

STANDING ORDERS

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THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2024

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

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 section 21 of Act VI 2023 – all as at 30 November immediately preceding.
2. **Presbyterial 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 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. **[ADDITIONAL WORDING APPLYING TO A HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY] Assembly Hub for online attendees.** All Members attending the General Assembly online shall require to use the Assembly Hub software application (the “Assembly Hub”) to participate in the General Assembly as set out below. All

such persons shall be supplied in advance with login details to the Assembly Hub and training on its use shall be made available. In particular, the Assembly Hub shall be used by online attendees throughout the General Assembly to do the following:

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

8A. [ADDITIONAL WORDING APPLYING TO A HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY] In Person/Online Participation. Members may participate in person or online at the General Assembly. A person shall be designated in advance by the commissioning Presbytery as either an in person or an online attendee for the entire duration of the Assembly. No change to a person's status as an in person or online attendee shall be possible after 28 March, save only in the following circumstances: if an in person attendee becomes ill and unable to attend the Assembly in person, they shall advise the Office of the General Assembly as soon as possible by emailing pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk. When doing so they may request to change to being an online attendee and the Office of the General Assembly shall enable this if possible.

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. **His Majesty's Commission.** His Majesty's Commission to the Lord High Commissioner shall then be read and ordered to be recorded.

12. **His Majesty's Letter.** His 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 circulate electronically before the commencement of the Assembly, a proposed Order of Business for the Assembly. The proposed Order of Business shall be put to the Assembly for approval on the opening day.

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

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. **Materials for Assembly Members:** Requests for permission to distribute material electronically to Assembly Members shall 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 electronic 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 anent 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 thereanent 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 arrange for a list of the proposed Acts of Assembly to be circulated in advance in the Assembly Paper, which shall be considered on the last day of the Assembly.

27. Examination of Records. Minutes of the Standing Committees of the Assembly shall be examined by the Legal Questions Committee. The Committee shall report thereanent 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 Action Programme Leadership Team or from the Ecumenical Relations Committee 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: the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, the Social Care Council, the Ecumenical Relations Committee, the General Trustees, the Church of Scotland Guild, the Church of Scotland Housing and Loan Fund, the Legal Questions Committee, the Nomination Committee, the Safeguarding Committee, the 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 Ministries and Mission, 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, 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) Presbyteries shall be entitled to appoint persons to serve as Youth Representatives as follows:

(a) Each Scottish Presbytery other than *Clèir Eilean Ì (the Presbytery of the Highlands & Hebrides)* and the Presbytery of Lewis may appoint up to four Youth Representatives.

(b) *Clèir Eilean Ì (the Presbytery of the Highlands & Hebrides)* and the Presbytery of Lewis may together appoint up to four Youth Representatives.

(c) The Presbyteries of England, International Charges and Jerusalem may each appoint one Youth Representative.

(ii) Each Youth Representative shall be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five on the opening day of the General Assembly. They shall be involved in the life of a congregation within the bounds of the Presbytery and shall be regularly involved in the life and worship of the Church of Scotland. The minister of the congregation shall provide confirmation of this involvement if asked by the Presbytery of the bounds.

(iii) The names of Youth Representatives shall be passed to the Clerks of Assembly by 31 January each year. If a Presbytery does not fully use its entitlement to appoint Youth Representatives in any given year, its unused entitlement may be allocated to another Presbytery or Presbyteries at the discretion of the Clerks of Assembly.

(iv) Youth Representatives shall be entitled to speak and move motions but not to vote: during debates on Committee reports, and

- during debates on Overtures.
- (v) Youth Representatives shall not be entitled to speak, move motions or vote:
during debates on Petitions or cases, and
during debates on matters affecting General Assembly procedure or Standing Orders.
- (vi) Youth Representatives shall not be members of the Commission of Assembly.

Oversight

- (vii) The Faith Action Programme Leadership Team shall take responsibility for Youth Representatives and shall extend to them appropriate hospitality.

(d) PROBATIONERS AND FAMILIARISATION CANDIDATES

35A.

Status

- (i) Persons who are, or have very recently been, (a) in training for Ministries of Word and Sacrament or for the Diaconate and undertaking a Probationary placement ("Probationers"), or (b) Admissions candidates undertaking a Familiarisation placement ("Familiarisation Candidates"), shall be entitled to attend the General Assembly with rights as set out below.
- (ii) The Faith Action Programme Leadership Team shall supply to the Assembly Clerks by 31 March each year the names of those Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates which it proposes attend that year's Assembly. Each Probationer and Familiarisation Candidate shall attend only one Assembly in that role.
- (iii) Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates shall be entitled to speak and move motions but not to vote:
during debates on Committee Reports, and
during debates on Overtures.
- (iv) Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates shall not be entitled to speak, move motions or vote:
during debates on Petitions or cases, and
during debates on matters affecting General Assembly procedure or Standing Orders.
- (v) Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates shall not be members of the Commission of Assembly.

Oversight

- (vi) The Faith Action Programme Leadership Team shall take responsibility for Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates and shall extend to them appropriate hospitality. Their accommodation, travel and subsistence expenses will be met as if they were Commissioners.

(e) 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 Action Programme Leadership Team 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 Action Programme Leadership Team, the Ecumenical Relations Committee, or other relevant Council or Committee shall extend appropriate hospitality to Visitors.

38. **Oversight.** The officials of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, 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.

[ADDITIONAL WORDING APPLYING TO A HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY]

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

[If attending online]: Members who wish to ask a question or to make a comment on a Report should use the Assembly Hub to enter a "request to speak" against the relevant section(s) of deliverance.

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.

[ADDITIONAL WORDING APPLYING TO A HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY]

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

[If attending online]: Members who wish to ask a question or to make a comment on a Report should use the Assembly Hub to enter a "request to speak" against the relevant section(s) of deliverance.

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

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

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

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 I 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 Action Programme Leadership Team, 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.

[ADDITIONAL WORDING APPLYING TO A HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY]

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

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

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

(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 (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.

[ADDITIONAL WORDING APPLYING TO A HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY]

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

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

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

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

[For all attendees]: The votes from both from in-person attendance and the Assembly Hub shall be added together and the result shall be announced by the Moderator. The voting figures shall be minuted where the

Moderator, in his or her discretion, specifically requests this, or where the Clerks of Assembly decide that it would be appropriate to do so. In no circumstances shall a second vote be taken on a matter which has already been the subject of a vote by electronic voting.

(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.

[ADDITIONAL WORDING APPLYING TO A HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY]

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

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

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 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 appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, 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 (from which shall be drawn the Convener, Vice-Convener, and Administrative Trustee. In addition to appointed Trustees, the Assembly Business Committee and the General Trustees shall each appoint one of their members as a representative who shall be entitled to attend all meetings as a corresponding member but without a right to vote or make a motion, such member being eligible to serve for a maximum period of three years.
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 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 Hymnary Trust**

Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.

5. **Church of Scotland Housing and Loan Fund**.....Up to 11

Up to 3 ministers and 1 member appointed by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, 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 Depute Chairperson

6. **Church of Scotland Investors Trust**

Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.

7. **Church of Scotland Trust**

Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.

8. **Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces**.....10

Convener, Vice-Convener and four members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee. There is also 1 non-voting member: a representative from and appointed by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.

9. **Delegation of the General Assembly**.....4

The Clerks of Assembly, the Principal Clerk as Chair, the Procurator and the Solicitor of the Church, *ex officio*.

10. **Ecumenical Relations Committee**..... 10 plus representatives and co-optees

a)

8 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, 1 to be attached, for the purposes of ecumenical accompaniment, to the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.

b)

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

c)

A representative of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland appointed in virtue of the Saint Margaret Declaration; a representative of the Scottish Episcopal Church appointed in virtue of the Saint Andrew Declaration; a representative of the Church of England appointed in virtue of the Columba Declaration, and 1 representative from each of 2 churches drawn from the following: the Baptist Union of Scotland, Congregational Federation (Scotland), Methodist Church; Religious Society of Friends, Salvation Army; United Free Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church, each to serve for a period of four 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)

Meetings of the Committee shall normally be held with all members, representatives and co-optees invited, but a meeting may also be called only for voting members, being those appointed under paragraphs a) and b) above. Where the full Committee is meeting, only those persons appointed under paragraphs a) and b) above shall be entitled to vote, but before any vote is taken the views of members representing other churches shall be ascertained.

11. **Ethical Oversight Committee**.....9

9 people, each of whom shall serve no more than two three-year terms, to be populated as follows: 3 persons who shall be trustees of the Investors Trust, 1 person from the General Trustees, and 5 appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee; of these 5, 3 will have a social justice and/or world church background; 1 will be a parish minister; and 1 will be thirty years of age or under at first appointment.

- 12. Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.....44**
 The Leadership Team will comprise a) a Convener appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee b) 5 Vice Conveners, appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, to deputise for the Convener when unavailable and lead Programme Groups (with 1 of the Vice Conveners to be designated, on the recommendation of the Nomination Committee, as Depute Convener) c) 5 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee d) 12 members appointed by Presbyteries. There will be 1 such member for each Presbytery or Presbytery grouping e) The Convener, or substitute, of the Theological Forum f) The Convener, or substitute, of the Ecumenical Relations Committee. No Assembly Trustee, member of another Agency of the Church or employee of the Church will be eligible to be a member. The quorum will be 5 members. The Convener will have a casting vote. The Convener will be appointed for a term of four years. Of the Vice Conveners 2 will be appointed for two years and 3 for three years as decided by the Nomination Committee. Subsequent to those first appointed, the Convener and Vice Conveners may be appointed from existing members and will conclude service at the conclusion of their term as Convener or Vice Convener. Of the other Members of the Leadership Team first appointed, one third will serve for four years, one third for three years and one third for two years as decided by the Nomination Committee.
 Five Programme Groups will report to the Leadership Team and will have written delegated authority from the Leadership Team to take forward their respective elements of the Faith Action Programme. This will include the development of strategy and policy, and working alongside staff members in their implementation.
 Each Vice Convener will lead a Programme Group. No other members of the Leadership Team will be a member of a Programme Group.
 Programme Groups, with the exception of the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group (PMPiG), will each consist of 4 members, appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee plus their Programme Group Leader. Of the 4 members, 2 will serve for four years and 2 for three years as decided by the Nomination Committee. PMPiG will consist of six members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee plus their Programme Group Leader. Subsequent to the initial appointments, all Programme Group members other than Leaders, will serve four years. Programme Groups will have power to co-opt members to their Group, subject to approval by the Leadership Team. The number of co-opted members will not exceed the number of General Assembly appointed members, and only General Assembly appointed members will have the right to vote on decisions of the Programme Group.
 Programme Groups may form short-life Task Groups to assist or advise them in the delivery of the Faith Action Programme. With the exception of the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group, such Groups will comprise no more than 5 individuals (of whom no more than 2 may be non-members of the Church), and be headed by a Programme Group member, with freedom to select other persons, including members of staff, as co-opts. The remit and composition of each such Group will be agreed by the Leadership Team and reviewed annually, should the task for which it is formed not be completed within a year. Task Groups will report to the relevant Programme Group. The number, size, remits and activities of such Groups will be approved by the Leadership Team Convener and reported to the General Assembly.
- 13. General Trustees**
 Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.
- 14. Iona Community Board 20**
 Convener and 5 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee; 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 Clèir Eilean Ì, the Presbytery of the Highlands and Hebrides.
 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.
- 15. Judicial Panel.....30**
 30 people being ministers, elders, deacons and members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly. All members of the Judicial Panel shall be qualified to practise as lawyers or shall be experienced in the law and practice of the Church. 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.
- 16. Legal Questions Committee.....16**
 Convener, Vice-Convener and 10 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination

Committee, the Clerks of Assembly, the Procurator and the Solicitor of the Church.

17. **Life and Work Editorial Advisory Committee**.....9

Convener and 7 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee 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.

18. **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.

19. **Mission Plan Review Group**.....15

A group of fifteen persons appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee and in line with the process for appointing persons to other judicial bodies. Additionally, the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team 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.

20. **Nomination Committee**.....20

Convener, Vice-Convener and 18 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee. 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 Convener's term of office shall be for 3 years.

21. **Nomination of the Moderator Committee**.....12

Twelve persons comprising eleven ministers and elders nominated by Presbyteries plus one deacon selected at random by the Clerks of Assembly. The ministers and elders on the Committee shall be selected as follows: each Scottish Presbytery (provided that in the case of *Clèir Eilean Ì (the Presbytery of the Highlands & Hebrides)* and of Lewis, this means the two Presbyteries working together) shall nominate 1 minister and 1 elder to populate the Committee; the Presbyteries of England and the Channel Islands and of International Charges shall nominate 1 minister or elder for the Committee in each alternate year, the first nomination being made in 2024 by the Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands. Upon receipt of all the nominations, the Nomination Committee shall select for appointment 1 or other of the nominees from each Scottish Presbytery, and shall appoint the nominee from the Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands or International Charges, 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.

22. **Personnel Appeal Group**.....12

12 members appointed by the General Assembly with the Solicitor of the Church as Secretary, each appointed to serve a four-year term with the option of appointment for a further four-year term. 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.

23. **Presbytery Review Committee**.....13

Convener, Vice-Convener and 11 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, together with the Principal Clerk and the Depute Clerk as *ex officio* members. In making nominations to the Committee, the Nomination Committee shall seek to ensure a balance of ministers, elders and members on the Committee, and also shall aim for geographical balance. Membership of the Committee shall include persons with considerable experience of Presbytery life, of Church life, of regulatory functions, of charity governance, of Church law, practice and procedure and of the operation of Church courts. Appointments shall be for a three-year term with some initial appointments being of shorter terms to stagger those stepping down from the Committee in future years. No current employee of a Presbytery shall be a member of the Committee or co-opted onto a Review Group.

24. **Registration of Ministries Committee**.....7

Convener, Vice-Convener and 5 members. 1 member is appointed by the Legal Questions Committee, 1 member by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and 5 members by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee. The Convener and Vice-Convener are appointed by the General Assembly from the General Assembly appointees. The 5 members appointed by the General Assembly shall include one member who is legally qualified, at least one Minister of Word and Sacrament and at least one elder. One or other of the Clerks to the General Assembly and the Head of Ministries and Mission attend the Committee *ex officio* in an advisory capacity but are not members. The Committee is clerked by a staff member of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team; this person is not a

- member of the Committee.
25. **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. The Panel will be clerked by the Principal Clerk or the Depute Clerk.
26. **Safeguarding Committee**.....11
Convener, Vice-Convener and 6 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, 1 representative (voting member) from and appointed by each of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and 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 two representatives from each of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and the Social Care Council.
27. **Social Care Council**.....12
Convener, Vice-Convener and 9 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, 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.
28. **Theological Forum**.....13
Convener, Vice-Convener and 11 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, 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.

(b) **MEMBERS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

114. **Period of Service.** All Members of each of the Standing Committees shall retire after serving for four 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 Deputes.** 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 depute 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.**

(i) Conveners and Vice-Conveners of Councils and Committees shall be appointed by the Assembly.

(ii) Conveners of Standing Committees other than the legal bodies shall hold office for not more than four consecutive years (in the case of the Nomination Committee, three consecutive years) and Vice-Conveners of Standing Committees other than the legal bodies 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 stead for the remainder of the period of their original appointment.

(iii) Conveners of the legal bodies (meaning the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly, the Discipline Tribunal, the Judicial Commission, the Judicial Panel, the Ministries Appeal Panel, the Mission Plan Review Group, the Personnel Appeal Group and the Safeguarding Appeal Group) shall initially be appointed for a term of four years and shall be eligible for reappointment for further terms of four years. Vice-Conveners of the legal bodies shall initially be appointed for a term of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment for further terms of three years.

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.

(d) **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.

NOTE AS TO AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS FOR A HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY (NEW SOs 8 AND 8A AND ADDITIONAL WORDING AT SOs 45, 46, 89, 105 AND 106-110):

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