with over a period of time whilst perhaps supporting them for other reasons.
12. Sacramental Ministry goes beyond the practical examples of ministry mentioned above and opens the door for a Chaplain to care for the 'whole' person. Chaplaincy does not necessitate Sacramental ministry. However, some Chaplains who work as non ordained employees can point to clear feelings that God is placing a Call to Ordained Ministry upon them and to continue in their current vocation.
13. Where the discernment process of the Church, and National Assessment Conference, confirm the presence of a Call for a given individual, it does not seem fair that the current options for the training of Ordained Ministers does not allow for flexibility in such a case, to allow the individual to continue through an appropriate training programme and on to fulfil the Calling to Sacramental Ministry within their current vocation and area of service.
14. At a time when the Church is rightly concerned about decreasing numbers of Parish Ministers, it is understandable that it should encourage people to consider such a calling. However, a calling to the work of Chaplaincy and serving the Church denomination in other appointments outside Parish Ministry, is equally legitimate.

15. The Church of Scotland is very much aware of the financial cost of training candidates, especially if ultimately an individual at the end of training is called into a Ministry other than Parish Ministry when there is such shortage in this area. However, it should be noted that in these specific cases outlined, the cost of training is minimal – limited to Academic Course Fees, Travel and Conference Fees. The requirement to pay a candidate an allowance during the years of Academic Study in the cases above would not be necessary as that person would continue in their Chaplaincy Appointment, studying Part-Time. In addition, a stipend during the Probationary Placement would not be required.
16. This proposal for an amendment to the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004) is not intended to create a shortcut for certain individuals to seek fast-track Ordination and is not intended to move the Church away from the broad approach to the Training Programme that generally works well. In addition, it is not seeking the removal of any steps in the process of discernment, education, and placement experience for certain people. Instead, it is to address an anomaly whereby an individual is disadvantaged, effectively having their path to building on their sense of call blocked, despite their call being sustained at National Assessment, on account of already being employed as a Chaplain. Such individuals are placed in the impossible position of being asked to leave their appointment to undertake the traditional Probationary Placement - built heavily around the experiences of Parish Ministry - and then hope to return to their previous Chaplaincy Appointment.
17. It is humbly overtured by the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland to the Venerable the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, that the General Assembly pass an Act amending the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (ACT X 2004) (as amended by Acts II, X 2005, III 2007, VI 2009, VIII 2011, XI 2014, IV 2015, XIV 2016, II 2017, XI 2018, I and III 2019 and IX and XV 2020) by inserting a new section 22A as follows:
- 22A. In the special circumstance of an individual being accepted as a Candidate for the Full Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament (FTWS), who is currently employed as a Chaplain though not currently Ordained, and who has demonstrated at National Assessment a Call to full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and yet who believes and can demonstrate a Calling to continue in their current role as a Chaplain, the committee have in their powers the option of modifying the training requirement of Full-Time Probation Placement in the following terms:
- All other parts of the Training Programme (including approved Academic Course, appropriate Conferences and first three Placements) to be completed during the years of Academic Study preceding the Probationary Placement. (Sections 16 and 17, Act X 2004).
 - The modified Probationary Placement to follow the same requirements as the Probationary Period undertaken by a Candidate within the Ordained Local Minister Training Programme. (Section 12, Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX 2011)).
 - This placement to run alongside the candidate's continuation in their salaried employment as a Chaplain.
 - All appraisals to be carried out as per the standard Training Programme for Full-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, with an additional statement required in the Final Appraisal provided by a suitably qualified person

who can testify to the candidate's work in their Chaplaincy during the year of placement. (Most usually a Line Manager).

- Upon successful completion of the training, the candidate will be granted an Exit Certificate and become a Graduate Candidate pending Ordination and will be given an assigned category of 'E', according to the Registration of Ministries Act (ACT II 2017).
- Should the said individual, at some point in the future, seek to take up a calling within another Ministry of the Church, an application for a change of category in terms of Section 27 of Act II 2017 will be required, including the committee's decision on further training/ placements that the applicant may be asked to undertake to complete before the change in category is approved.

Or to do otherwise as to your Venerable Court may seem good.

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

- Receive the Overture.
- Pass an Act amending the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004) (as amended) as set out in the Appendix.

Appendix

[] ACT AMENDING THE SELECTION AND TRAINING FOR FULL-TIME MINISTRY ACT (ACT X 2004) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2021, 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:

- Insert a new section 22A as follows:

22A. In the special circumstance of an individual being accepted as a Candidate for the Full Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament (FTWS), who is currently employed as a Chaplain though not currently Ordained, and who has demonstrated at National Assessment a Call to full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and yet who believes and can demonstrate a Calling to continue in their current role the committee have in their powers the option of modifying the training requirement of Full-Time Probation Placement in the following terms:

- All other parts of the Training Programme (including approved Academic Course, appropriate Conferences and first three Placements) to be completed during the years of Academic Study preceding the Probationary Placement. (Sections 16 and 17, Act X 2004).
- The modified Probationary Placement to follow the same requirements as the Probationary Period undertaken by a Candidate within the Ordained Local Minister Training Programme. (Section 12, Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX 2011)).
- This placement to run alongside the candidate's continuation in their salaried employment as a Chaplain.
- All appraisals to be carried out as per the standard Training Programme for Full-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, with an additional statement required in the Final

Appraisal provided by a suitably qualified person who can testify to the candidate's work in their Chaplaincy during the year of placement. (Most usually a Line Manager).

- (v) Upon successful completion of the training, the candidate will be granted an Exit Certificate and become a Graduate Candidate pending Ordination and will be given an assigned category of 'E', according to the Registration of Ministries Act (ACT II 2017).
- (vi) Should the said individual, at some point in the future, seek to take up a calling within another Ministry of the Church, an application for a change of category in terms of Section 27 of Act II 2017 will be required, including the committee's decision on further training/placements that the applicant may be asked to undertake to complete before the change in category is approved.

Note: this Overture was not agreed to by the General Assembly.

Overture**OVERTURE ANENT THE UNION OF THE PRESBYTERIES OF EDINBURGH AND WEST LOTHIAN****From the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian**

Whereas the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian have conferred together, and have each come to the view that it is necessary for the effective good government of the Church that they have each other's mutual support and encouragement in a united Presbytery and have agreed the Basis of Union set out in the Appendix to this Overture at meetings of the Presbyteries on the ninth day of February 2021:

It is humbly overtured by the Reverend the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian to the Venerable the General Assembly to enact and ordain as follows:-

ACT ANENT THE UNION OF THE PRESBYTERIES OF EDINBURGH AND WEST LOTHIAN

Edinburgh, XX May 2021, Session XX

In terms of the decision of the General Assembly of 2019 to approve a Radical Action Plan, which *inter alia* encouraged the establishment of around twelve regional Presbytery structures by the General Assembly of 2024 enact and ordain that:-

1. With effect from 1 January 2022 the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian shall be united in terms of the Basis of Union agreed by them all.
2. The name of the united Presbytery shall be the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian and for registration purposes shall be the "Church of Scotland Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian".
3. All ministers and deacons having seats in the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian at 31 December 2021 in terms of Act III 2000 (as amended) shall be members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.
4. All Presbytery elders at 31 December 2021, whether commissioned by Kirk Session or appointed by the Presbytery, shall so long as their commission or appointment run be members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.
5. All corresponding members of the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian at 31 December 2021 shall be corresponding members of the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian until their corresponding membership is concluded by the united Presbytery.
6. All property or funds belonging to or held on behalf of the Presbytery of Edinburgh or the Presbytery of West Lothian shall belong to the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian. Any trust or other special funds held by either Presbytery shall, from the date of the Union, be dealt with in such a way as is competent and as may be agreed to by the united Presbytery, subject to obtaining of legal advice on any question of difficulty which may arise.

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian to form the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian, as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.

Appendix**BASIS AND PLAN OF UNION OF THE PRESBYTERY OF EDINBURGH AND WEST LOTHIAN**

1. The united Presbytery to be created by uniting the existing Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian, the new Presbytery to comprise the charges in existence at 31 December 2021.
2. The united Presbytery to be known as the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.
3. The united Presbytery to meet for its first meeting on 1 February 2022 at a venue to be determined by the Steering Group.
4. The Steering Group, consisting of five members from each of the existing Presbyteries of Edinburgh and West Lothian to prepare for the united Presbytery in terms of the following remit:
 - (a) Prepare a set of values and principles which will underpin the operation of the new Presbytery for presentation to the first meeting of the united Presbytery.
 - (b) Determine the paid posts, including a full time Presbytery Clerk, required for the operation of the united Presbytery.
 - (c) Determine office arrangements for Presbytery staff.
 - (d) Nominate a Moderator for 2022.
 - (e) Set dates of meetings in 2022, subsequent to the first meeting on 1 February.
 - (f) Recommend the Number, Composition and Remit of Committees.
 - (g) Recommend venues and/or ways of meeting for Presbytery and Committees.
 - (h) Prepare a Budget and Presbytery Dues for 2022.
 - (i) Recommend a List of Mission Districts and their Remit, for presentation to the first meeting of the united Presbytery.
 - (j) Prepare Standing Orders to be approved at the first meeting of the united Presbytery.
 - (k) Consider external bodies to which the current Presbyteries make appointments.
5. The primary focus of the united Presbytery to be the mission of the Church.
6. The united Presbytery to be a registered Scottish Charity and shall adopt the charity number currently in use by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, the Presbytery of West Lothian not being a registered charity.

Overture**OVERTURE ANENT THE UNION OF THE PRESBYTERIES OF ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE, ARDROSSAN, AYR, DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT, IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK, AND WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER****From the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer**

Whereas the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer have conferred together, and have each come to the view that it is necessary for the effective good government of the Church that they have each other's mutual support and encouragement in a united Presbytery.

It is humbly overtured by the Reverend the Presbyteries of of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer to the Venerable the General Assembly to enact and ordain as follows:-

ACT ANENT THE UNION OF THE PRESBYTERIES OF ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE, ARDROSSAN, AYR, DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT, IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK, AND WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER
Edinburgh, XX May 2021, Session XX

Notwithstanding the terms of Act II 1975, by which the present overall Presbytery structure of the Church was established, the General Assembly in the exercise of power to readjust the said structure as may be required from time to time enact and ordain that:-

1. The Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer shall be united on or before 30 September 2022.
2. The name of the united Presbytery shall be the Presbytery of the South West and for registration purposes shall be the "Church of Scotland Presbytery of the South West".
3. All ministers and deacons having seats in the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer in terms of Act III 2000 [as amended] shall be members of the Presbytery of the South West.
4. All Presbytery elders of the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer, whether commissioned by Kirk Session or appointed by the Presbytery, shall, so long as their commissions or appointments run, be members of the Presbytery of the South West.
5. The Presbytery shall be a charity registered with OSCR and shall retain the existing Charity Number of the Presbytery of Ayr (SC020676).
6. All property or funds belonging to or held on behalf of the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer shall belong to the Presbytery of the South West.

Any trust or other special funds held by the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer shall, from the date of the Union, be dealt with in such a way as is competent and as may be agreed to by the united Presbytery, subject to obtaining legal advice on any question as may arise.

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Pass an Act uniting the Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer to form the Presbytery of the South West, as set out in the Overture received from the Presbyteries.

Appendix**INITIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR UNION OF THE PRESBYTERIES OF ANNANDALE AND ESKDALE, ARDROSSAN, AYR, DUMFRIES AND KIRKCUDBRIGHT, IRVINE AND KILMARNOCK, AND WIGTOWN AND STRANRAER.**

1. The united Presbytery to be created by uniting the existing Presbyteries of Annandale and Eskdale, Ardrossan, Ayr, Dumfries and Kirkcudbright, Irvine and Kilmarnock, and Wigtown and Stranraer, the new Presbytery to comprise all charges and additional Posts within the existing Presbytery Plans as at present or as shall be in place on the Date of Union.
2. The united Presbytery to meet for its first meeting on or before the 30 September 2022, in a venue to be determined, when the normal pattern of meetings shall be decided.
3. The united Presbytery to appoint a Moderator at its first meeting to serve from the date of the Union taking place.
4. The united Presbytery may establish a Presbytery Office.
5. The United Presbytery will appoint a full time Clerk and appropriate administrative assistance along with other staffing to be determined by the newly united Presbytery.
6. The Standing Orders for the united Presbytery shall be approved by the united Presbytery at its first meeting.
7. The united Presbytery may establish Mission Areas and such Local Groups as determined by the New Presbytery.
8. The United Presbytery will establish appropriate committees to enable a structure to be developed that is commensurate with the Church of Scotland for practical administrative purposes.
9. The provisional objective of the united Presbytery shall be supporting congregations to share the Good News of Jesus Christ through such mission strategy as be developed by the new Presbytery.

Overture

OVERTURE ANENT PRESBYTERY RESTRUCTURING FROM THE PRESBYTERY OF LEWIS

Whereas:

1. The reorganisation of Presbyteries across Scotland, establishing around 12 Presbytery structures from the existing total of 43 Presbyteries, represents the most significant restructuring of the Church of Scotland since the Scottish Reformation of 1560.
2. The General Assembly of 2019 agreed the establishment of around 12 Presbyteries by the General Assembly of 2024 or sooner.
3. The restructuring process has continued at pace despite the inability of Presbyteries to consult properly on the proposals during the global COVID-19 pandemic of March 2020 to the present.
4. Insufficient consideration has been given to the erosion of representation of the local Church introduced by the removal of Barrier Act votes from 43 existing Presbyteries, each with a unique and valuable perspective on the path being followed by General Assemblies.
5. With regard to the Barrier Act, it is noted that the proposed structure effectively represents a return to the 12 Synods and an abolition of Presbyteries as we know them whereas the Barrier Act specifically provides for the consideration of draft Acts “*by the several Presbyteries of this Church*” and was enacted at a time when both Synods and Presbyteries were in existence.
6. For such a significant change in the life and work of the Church, and in view of the loss of an entire year through a global pandemic, insufficient time has been allowed for reflection, for pastoral provision for those affected and for the assessment and avoidance of unintended and irreversible consequences.

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Overture.
2. Without prejudice to those Presbyteries who have already united or who may be united by this General Assembly, agrees that the process to establish new regional Presbytery structures in Scotland should be paused for a period of 12 months until General Assembly 2022, in order to consider the implications for the Barrier Act and to allow sufficient time for thoughtful reflection on the implications of the process, adequate consultation in the regions and a fuller consideration of any unintended consequences.

Note: this Overture was not agreed to by the General Assembly.

SECTION D – STANDING ORDERS

Standing Orders

- 35/1.....Commissions
- 35/1.....Conduct of Business
- 35/2.....Members not Commissioners
- 35/3.....Committee Reports and Overtures
- 35/4.....Conduct of Cases
- 35/6.....Order of Debate
- 35/8.....Committees and their Membership
- 35/11.....Alteration and Suspension
- 35/11.....Proposed Amendments to Standing Orders for the
Online General Assembly 2021

SECTION D - STANDING ORDERS

Standing Orders

I. COMMISSIONS

- 1. Roll of Presbytery.** Each Presbytery Clerk shall, by 15 December of each year, transmit to the Clerks of Assembly the number of charges, appointments and deacons specified in sections 2 and 4 of Act III 2000 (as amended) – all as at 30 November immediately preceding.
- 2. Presbyterian Representation.** The Clerks of Assembly will thereafter intimate to Presbyteries what will be their representation in the ensuing Assembly. Any queries shall be settled by the Assembly Business Committee at the request of the Clerks. The decision of the Assembly Business Committee shall be subject to review by the Assembly on Petition by the Presbytery concerned.
- 3. Question Arising.** Should there arise between the month of December and the opening of the Assembly any question regarding representation not provided for in these Orders, the Assembly Business Committee shall have power to dispose thereof.
- 4. Transmission of names and details of Commissioners.** The names, in alphabetical order, full postal addresses, email addresses, charges and types of commission (ie minister, deacon or elder) of Commissioners from Presbyteries, shall be transmitted by Presbytery Clerks to the Clerks of Assembly not later than 31 January in each year so far as they have been elected by that time. In transmitting the names of Commissioners to the Clerks of Assembly, the Clerk of each Presbytery is certifying that to the best of his or her knowledge the Elders named therein are bona fide ruling Elders and are commissioned by the Presbytery.
- 5. Committee on Commissions.** The Committee on Commissions shall consist of the Clerks and the Convener of the Assembly Business Committee; the Principal Clerk shall be Convener. The Committee shall prepare and circulate a list of Commissioners for submission to the Assembly. Along with the said list a copy of the Standing Orders of the General Assembly shall be made available to each member. The Clerks shall arrange to forward to each Commissioner, at least one week before the opening day of the Assembly, an electronic copy (unless a hard copy has been previously requested) of the volume of Reports and Proposed Deliverances and a copy of all Assembly Papers then available.
- 6. Objections.** During the sittings of the Assembly, the Committee on Commissions shall, if called upon, or if it shall appear to it necessary or expedient so to do, hear any person whose Commission is objected to in support of his or her Commission, and also any person or persons who may object to such Commission, and the Committee on Commissions shall have power to settle any such matters.
- 7. Late Commissions.** It shall be competent at any time prior to the opening of the Assembly to lodge with the Clerks of Assembly Commissions which have not previously been transmitted to them; and the Committee on Commissions shall settle any queries as to whether or not such Commissions are valid. Once the Assembly has opened and the Roll of Commissioners has been laid on the table, no further Commissions may be received.
- 8. Number not currently used.**

II. CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

(a) OPENING SESSION

- 9. Convening.** The Commissioners elected to serve in the Assembly shall convene on the day and at the hour fixed for the meeting of the Assembly, and, after prayer by the

Moderator of the preceding Assembly, the List of Commissioners shall be laid on the table.

- 10. Election of Moderator.** The election of a Moderator shall then be made.

- 11. Her Majesty's Commission.** Her Majesty's Commission to the Lord High Commissioner shall then be read and ordered to be recorded.

- 12. Her Majesty's Letter.** Her Majesty's Letter to the Assembly shall then be read and a Committee shall be appointed to prepare an answer thereto.

- 13. Standing Orders.** The Standing Orders shall be laid on the table.

- 14. Committee on Commissions.** The Report of the Committee on Commissions (SO 5) shall be called for and disposed of.

- 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 submit at the opening session an Order of Business for the first two days.

(b) PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

- 16. The Procedure Committee** shall consist of the Convener and Vice-Convener, plus the Moderator, the Clerks, the Procurator and the Law Agent.

- 17. First Meeting.** The Procedure Committee shall meet on the opening day of the Assembly as intimated and thereafter as business may require. At its first meeting it shall consider the Draft Order of Business which shall have been prepared by the Assembly Business Committee for the business of the Assembly subsequent to the first two days, and shall be wholly responsible therefor.

- 18. Selection Committee.** Commissioners to the General Assembly shall be free to nominate other commissioners to serve on the Selection Committee. The names of those proposed shall be brought before the first meeting of the Procedure Committee which, in turn and without being limited to those names proposed by commissioners who are not among its members, shall nominate a Selection Committee of twenty commissioners, including a Convener and Vice-Convener, whose function it shall be to select and submit to the Assembly for their approval names of persons to serve on all Special Commissions and Committees appointed during the sittings of the Assembly. Such persons need not be commissioners.

- 19. Communications.** All letters addressed to the Moderator for the purpose of being communicated to the Assembly shall, in the first instance, be laid before the Procedure Committee, which shall advise the Moderator as to their disposal.

- 20. Paper through Boxes.** Requests for permission to distribute material through Members' boxes should be submitted to the Assembly Business Committee before the commencement of the Assembly, and requests received thereafter shall be submitted to the Procedure Committee. Any other Committee concerned should be informed and supplied with copies, if available, of the material to be distributed.

(c) DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

- 21. The Lord's Supper.** The Assembly shall celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at a time appointed by the General Assembly at its opening session.

22. Acts of Worship. The Moderator shall be responsible to the Assembly for the conduct of all acts of worship, and shall consult the Assembly Business Committee or the Procedure Committee on any proposed innovation in such conduct.

(d) MISCELLANEOUS

23. Minutes. The minutes of each day's proceedings, if available, together with the Agenda for the following day or days, intimations of meetings of Committees, and Notices of Motion, shall be circulated as the "Assembly Papers", and shall be made available for all members. The Minutes, being taken as read and full opportunity having been given for correction, shall be approved as available. It shall always be in order at the close of any particular item of business to move that the Minute thereon be adjusted and approved. Before the dissolution of the Assembly a small Committee, appointed for the purpose, shall be authorised to approve the Minutes not already approved by the Assembly.

24. Quorum. The quorum of the Assembly shall be thirty-one, of whom not less than sixteen shall be Ministers. Any Member may at any time call the attention of the Moderator to the fact that there is not a quorum present, and if, on a count being made, it is found that such is the case, it shall be the duty of the Moderator to suspend or adjourn the session.

25. Tellers. The Assembly Business Committee shall submit for the approval of the Assembly at their first session a proposed Panel of Tellers. (See SO 105.)

26. Acts of Assembly. The Committee on Commissions (SO 5) shall arrange for the text of the Acts of Assembly to be finalised and shall include in the Assembly Papers of the penultimate day an Interim Report thereon, which shall be considered on the last day of the Assembly.

27. Examination of Records. Minutes of the Standing Committees of the Assembly shall be examined by the Legal Questions Committee. The Committee shall report thereon to the General Assembly.

28. Returns to Overtures.

- (a) A Committee on Overtures and Cases, consisting of the Clerks, Procurator and Law Agent of the Church (with the Principal Clerk as Convener) shall advise any Committee or individual on the procedure to be followed in respect of measures requiring process under the Barrier Act.
- (b) For the avoidance of doubt, measures other than Acts of Assembly may be referred for the consideration of Presbyteries, in which case they shall be presented to the General Assembly in the form of an Overture set out as an Act.
- (c) For the avoidance of doubt, it is open to the General Assembly to decline to consider any motion of which it believes inadequate notice has been given, considering the nature of its content.
- (d) Measures remitted to Presbyteries by an Overture under the Barrier Act shall be accompanied by a note of the voting figures in the General Assembly, the text of the relevant Report and a note by the Clerks explaining any technical or legal matters contained in the Overture.
- (e) All Presbyteries shall make a return in respect of every Overture sent down under the Barrier Act. The return shall be made upon the schedule sent electronically to the Presbytery Clerk for the purpose, transmitted to the Clerks of Assembly, and then submitted to the Committee on Overtures and Cases. The Committee shall classify the returns and make a report to the next Assembly. It shall be the duty of the Committee to report not only the number of Presbyteries for and against an Overture, but also the numbers voting in the Presbyteries as reported in the schedule.

- (f) The Report of the Committee shall include the text of such Overtures as have been approved by a majority of Presbyteries.
- (g) The Assembly Business Committee shall ensure that the Committee's Report classifying returns is taken by the General Assembly no later than session 2 thereof, and in any case before any debate that in the opinion of the Committee on Overtures and Cases would more usefully follow consideration of the Committee's Report.
- (h) The Report of the Committee shall be given in to the Assembly by the Principal Clerk, with the reply to the debate on the merits of the measure given by the relevant Convener. Both should be available to answer questions, as appropriate.

29. Special Commissions and Committees.

Special Commissions or Committees will only be appointed where the General Assembly has no existing Standing Committee to which the matter under consideration can, in all the circumstances, properly be remitted. In normal circumstances, business proposed by Councils or Committees of the General Assembly or proposed by Commissioners in the course of debate shall be remitted to one or more of the appropriate Standing Committees listed in SO 113. When, from time to time, a Standing Committee requires to co-opt relevant expertise in order to fulfil the work remitted to it by the General Assembly, it should acknowledge the same in its Report to the General Assembly.

30. Closing of Assembly.

When the business set down for the last day of the Assembly has been disposed of, the Assembly shall be closed by addresses by the Moderator to the Assembly and to the Lord High Commissioner, and by an address by the Lord High Commissioner to the Assembly, during an act of worship, and dissolved according to the practice of the Church.

III. MEMBERS NOT COMMISSIONERS

(a) MEMBERS *ex officio*

31. These are the Moderator of the Assembly, on election, and the immediately preceding Moderator, the Clerks, Procurator, and Law Agent, and also the Convener and Vice-Convener of the Procedure Committee upon their election.

They have all the rights and privileges of Commissioners.

(b) CORRESPONDING MEMBERS, DELEGATES AND VISITORS – DEFINITION

32. Corresponding Members. Representatives of Departments and Standing Committees as stated in SO 33.

Delegates from other Churches. Representatives of other Churches who come in response to an invitation from the Principal Clerk sent at the request of the Faith Impact Forum or from the Committee on Ecumenical Relations to their Church to send a delegate or delegates to the General Assembly and who are duly accredited by the Courts or equivalent authority of their Churches.

Visitors. Visitors from other Churches who come with a Letter of Introduction from Assembly or Presbytery Clerks or equivalent officer of their Church.

33. Corresponding Members

1. (a) Each of the following bodies shall have the right to appoint for each day of the General Assembly, one member or staff-member to act as a Corresponding Member: Faith Nurture Forum, Faith Impact Forum, Social Care Council, Ecumenical Relations Committee, General Trustees, Church of Scotland Guild, Trustees of the Housing and Loan Fund, the Legal Questions

Committee, the Nomination Committee, Safeguarding Committee, Stewardship and Finance Department, the Church of Scotland Pension Trustees and the Theological Forum.

- (b) Each such body will advise the Assembly Business Committee not less than one week before the commencement of the General Assembly of the name of the Corresponding Member appointed for each day. The names of Corresponding Members appointed under this Standing Order shall be included in the Assembly Papers.
2. The Chief Officer, the Head of Faith Action, the Heads of the Faith Nurture Forum and Faith Impact Forum, the Secretary of the Social Care Council, the Ecumenical Officer, the Editor of Life and Work, the General Treasurer, the Head of Human Resources, the Convener of the Nomination Committee, the Scottish Churches' Parliamentary Officer and the Head of Communications shall be Corresponding Members when not Commissioners.
3. The Assembly Trustees, (including the Chair of the General Trustees as an Assembly Trustee *ex officio*), being the Charity Trustees of the Unincorporated Councils and Committees of the General Assembly, shall also be Corresponding Members when not Commissioners.

34. Status. Corresponding Members of Assembly shall be entitled to attend all sessions of the same and to speak on any matter before the Assembly affecting the interests of their Council or Committee, where applicable, but shall not have the right to vote or make a motion.

(c) YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES

35. Status

- (i) One person between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five on the opening day of the General Assembly shall, if possible, be appointed by each Presbytery to serve as a Youth Representative; each Representative shall be involved in the life of a congregation within the bounds of the Presbytery and be regularly involved in the life and worship of the Church of Scotland. The minister of the congregation shall provide confirmation of this involvement if asked by the Faith Nurture Forum.
- (ii) A further ten persons between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five on the opening day of the General Assembly shall be appointed as Youth Representatives to each Assembly, such Representatives to be selected by the Faith Nurture Forum in terms of a process prescribed by that Forum and the names passed to the Clerks of Assembly by 31 March each year.
- (iii) Youth Representatives shall be entitled to speak and move motions but not to vote:
during debates on Committee reports
during debates on Overtures
- (iv) Youth Representatives shall not be entitled to speak, move motions or vote:
during debates on Petitions or cases
during debates on matters affecting General Assembly procedure or Standing Orders
- (v) Youth Representatives shall not be members of the Commission of Assembly.
Oversight
- (vi) The Faith Nurture Forum shall take responsibility for Youth Representatives and shall extend to them appropriate hospitality.

(d) DELEGATES AND VISITORS

36. Reception. Delegates from other Churches shall be received and welcomed by the Moderator. The Assembly Business Committee is authorised, after consultation with the Faith Impact Forum and the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to recommend to the Moderator to invite two specified delegates to convey greetings briefly after all the delegates have been received and welcomed by the Moderator.

37. Status.

- (i) Delegates to the Assembly shall have the right to attend all sessions and to speak on all matters before the Assembly, except when the Assembly are exercising judicial functions, but shall not have the right to vote.
- (ii) Visitors shall have the privilege of seats in the Assembly but without the right to speak or vote. As in the case of Delegates, the officials of the Faith Impact Forum, the Ecumenical Relations Committee, or other relevant Council or Committee shall extend appropriate hospitality to Visitors.

38. Oversight. The officials of the Faith Impact Forum, the Ecumenical Relations Committee, and other Councils or Committees which may be interested in Delegates, shall see that Invitations to Assembly functions are procured for the Delegates, and that the Members of Assembly shall do everything in their power to make the visits of all the Delegates pleasant and profitable.

(e) NON-MEMBERS

39. Guest Speakers. Where any Committee wishes that one of its members or staff members, not being a Member of Assembly, should have an opportunity of addressing the Assembly in connection with the discussion of its Report, the Convener shall seek the permission of the Moderator; for the avoidance of doubt, such permission may be sought during a debate. Where any Committee wishes that a person, not being a Member of Assembly or member or staff member of that Committee, should address the Assembly, the Convener shall submit the name of such person for approval to the Assembly Business Committee before the Assembly opens, or to the Procedure Committee during the sittings of the Assembly, and the decision of the Assembly Business Committee or Procedure Committee shall be final, unless the Assembly themselves shall resolve in terms of SO 129 hereof to dispense with the observance of Standing Orders in respect of that particular matter.

40. Conference Sessions. The Assembly Business Committee, or the Procedure Committee, in consultation with other Councils and Committees as appropriate may invite the General Assembly to meet in conference sessions and arrange for guest speakers to address such sessions. Councils and Committees shall also be free to invite guests, whom they consider to have a particular interest in the matter under discussion, to participate in the debate. When the General Assembly is meeting in conference no resolutions shall be framed or decisions taken. Expert speakers invited to address the conference shall be allowed a maximum time of fifteen minutes. All other speeches shall be limited to five minutes.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND OVERTURES

(a) REPORTS

41. Transmission. Reports of all Committees reporting to the Assembly shall be transmitted to the Clerks of Assembly not later than the first Monday after the third Tuesday in February each year provided that, by arrangement with the Clerk of Assembly, a Statement and Proposed Deliverance on the Budget of the Church, report on Congregational Statistics as reported by Kirk Sessions through Presbyteries and report on Statistics of Ministry may be submitted at a later date, but in time to be included and

circulated with the Reports. All Reports shall be accompanied by the Deliverance to be proposed to the Assembly, and when the Proposed Deliverance exceeds two sections each section shall be numbered consecutively.

42. Circulation of Reports and Proposed Deliverances.

It shall be the duty of the Clerks to arrange for all such Reports and Proposed Deliverances to be circulated in the authorised form to each Member of Assembly at least one week before the day of meeting. All Reports so distributed shall be held as read. Each Committee shall immediately after the rising of the Assembly furnish the publisher of the Reports with the number required for circulation.

43. Oral Reports and Reports of Sub-Committees. Oral Reports shall not be received, and no Sub-Committee shall give any Report to the Assembly.

44. In Retentis. Reports shall not be engrossed in the Minutes, but a copy of each Report certified by one of the Clerks as being that given to the Assembly, shall be kept in retentis; and the Reports thus collected shall be preserved among the other Records of the Assembly.

45. Questions on Reports. After the Deliverance on the Report of any Committee has been moved and seconded the Assembly, before dealing with any other motions or amendments thereon, shall have opportunity for asking questions on the Report, this being without prejudice to the right of Members to put questions, with the leave of the Assembly, at any subsequent stage.

46. Questions requiring Notice. It shall be in order to ask questions of the Convener regarding any matter in the care of the Committee to which no reference is made in the Report but in such cases timeous notice shall be given to the Convener.

47. Deliverance. The final Deliverance of the Assembly upon the Report of any Committee shall follow immediately after the consideration of that Report, except in the event of a special reason for the contrary having been approved by the Assembly and recorded in the Minutes.

48. Late Reports. Reports of Committees appointed during the sittings of Assembly, if they propose any motion not already circulated to Members, shall be submitted to the Clerks of Assembly at least one day prior to their being considered, and included in the "Assembly Papers".

(b) OVERTURES

49. Transmissions. All Overtures from Presbyteries passed on or before 24 April shall be sent to the Clerks of Assembly not later than that date in each year. Overtures from Commissioners shall be lodged with the Clerks not later than noon on the third last day of the meeting of the Assembly, unless the Assembly for special reason decide otherwise.

50. Circulation of Overtures. The Clerks shall arrange for the circulation of Overtures to Commissioners, at the expense (if any) of those promoting them, either with the papers for Cases or in the "Assembly Papers".

51. Form. Overtures should contain a brief statement of the matter to be brought before the Assembly together with a Proposed Deliverance, of which the first section shall be "The General Assembly receive the Overture".

52. When Taken. Overtures relating to matters under the care of the Committees of the Church whose reports are on the Agenda for one of the first two days of the Assembly shall be assigned by the Assembly Business Committee (unless the Committee on Overtures and Cases decides not to transmit) to the place in the discussion at which they shall be introduced to the Assembly. In other cases this shall be done by the Procedure Committee. When the Proposed Deliverance of an Overture is capable of being treated as a counter-motion or amendment to the Proposed Deliverance

of a Committee, or as a new section of such Proposed Deliverance, it shall be so treated.

53. Grouping. Overtures on the same or cognate subjects shall be grouped by the Assembly Business Committee or Procedure Committee of the Assembly and only one speaker shall be heard introducing each group.

54. Introduction. An Overture from a Presbytery may be introduced by any member of that Presbytery, specially appointed for the purpose, at the bar; or by any one of its Commissioners to the Assembly in his or her place as a Commissioner.

(c) GENERAL

55. Matters Relating to Stipend. It shall not be competent for the Assembly, without due notice of motion in the hands of Commissioners in proper form (for example as a Proposed Deliverance, Notice of Motion or Crave of a Petition), to debate any proposal which might impact directly on or which might bring about binding changes to the terms and conditions of ministers which relate to stipend or stipend scales.

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, ie 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 (for example, as a Proposed Deliverance, Notice of Motion, or Crave of a Petition). Specifically, to ensure sensible budget controls:

- (a) Any proposal which involves 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 costs; funding external to the Church or by an increase in the total amount to be met by congregations.
- (b) Any proposal which results in a potential reduction in income, including a reduction in the total to be met 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 shall have the right to comment upon any proposal in category (a) or (b) before any decision is taken.

57. Declaratory or Interim Act. The draft of any proposed Declaratory or Interim Act, as also the draft of any Overture which it is proposed to transmit to Presbyteries in terms of the Barrier Act (other than any Overture circulated in the volume of Reports), shall be circulated to Members and laid on the table of the Assembly at least one day before a Motion for the passing of such Declaratory or Interim Act, or for the transmission of such Overture to Presbyteries, is made in the Assembly.

V. CONDUCT OF CASES

58. Commission of Assembly. The rules of procedure for the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly shall be as set out in Schedule 2 to the Appeals Act (Act 1 2014). Standing Orders 59 – 61 apply where a matter is being brought before the Commission of Assembly in terms of those powers of the Commission of Assembly not being exercised by the Appeals Committee, or before the General Assembly, being a petition, a reference or an appeal on a matter of doctrine. In Standing Orders 59 - 61 references to the General Assembly shall be taken to refer where appropriate to the Commission of Assembly and all references shall be so construed mutatis mutandis.

(a) LODGING OF PAPERS

59. Appeal; Dissent and Complaint; Petition. The papers in all cases intended to be brought before the Assembly, whether Appeals or Dissents and Complaints against the judgement of inferior courts, or Petitions, should be lodged with the Clerks of Assembly not later than 24 April, and must be lodged not less than fourteen days before the opening session of Assembly; except in the case of judgements pronounced within sixteen days of the meeting of Assembly, in which case they shall be lodged within forty-eight hours of the judgement being pronounced.

60.

- (a). Reference. In the case of Reference of a matter from an inferior court for the judgement of the Assembly the same limits as to time for lodging of papers in the case shall apply as in SO 59.
- (b). Reference of Matter Previously Considered. Where the matter of a Reference has previously been under consideration of the Assembly, the Reference shall state the date when the matter was previously before the Assembly and shall narrate the Assembly's Deliverance thereon.

61. Answers. It shall be competent for all parties claiming an interest in the subject matter of an Appeal, Dissent and Complaint or Petition to lodge Answers thereto complying with the requirements of this SO 61. Answers may be lodged any time after the Appeal, Dissent and Complaint or Petition is received by the Clerks, but not later than seven days before the opening meeting of Assembly. Answers shall be in the form of articulate numbered Answers to the narrative contained in the Appeal, Dissent and Complaint or Petition, indicating in particular matters of fact that are admitted and denied, and shall set forth a concise statement of the Respondent's case, together with a crave specifying the action the Assembly are invited to take thereanent.

(b) PROVISION OF PAPERS

62. Circulation. It shall be the duty of the Clerks on receiving papers that are to come before the Assembly in connection with cases to arrange to have these circulated to Members in authorised form.

63. In Private. Papers relating to business dealt with by Presbyteries in private, or which the Committee on Overtures and Cases (SOs 70 - 71) consider should be taken in private, shall be circulated separately and may be dealt with by the Assembly in private.

64. Cost of Circulation of Papers. In cases of discipline brought before the Assembly by the Judicial Commission, by Reference from a Presbytery, or by complaint by a minority of the Court, the expense of circulation (if any) shall be borne by the Assembly Business Committee; in other circumstances by the Complainer or Appellant. In all other cases the expenses of circulating papers (if any) for the use of Commissioners shall be borne by the party having interest in the same or desiring a Deliverance from the Assembly.

65. In Retentis. A copy of every circulated paper shall be kept by the Clerks of Assembly to be retained among the Records of Assembly.

(c) CIRCULATION OF PAPERS

66. Date of Dispatch. A copy of all papers transmitted to the Clerks of Assembly not later than 24 April shall be forwarded by them to each Member of Assembly at least one week before the opening day of the Assembly.

67. In Private. The Clerks of Assembly shall not issue in advance to Members the papers in cases which they think require to be conducted in private, until specially instructed by the Assembly so to do; but shall report such cases to the Convener of the Procedure Committee, for the information of that Committee, immediately after its appointment.

(d) INTIMATION TO PARTIES

68. Appeal; Dissent and Complaint. In all cases coming before the Assembly by Appeal or Dissent and Complaint it shall be the duty of the Clerks of Assembly to inform the parties on both sides as soon as possible of the time at which such case is likely to be taken by the Assembly. Such intimation shall, unless in a specific case the Assembly determine otherwise, be regarded as sufficient notice.

The Clerks shall further be bound, on application made to them for the purpose, to supply a copy of all papers circulated in pursuance of the foregoing Orders to the opposite party or parties in any case, or to his or her or their duly accredited Agents.

69. Petition. In every Petition it shall be the duty of the Petitioner to make such intimation of the Petition as may be necessary having regard to the nature of the Petition. Such intimation shall be made not more than seven days later than the time when the Petition is lodged with the Clerks of Assembly as provided in SO 59 above; and along with the Petition there shall be lodged a certificate signed by the Petitioner or his or her Agent setting forth the names of the parties to whom such intimation has been made or is to be made. The Assembly may refuse to dispose of any Petition if in their opinion sufficient intimation thereof has not been made.

(e) TRANSMISSION TO ASSEMBLY

70. Committee on Overtures and Cases. All papers lodged with the Clerks in cases of every sort in terms of the foregoing Orders shall be laid by them before the Committee on Overtures and Cases, which shall consider the same and report to the Assembly.

71. Decision not to Transmit. If the Committee on Overtures and Cases shall decide not to transmit to the Assembly any papers in cases duly lodged with the Clerks of Assembly it shall report the same to the Assembly at their first Session, or at the Session next after such decision, with its reasons for not transmitting the papers, and parties shall be entitled to be heard thereon at the bar of the Assembly. Intimation of a decision not to transmit papers shall be made to the parties concerned as soon as possible, and in time to allow of their being represented at the bar when the decision not to transmit is reported to the Assembly.

72. In Private. The Procedure Committee shall, in its first Report, specify any case which in its judgement requires to be conducted in private, and any case which does not appear to it to be of that character although the Clerks of Assembly may have reported it as such. The Assembly shall thereupon determine by a special Deliverance, at what stage in the proceedings the papers in such a case shall be issued to the Commissioners. In every case which the Assembly appoint to be conducted in private the instruction to issue the papers shall be accompanied by a special exhortation to the Commissioners to keep them private.

73. Proposed Legislation. All Overtures from Presbyteries or from Commissioners which propose the introduction of new or the amendment of existing Acts (or Regulations) shall contain the precise terms of the legislation which they propose; and the Committee on Overtures and Cases shall not transmit to the Assembly any Overture which is deficient in this respect, provided always that the Clerks and Procurator shall be available to assist with the framing of such proposals

(f) HEARING OF CASES

74. Announcement. Before parties are heard in any contentious case the Clerk shall read the following announcement, viz - "The Commissioners are reminded that justice requires that all the pleadings at the bar should be heard by all those who vote in this case, and that their judgement should be made solely on the basis of the pleadings." Immediately before a vote is taken in such a case,

the Clerk shall read the following further announcement, viz – “The Commissioners are reminded that only those who have heard all the pleadings at the bar are entitled to vote in this case.”

75. Appeal; Complaint; One Appellant. In cases brought before the Assembly by Appeal, where there is only one appellant (or one set of appellants concurring in the same reasons of Appeal) and only one respondent (or one set of respondents concurring in the same answers to the reasons of Appeal) the case for the appellant (or set of appellants) shall be stated by him or herself or by his or her counsel, who at the same time shall submit such argument upon the case as he or she shall think fit. The party or counsel so stating the Appeal shall be followed by the respondent or his or her counsel who likewise shall submit such arguments upon the case as he or she shall think fit. At the close of the statement for the respondent the appellant shall be entitled to be again heard, and the respondent shall also be entitled to be heard in answer to the second speech for the appellant and if, in his or her final answer, the respondent shall state any fact or submit any argument not adverted to in his or her answer to the opening statement for the appellant, the appellant shall be entitled to a reply upon the new matter introduced in the final answer for the respondent. With the exception of this right of reply, so limited, more than two speeches shall not be allowed to any party at the bar.

76. Appeal; Complaint; More than one Appellant. In such cases as those referred to in SO 75 if there is more than one appellant (or set of appellants) insisting on the Appeal, or more than one respondent (or set of respondents) supporting the judgement appealed against, (a) on different grounds, or (b) in separate reasons or answers, each appellant shall be entitled to open and state his or her separate case, and each respondent shall be entitled to make his or her separate answer, and the debate shall be closed with a reply for the several appellants; provided always that it shall be competent to the parties, with consent of the Assembly to make any arrangement for conducting the debate other than herein prescribed, if it shall have the effect of limiting, further than is herein done, the number of speeches to be made from the bar.

77. Appeal; Complaint; Who may appear. Any Member of an inferior court whose judgement is brought under review of the Assembly may appear at the bar in support of the judgement; but, when Commissioners have been specially appointed by the inferior court to support its judgement, the Assembly shall not hear any Member of such court other than the Commissioners so appointed, unless any Member not so appointed but wishing to be heard can show a separate and peculiar interest to support the judgement; and in all such cases it shall be competent to the Assembly to limit the number of Members of an inferior court who shall be heard in support of the judgement under review.

78. Dissents and Complaints. In SOs 75 to 77, “Appeal” includes “Dissents and Complaints” and “Appellant” includes “Complainer”.

79. Petition. In cases brought before the Assembly as the court of first instance by Petition, the party promoting the application shall be entitled to be heard in support of the same; and the Assembly shall also hear an answer from any party at the bar claiming to be heard whom it shall consider to be a proper respondent, and the debate at the bar shall be closed with a reply from the person promoting the application.

80. Reference. In cases brought before the Assembly by reference from a Presbytery the reference shall be stated to the Assembly by a Member of the referring court, specially appointed for the purpose, at the bar if not a Commissioner, or in his or her place as a Commissioner if a Commissioner from the Presbytery. The Assembly shall thereafter hear the

parties in the case referred in such order as the nature of the case may seem to require, keeping in view the regulations in SOs 74 to 79.

81. Readjustment Cases. In cases arising from Act VII, 2003, when a request for determination follows a decision of the Partnership Development Committee not to concur in the judgement of a Presbytery, the Convener, or other member of the said Committee, shall be heard at the bar if not a Commissioner, or in his or her place as a Commissioner if a Commissioner, immediately after the request for determination has been stated. After the initial statement and the response by the said Committee when applicable, the General Assembly shall hear at the bar such parties in the case as are not represented by Commissioners, in such order as the nature of the case may seem to require.

VI. ORDER OF DEBATE

(a) ORDER OF THE DAY

82. When the Assembly have resolved that a case or other piece of business shall be taken up at a certain hour mentioned in the Order of Business, such case or other piece of business shall be taken not later than the hour fixed and the business before the Assembly, if not finished at the hour named, shall be adjourned, provided that, in the case of an Order of the Day following the Report of the Faith Impact Forum, such unfinished business shall not be taken up. If, in the opinion of the Moderator, it would be in accordance with the general convenience of the Assembly, the Moderator may allow the transaction of the business then actually under discussion to continue for a period of not more than fifteen minutes beyond the specified time, but no fresh business shall be commenced.

(b) MOTIONS

83. TIME-BOUND

On the motion of the Procedure Committee or moved as part of the deliverance of the Assembly Business Committee, the General Assembly may resolve that the Report and draft Deliverance relating to a particular Council or Committee's Report be taken in a time-bound process of debate and decision. Such a motion shall be moved at least 24 hours in advance of the presentation of the Report concerned.

Having so resolved the General Assembly shall operate the following timetable:-

- (a) Start times shall be allotted to specified Sections of the Report and to the related sections of the draft Deliverance. Discussion of any Section of the Report shall not commence later than its allotted start time, but may begin earlier if debate of the previous Section has been completed.
- (b) If discussion and debate of a particular Section of the Report has not been concluded within its allotted time, then further consideration of associated sections of the draft Deliverance shall be sisted and the General Assembly shall take up the next Section of the Report.
- (c) If, at the close of the debate on the last Section of the Report, there is still time before the Order of the Day requires to be implemented or business is due to conclude, then the General Assembly shall return for further debate of any outstanding sections of the draft Deliverance remaining relative to each Section of the Report.
- (d) If the Order of the Day or anticipated close of business is imminent, then any outstanding sections of the draft Deliverance shall be voted upon without debate, except that other motions circulated in the Daily Papers shall also be taken, without debate, the Convener simply having the right to indicate whether or not the Council or Committee is willing to accept the motion.

- (e) Where motions appearing in the Daily Papers do not relate directly to the Report and draft Deliverance proposed by the Council or Committee, they will be taken either at the end of the appropriate Section, if there is time available according to the allotted timetable, or at the end of the appropriate Section when the procedure leading to the Order of the Day (or close of business) is being implemented.

84. Right to Move. Any Commissioner to the Assembly may make a motion upon any matter coming regularly before the Assembly; and on rising to do so he or she shall read the terms of the motion having previously handed the same in writing on the form provided to the Assembly Office or other point of collection intimated to the General Assembly. It shall be in order to move a motion regarding any matter in the care of a Committee to which no reference is made in the Report of that Committee, provided that reasonable notice has been given in writing to the Convener before presentation of the Report. The mover of any counter-motion or amendment may reply to the discussion of his or her motion, immediately before the Convener closes the debate.

85. Withdrawal. When a motion has been duly seconded it shall not be competent to withdraw it, or to make any alteration upon it, without the permission of the Assembly.

86. Priority of Deliverance over other motion. The Deliverance on the Report of a Committee shall take precedence of any other motion on that subject.

87. Committee Convener. The Convener of a Committee when a Commissioner, on giving in the Report of that Committee, shall move the Deliverance proposed in terms of SO 41. A Convener, when not a Commissioner, shall be allowed to submit the Report of the Committee, and to give explanations in the subsequent discussion. In such a case the Principal Clerk, whom failing, the Depute Clerk, shall formally move the Deliverance. In all cases the Convener shall have the right of replying to the debate.

88. Introducer of Overture. The Introducer of an Overture, if a Commissioner, shall move the Deliverance; and if he or she is not a Commissioner the Principal Clerk, whom failing the Depute Clerk, shall formally move the Deliverance. The Introducer, whether a Commissioner or not, may answer questions or give explanations in the course of the debate and, if a Commissioner, may reply to, the discussion immediately before the relevant Convener closes the debate.

89. Notice of Motion. Commissioners are encouraged to give advance Notice of motions. Any Commissioner may, during the sittings of the Assembly, give advance notice of Motion on any subject due to come regularly before the Assembly, other than a contentious case. Notices of Motion so given in shall, if received in time to do so, be included in the "Assembly Papers" not later than the day on which the business is to be taken. Such circulated Notice of Motion shall confer no right of priority of moving same, the Moderator being the sole judge of the order in which Members are entitled to address the Assembly.

(c) THE DEBATE

90. The Chair. Every speaker shall address the Assembly through the Moderator, and the correct address is "Moderator".

91. In Support. When a motion or motions have been made and seconded, any Member (including a formal seconder in terms of SO 95) may take part in subsequent debate.

92. Speeches. (1) Except as provided in SOs 84 and 87, no Member may speak twice on the same question except in explanation, and then only by special permission of the Assembly. (2) Members shall make relevant declarations of

interest where the topic of debate makes it appropriate to do so.

93. Point of Order. Any Member may rise to speak to a Point of Order. A speaker is not to be interrupted unless upon a call to order. When so interrupted he or she shall cease speaking, and shall resume his or her seat until the Point of Order is decided. The Member calling to order shall state the grounds for so doing; and the speaker who has been interrupted may briefly reply in explanation, to show that he or she is not out of order, but no other Member may speak to the Point of Order unless with the permission or at the request of the Moderator, with whom the decision of the point rests, though the Moderator may put the point to a vote of the Assembly.

94. There shall be no right of reply to a debate except as provided for by SOs 84 and 87.

95. Limits. All speeches shall be limited to 5 minutes, with the following exceptions:

- (i) COMMITTEES Convener giving in the Report of his or her Committee and moving thereon (seconding to be formal) 15 minutes

Convener responding to a question 4 minutes

- (ii) OVERTURES Introducing an Overture and when the Introducer is a Commissioner, moving thereon 10 minutes

Mover of other Motions in relation to Overture (seconding to be formal) 10 minutes

- (iii) PETITIONS Speeches of Petitioners 10 minutes

96. No Time Limit. The time limits shall apply, except in the following cases:

- (a) when the Assembly are debating specific proposals for change under Barrier Act procedure;
- (b) when the Assembly are exercising judicial functions;
- (c) in Petitions when, for special reasons, the Committee on Overtures and Cases reports that the circumstances demand an extension, and when the General Assembly adopt that opinion;
- (d) in any other matter when the Assembly Business Committee (in respect of the Order of Business for the first two days) or the Procedure Committee (in respect of the Order of Business for the subsequent days) declares that, in its opinion, such matter is of exceptional importance, and when the Assembly adopt that opinion.

(d) DEALING WITH MOTIONS

97. Character of Motions. Motions shall be considered as belonging to one of the following categories, and shall be dealt with as prescribed, viz:

1. The original Motion.
2. Counter-Motions – being Motions contradictory or negative of the original Motion or of a substantial part of the original Motion.
3. Amendments being Motions not substantially contradictory of the original Motion or Counter-Motion, but for making deletions, alterations, or additions thereto without defeating its main object.
4. Amendments of amendments already moved and seconded.

98. Moderator to Judge. The Moderator shall be judge of the category to which any Motions shall be considered to belong, and the ruling of the Moderator shall be final.

99. Grouping of Amendments. When to any Proposed Deliverance there has been given notice of amendments which differ from each other only slightly in their general

tenor, the Moderator shall decide whether or not to permit more than one of such amendments to be moved.

100. Voting on Amendments. When an amendment (Category 3) has been proposed it shall be disposed of by the Assembly before any other counter-motion or amendment is proposed. However, it shall be in order for an amendment of an amendment (Category 4) to be proposed, seconded and debated, after which the Moderator shall take a vote "For" or "Against". When all such Category 4 motions have been so disposed of, the Assembly shall complete its consideration of the original amendment (Category 3) and the Moderator shall take a vote "For" or "Against" the original amendment amended or unamended as the case may be. For the avoidance of doubt, it is affirmed that the order of debate for Category 3 and Category 4 motions shall be the same except as herein provided and that the provisions of SO 87 shall apply to both.

101. Voting on Motions. After all amendments, if any, have been disposed of, the Moderator shall take a vote between all Motions in Categories (1) and (2), and in doing so shall adopt the following procedure. A vote shall be taken in one of the methods provided below, between all the Motions in the order in which they were made, beginning at the first. Each Commissioner may vote for one Motion only. If, on the numbers being announced, one Motion has obtained a clear majority of votes, all the other Motions shall fall; but if no Motion has obtained a clear majority, the Motion having the smallest number of votes shall be struck off and a vote taken between the remaining Motions; and the Assembly may determine.

102. Voting for Appointments. In the case of voting for appointments to vacant offices in the Church, where there are more than two nominations the Assembly shall vote separately on all the names proposed, and, unless there be a majority in favour of one over all the others combined, the one having the lowest number shall be dropped, and the Assembly shall again vote on those that remain.

103. Deliberative Vote. The Moderator or Acting Moderator in the Chair shall have no Deliberative Vote.

104. Casting Vote. If in any division there shall be an equality of votes for two proposals before the Assembly, the Moderator shall have power to give a deciding vote; and if in the course of the voting as provided in SOs 100 and 101 above, there should be an equality of votes for the two Motions having fewest votes, the Moderator shall have power to give a deciding vote and the Motion for which the Moderator shall vote shall be retained for the purpose of the next vote of the Assembly.

(e) TAKING THE VOTE

105. The Moderator may, in any circumstances and at his or her sole discretion, ascertain the mind of the Assembly by asking the Commissioners to stand in their places, and shall intimate to the Assembly on which side there is in his or her opinion a majority. Unless the opinion of the Moderator so intimated is at once challenged, it shall become the decision of the Assembly. If any Commissioner challenges the opinion of the Moderator, the Assembly shall proceed to take an electronic vote using a system approved by the Assembly Business Committee. Alternatively, it shall be open to the Moderator, again at his or her sole discretion and in any circumstances, to ascertain the mind of the Assembly by recourse to the use of electronic voting. After all votes have been counted the Moderator shall intimate the result of the voting which will become the decision of the Assembly. In no circumstances shall a second vote be taken on a matter which has already been the subject of a vote by electronic voting. The Procedure Committee shall ensure that Commissioners are familiar with the method of electronic voting and will appoint tellers to assist Commissioners, where necessary, with the process of casting votes and to assist the Assembly with the process of voting by paper ballot which shall be a competent alternative to the taking

of a vote by electronic means in the event of a failure in the electronic voting system.

(f) DISSENTS

106. Entering. Any Commissioner dissatisfied with a judgement of the Assembly, which has not been unanimous, has the right to enter his or her dissent against it; but no dissent can be given in until the matter to which it refers has, for that session, been disposed of, the Minute adjusted, and the Assembly is ready to proceed to other business.

107. Adhering. When a dissent has been entered, it is in order for any other Commissioner present when that judgement was pronounced to adhere to such dissent. No other's adherence may be entered.

108. Reasons. A person dissenting may do so with or without giving in reasons of dissent. If he or she dissent for reasons given in at the time, or to be afterwards given in, such reasons shall, if received by the Assembly as proper and relevant, and provided they are given in before the close of the next session (or, when made on the last day of the Assembly, before the close of the same session), be recorded in the Minutes.

109. Answers. If the Assembly appoint a Committee to prepare answers to reasons of dissent, the Report of the Committee shall, except on the last day of the Assembly, be in the "Assembly Papers"; and, as approved by the Assembly, shall be included in the Minutes, if the reasons of dissent have been so circulated.

110. Record of Dissents. Reasons of dissent and answers thereto when not entered in the Minutes, shall be kept in a separate Record of Dissents.

VII. COMMITTEES AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP

(a) COMMITTEES

111. Committees. The Committees of the General Assembly shall be those listed in SO 113 together with such *ad hoc* Committees as the General Assembly may appoint from time to time. Clerical services for the *ad hoc* Committees shall normally be provided by the staff of the Principal Clerk's Department.

112. Quorum. Save for the Judicial Proceedings Panel and those bodies where provision is already made for a quorum, the quorum of Standing Committees of the General Assembly listed in SO 113 shall be three. When a meeting ceases to be quorate, business must be suspended. The quorum shall apply also to sub-committees and other bodies constituted from the relevant Standing Committees where such sub-committees and other bodies have decision-making powers, but not otherwise.

113. Membership. The Standing Committees of the General Assembly shall have membership as follows, General Assembly appointments being made on the nomination of the Nomination Committee except where otherwise stated.

- 1. Assembly Business Committee**.....16/17
Convener, Vice-Convener, 2 members of the Legal Questions Committee (Convener and another member involved more in judicial matters to be nominated by the Legal Questions Committee), a further 6 members made up of ministers and elders with experience of the General Assembly, with the following members *ex officio*: the Moderator and the Moderator Designate, the Principal Clerk, the Depute Clerk, the Solicitor, the Procurator and the General Treasurer. The Convener and Vice-Convener are also to serve as Convener and Vice-Convener respectively of the Procedure Committee.
- 2. Assembly Trustees**..... 14
12 trustees appointed in accordance with the Constitution and Remit approved at the General Assembly of 2019 (from which shall be drawn the

- Convener, Vice-Convener, and Administrative Trustee), plus 2 *ex officio* members: the Convener of the Assembly Business Committee and the Chair of the General Trustees.
3. **Audit Committee**.....6
Convener, who shall not be an Assembly Trustee, three voting members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, all of whom shall be independent of the Unincorporated Entities and at least one of whom shall have recent and relevant financial experience, and two additional voting members be appointed by the Assembly Trustees. The quorum shall be three voting members, at least one of whom is a Trustee member. The Chief Officer and the General Treasurer shall attend without a right to vote or make a motion. In addition, other officials, as required by the Committee, may be in attendance from time to time without a right to vote or make a motion. Representatives of the External and Internal Auditors, shall be entitled to attend all meetings but without a right to vote or make a motion.
 4. **Church of Scotland Investors Trust**
Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.
 5. **Church of Scotland Trust**
Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.
 6. **Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces**.....18
Convener, Vice-Convener and 16 members appointed by the General Assembly. There are also 2 non-voting members: one representative from and appointed by each of the Faith Nurture and Faith Impact Forums.
 7. **Delegation of the General Assembly**.....4
The Clerks of Assembly, the Principal Clerk as Chairman, the Procurator and the Solicitor of the Church, *ex officio*.
 8. **Ecumenical Relations Committee**.....10
plus representatives, co-optees and corresponding members
 - a) 8 members appointed by the General Assembly one to be attached, for the purposes of ecumenical accompaniment, to each of the Faith Nurture Forum, the Faith Impact Forum, the Social Care Council, and the Theological Forum.
 - b) Convener who will act as a personal support for the Ecumenical Officer (EO) and Vice-Convener, appointed by the General Assembly.
 - c) A representative of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland appointed by the Bishops' Conference and 1 representative from each of 3 churches drawn from among the member churches of ACTS and the Baptist Union of Scotland, each to serve for a period of 4 years.
 - d) The Committee shall co-opt Church of Scotland members elected to the central bodies of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE, formerly the Leuenberg Fellowship of Churches).
 - e) The General Secretary of ACTS shall be invited to attend as a corresponding member.
 - f) For the avoidance of doubt, while only those persons appointed under paragraphs a) and b) above shall be entitled to vote, before any vote is taken the views of members representing other churches shall be ascertained. The Convener shall be entitled to call a meeting of the voting members.
 9. **Faith Impact Forum**.....15
Convener, Vice-Convener and 13 members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly.
 10. **Faith Nurture Forum**.....15
Convener, Vice-Convener and 13 members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly.
 11. **General Trustees**
Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.
 12. **Iona Community Board**.....20
Convener and 5 members appointed by the General Assembly;
6 members appointed by and from the Iona Community, 2 changing each year;
The Leader of the Iona Community;
1 member appointed by and from the Presbytery of Argyll.
In addition the Board will invite 6 member churches of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) to appoint a representative member to the Board, such members being eligible to serve for a maximum period of 4 years.
 13. **Judicial Panel**
20 people being ministers, elders and deacons 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. Notwithstanding SOs 114 and 118, the members of the Judicial Panel shall initially be appointed for a term of four years, and shall be eligible for reappointment for further terms of four years.
 14. **Judicial Proceedings Panel**
A Panel of ministers, elders and deacons appointed by the General Assembly who are suitably experienced in the law and practice of the Church and whose number shall, in accordance with the Discipline of Ministry Act (Act III, 2001), section 1(1)(e), be determined, from time to time, by the Legal Questions Committee. Notwithstanding SOs 114 & 118, appointments shall be for three years with the option of further consecutive terms. In calculating how many Panel members may be appointed, no account shall be taken of any members whose current term has expired but who are deemed to remain as members of the Panel by operation of the Discipline of Ministry Act (Act III, 2001), section 1(1)(f).
 15. **Legal Questions Committee**.....16
Convener, Vice-Convener and 10 members appointed by the General Assembly, the Clerks of Assembly, the Procurator and the Solicitor of the Church.
 16. **Life and Work Editorial Advisory Committee**.....9
Convener and 7 members together with the Principal Clerk as an *ex officio* member. The members should represent a wide range of theological opinion and perspectives, with an interest and particular gifts to offer the Committee, for example journalism, magazine production, former contributors. The Committee may co-opt members with particular gifts or information.
 17. **Ministries Appeal Panel**.....5
Convener, Vice-Convener and 3 members appointed by the General Assembly. At least 1 member shall be legally qualified, at least 1 shall be a minister and at least 1 shall be an elder.

18. **Nomination Committee**..... 26
Convener, Vice-Convener and 24 members appointed by the General Assembly. Notwithstanding SO 118, no member of the Committee, having served a term of 4 years, shall be eligible for re-election until after a period of 4 years, except for special cause shown. The Convenership of the Committee shall be for 3 years.
19. **Nomination of the Moderator Committee** ...Up to 15
Up to 8 ministers and deacons and up to 7 elders appointed by the General Assembly, to create a Committee which is representative of the diversity of the whole Church. The Committee is to be convened by the immediate past-Moderator of the General Assembly, failing which by another former Moderator of the General Assembly.
20. **Personnel Appeal Group**.....8
8 members appointed by the General Assembly with the Solicitor of the Church as Secretary. Members shall not include any former or current members of staff of any of the Church's Employing Agencies (including the Social Care Council), nor any current Council or Committee member.
21. **Registration of Ministries Committee**.....5
Convener, Vice-Convener and 3 members. 1 member is appointed by the Legal Questions Committee, 1 member by the Faith Nurture Forum and 3 members by the General Assembly. The Convener and Vice-Convener are appointed by the General Assembly from the General Assembly appointees. One or other of the Clerks to the General Assembly and the Secretary to the Faith Nurture Forum attend the Committee *ex officio* in an advisory capacity but are not members. The Committee is clerked by a person from the Faith Nurture Forum who is not a member of the Committee.
22. **Safeguarding Appeal Panel**.....6
A Panel of 6 persons appointed by the General Assembly, being persons with Safeguarding and other relevant experience, and including at least two persons who shall be qualified to practise as lawyers or who are experienced in the law and practice of the Church, and at least two ministers. None of the Panel shall be a current or former employee of any of the Employing Agencies or a current member of the Safeguarding Committee.
23. **Safeguarding Committee**.....11
Convener, Vice-Convener and 6 members appointed by the General Assembly, 1 representative (voting member) from and appointed by each of the Faith Nurture Forum, the Faith Impact Forum, the Social Care Council, the Solicitor of the Church, the National Adviser (Head of Safeguarding) as Secretary to the Committee, the Chief Officer and up to 4 members co-opted by the Committee for their expertise. For the avoidance of doubt it is declared that only the following persons will be entitled to vote: Convener, Vice-Convener, the six Assembly appointed members and the three representatives from each of the Faith Nurture Forum, the Faith Impact Forum and the Social Care Council.
24. **Social Care Council**.....12
Convener, Vice-Convener and 9 members appointed by the General Assembly, with the Chief Executive Officer of CrossReach as a non-voting *ex officio* member. At least one member shall be a Church of Scotland minister.
25. **Theological Forum**.....13
Convener, Vice-Convener and 11 members appointed by the General Assembly, the membership being selected to provide an appropriate balance of (a) ministers of Word and Sacrament, (b) members of academic staff from the Divinity Schools (or

equivalent) of Institutions of Higher Education in Scotland, (c) elders and (d) members drawn from the wider membership of the Church chosen for their particular expertise, experience or provenance.

26. **Trustees of the Housing and Loan Fund**Up to 11
Up to 3 ministers and 1 member appointed by the Faith Nurture Forum, who having served a term of 4 years shall be eligible for re-appointment for a second 4 year term;

Up to 4 appointed by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trustees, who having served a term of 4 years shall be eligible for re-appointment for a second 4 year term;

Up to 3 appointed by the Baird Trust, for a term of office determined by that Trust.

Any Trustee (other than one appointed by the Baird Trust) may serve for up to a further two four-year terms if elected also as Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson.

(b) MEMBERS

114. Period of Service. All Members of each of the Standing Committees shall retire after serving for four years, save for the Faith Nurture Forum and the Faith Impact Forum where the period is three years.

115. Representatives. Bodies entitled to appoint representatives shall be permitted to make changes in their representation for special reasons in any year.

116. Non-attendance. The name of a Member shall be removed from any Standing or Special Committee which has met three times or oftener between 1 June and 1 March unless he or she has attended one-third of the meetings held within that period. Attendance at meetings of Sub-Committees shall for this purpose be reckoned as equivalent to attendance at the meeting of the Committee itself.

117. Replacement. When a Minister, Elder, or Member of any Standing or Special Committee is unable to accept the appointment, or where from any cause vacancies occur in Committees during the year, that Committee, after consultation with the Convener of the Nomination Committee, may appoint a Member to take the place of the Member whose retirement has caused the vacancy. All such appointments, if for a longer period than one year, shall be reported for confirmation through the Nomination Committee to the General Assembly.

118. Re-election. A Member retiring from a Council or Committee by rotation, or having his or her name removed for non-attendance, shall not be eligible for re-election to that Council or Committee until the expiry of one year thereafter, unless the Assembly are satisfied, on the Report of the Nomination Committee, on information submitted to it by the Council or Committee concerned, that there are circumstances which make re-election desirable; but where more than one member is due to retire then not more than one-half of the retiring members be so re-elected. No Member shall normally serve for more than two consecutive terms of office. (If possible 20 per cent of the Assembly appointed members of Councils or Committees should be under the age of 35 at the time of their appointment). A Member appointed in the room of one deceased, resigned or removed, or of one appointed as Convener or Vice-Convener, shall serve for the remainder of the period for which the person was appointed whose place he or she takes, and on retiral shall be eligible for re-election if he or she has not served for more than two years.

A retiring Convener shall be eligible for re-election as an additional member of the Council or Committee concerned to serve for one year only immediately following tenure of office as Convener.

119. Eligibility. No person shall be a Member of more than three Councils or Committees at the same time. Appointments *ex officio* shall not be reckoned in this number. This rule shall not apply to those for whom the Nomination Committee is prepared to give special reason to the Assembly for their appointments to more than three Committees.

The Nomination Committee shall not nominate for Committees any of its own number except in special circumstances which must be stated to the Assembly.

120. Secretaries and Deputies. It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary of each Council and Committee to attend the meetings thereof, to provide information and advice as requested, and to provide a deputy for any meeting that he or she cannot attend. Members of staff shall not have the right to vote at any meeting.

121. Expenses. Expenses incurred by Members of Committee, consisting of travel charges and a sum for maintenance when required shall be defrayed.

(c) CONVENERS AND VICE-CONVENERS

122. Appointment. Conveners and Vice-Conveners of Councils and Committees shall be appointed by the Assembly. Conveners shall hold office for not more than four consecutive years (in the case of the Nomination Committee, Faith Nurture Forum and Faith Impact Forum, three consecutive years) and Vice-Conveners shall hold office for not more than three consecutive years, unless the Assembly are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which make the reappointment of Conveners and Vice-Conveners desirable. The period of reappointment shall be for one year only. If at the time of their appointment they are already members of the Council or Committee another Member shall be appointed in their room for the remainder of the period of their original appointment.

123. Replacement. In the event of the death, resignation, consistent non-attendance or supervening incapacity of the Convener or Vice-Convener of any Council or Committee, the body concerned, after consultation with the Convener of the Nomination Committee, may appoint an Interim Convener or Interim Vice-Convener, as the case may be. Such appointment shall be reported by the Committee to the General Assembly and the Assembly shall make such order as the situation may require.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

124. List of Nominations. The Nomination Committee shall include in its Report its list of nominations to be submitted to the Assembly. The Report, so prepared, shall be included in the Volume of Reports issued to Members of Assembly.

125. Nomination of Conveners. When the Convener or Vice-Convener of a Committee or Council is completing his or her term of office the Council or Committee shall be invited by the Convener of the Nomination Committee to suggest the name of one who may be appointed in succession. The Nomination Committee shall satisfy itself that an open and transparent process has been followed in identifying the Convener or Vice-Convener so suggested.

126. Conveners to Attend Meeting. Conveners of Standing Committees shall be entitled to be present at meetings of the Nomination Committee when the composition of their respective Committees is under consideration, but not to vote.

127. Amendment to Report. No amendment to the Report of the Nomination Committee shall be in order of which due notice has not been given.

All notices of proposed amendments on the Report, including such as propose the omission or insertion of any name or names, or the addition of a name or names where

the full number eligible has not been nominated by the Committee, must be given in to the Clerks before midday on the third day prior to the closing of the Assembly, signed by the Member or Members giving them.

All such notices of proposed amendment shall, with the names of those signing them, be circulated in the "Assembly Papers" issued on the second day prior to the closing of the General Assembly, and on the morning of the day the Report is to be called for.

VIII. ALTERATION AND SUSPENSION

128. Alteration. Any proposal for alteration of Standing Orders shall be either (a) on the Report of the Legal Questions Committee and included in the volume of Reports or (b) by Overture and the subject of at least one day's notice in the "Assembly Papers". This Standing Order shall not apply to SO 113 which may be amended by the Principal Clerk in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly.

129. Suspension. It shall always be competent for the Assembly, on the Motion of any Commissioner and on cause shown, summarily to dispense with the observance of the Standing Orders, or any part of them, in any particular case: provided that such Motion shall receive the support of not less than two-thirds of those voting on the question when put from the Chair, and that such suspension shall not contravene any Act of Assembly.

AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS FOR THE ONLINE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2021

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 be read as "circulated electronically in advance".

New Standing Order 8 - Assembly Hub: All Commissioners, Members *ex officio*, Corresponding Members, Delegates, Visitors (if any) and Youth Representatives shall require to use the Assembly Hub software application (the "Assembly Hub") to participate in the General Assembly. 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 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).

Amendments to specific Standing Orders:

Standing Order 5: No hard copy of the volume of Assembly Reports, Proposed deliverances or Assembly Papers shall be supplied; these documents will be supplied electronically.

Standing Order 15: The Order of Business shall be prepared and circulated electronically in advance.

Standing Order 20: No material shall be circulated through boxes.

Standing Order 25: No Panel of Tellers shall be appointed.

Standing Order 26: The list of Acts of Assembly shall be circulated electronically in advance.

Standing Orders 45 & 46: Any person who is entitled to do so and who wishes to ask a question or to make a comment on a Report is encouraged to give advance notice of their intention by entering a "request to speak" on the Assembly Hub against the relevant section(s) of deliverance.

Standing Order 87: Video recordings of all Conveners' speeches shall be uploaded to the Church's website at least one week before the opening day of the General Assembly and shall be available to be watched there, with all Assembly attendees encouraged to watch speeches in advance of that Standing Committee's business slot at the Assembly. The recordings of Conveners' speeches will **not** be replayed during business sessions of the Assembly. On rising to present the Report of his or her Standing Committee, a Convener shall state that his or her speech is available to view on the Church's website, shall present a short summary of key points from his or her Committee's Report lasting a maximum of two minutes and shall then state that he or she presents the Report and moves the deliverance as a whole, (or, if he or she is not a Commissioner, he or she shall ask the Principal Clerk to move the deliverance) with any debate then following.

Standing Order 89: Commissioners, Members and Youth Representatives are encouraged to register a notice of motion in advance in the Assembly Hub against a section of deliverance and in any event before the start of the relevant Standing Committee's business slot, i.e. before debate on the relevant Report starts. For each Standing Committee's business slot, after the Convener has presented the Report and moved the deliverance, and after questions for elucidation have been taken, the Moderator shall state, as at that time, which sections of deliverance have **not** had any notice of motion or request to speak registered against them in terms of this Standing Order or Standing Orders 45 & 46. The Moderator shall then allow a short period for any final request to speak to be registered. After that period, the Moderator shall confirm in respect of which sections of deliverance there has been no notice of motion or request to speak registered and shall confirm that such sections of deliverance have been agreed to by the Assembly without further procedure. Next the Moderator shall confirm that where a request to speak or notice of motion has been registered against a section of deliverance, there shall be an opportunity for debate in the usual manner until that section of deliverance is agreed and shall state to which sections of deliverance this applies. Debate shall then proceed in the usual manner according to Standing Orders.

Standing Order 95(i): Conveners' speeches shall be limited to 10 minutes in duration.

Standing Order 105: The vote on each section of deliverance which is debated shall be taken and conclusively determined by using the voting mechanism in the Assembly Hub. The result of the vote shall be displayed on the livestream and announced in each case by the Moderator. It shall be at the Moderator's discretion in each case to request whether the actual voting figures are minuted. In the event of a failure in the technology operating the Assembly Hub, the Assembly shall vote using Zoom Polls or shall use such other voting mechanism as may be prescribed at the time by the Procedure Committee. In no circumstances shall a second vote be taken on a matter which has already been the subject of a vote by electronic voting.

Standing Orders 106 - 110: 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 time of close of the last session of the Assembly.

