

Appointment of

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

Closing date – 12 noon on Monday 25 November 2024



Become a Church of Scotland Assembly Trustee – take your church involvement to a different level

Creating the conditions for renewal in the Church of Scotland

The Assembly Trustees have a big task. We have to ensure that the focus is on delivering the strategic objectives which come from the Church's annual General Assembly, and encourage a vision in the Church that supports new and existing ministries to meet the needs of the people of Scotland.

The task is particularly difficult just now. For decades almost all the numbers in the Church have been going down – members, ministers, income. Many congregations are small, with few people to keep them going. Yet, thankfully, across the land Church of Scotland congregations have a real and respected place in their communities, and there are many good news stories.

What we long to see is growth. Communities of Christians sharing the Good News and being church in lively and creative ways.

Meantime, as Assembly Trustees, we have to ensure that the books balance. And at present, they do not, not without relying on the monies that our predecessors gave us. The Church is steadily using up its financial reserves. We must pay close attention to this, as we are charity trustees and must make sure the charity has enough money to deliver its purpose and activities.

Assembly Trustees serve for a fixed time period and so we must have an eye for succession planning as well as delivering good governance whilst in the role.

So – we are looking to people with skills honed at Board level, in governance or finance with a sense of call to lead in a national setting. We are looking for people with a range of expertise in areas including strategic leadership, planning and change management, impact measurement and evaluation, supporting God's ministry and mission through the local church. From our group of trustees, we will be looking to appoint a replacement convener and vice convener from May 2025. If that is you, we would love to hear from you.

The Church of Scotland

The Church of Scotland's vision is to be a Church which seeks to inspire the people of Scotland and beyond with the Good News of Jesus Christ, through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities.

The Church of Scotland is local – with congregations across Scotland, in England and further afield. It is regional – a dozen or so Presbyteries are the vital link with the local. It is national – and it is at this level that the Assembly Trustees operate. Services and initiatives are provided nationally, with paid staff and the leadership input of representatives of the Church from many congregations.

The Church's Assembly Trustees

The Assembly Trustees are a non-executive board for the Church of Scotland. We have trustee responsibilities as defined by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).

Our responsibilities include ensuring that the charity remains true to its purpose, that the finances are sufficient and that the governance arrangements are sound. In doing this we have an oversight role over various aspects of the Church's life and work (www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/our-structure/assembly-trustees).



The opportunity

This is an opportunity to become one of the 12 Assembly Trustees who are appointed by the General Assembly. We are recruiting for three vacancies for an initial three-year term from May 2025. You will be joining a dynamic, encouraging and motivated group of people with wide experience. We share a sense of commitment and willingness to be actively engaged in the national life of the Church of Scotland in this challenging season.

Person specification

You will be bringing your gifts and using your personal and professional skills and experience.

Many areas of the Church's life and work are in transition. You will be good at absorbing information, questioning, sharing ideas, listening and participating in discussion. You will be practiced in reaching collectively sound and wise decisions. You will be willing to take on additional roles within the remit of the trustees. This could draw on other skills such as contributing to a short-term working group on a matter of policy or strategy or taking on a specific leadership responsibility.

The Church is about people. All our decisions involve people, and developing relationships. You will have a track record of understanding the role of a non-executive and building relationships of trust with staff and others.

Managing the money is a challenge. Most of the Church's annual income is from its members, and most of this is used to pay its ministers. In 2023, the Trustees were responsible for expenditure of £118.6m. There is a professional finance team. Your role is to understand the figures and be able to interrogate them aptly and wisely.

As charity trustees, the Assembly Trustees have oversight of other parts of the nationally run elements of the Church. There is a close relationship with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (FAPLT) and its Programme Groups (www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/faith-action-programme-committees-and-departments/faith-action-programme).

Also within the Assembly Trustees' overall responsibilities is CrossReach, the Church of Scotland's professionally run social care arm (www.crossreach.org.uk).

From a personal point of view, you will bring your individual perspective, and your knowledge and experience of life and Christian discipleship.



Time commitment

Being an Assembly Trustee is rewarding – and it does take time. You are expected to read and reflect on papers before meetings and to attend meetings during the working day, normally on the second Thursday of each month except January and July, with an occasional additional ad hoc meeting. Many of our meetings are online, though we value the opportunity to gather onsite, usually in Edinburgh, from time to time.

Each Assembly Trustee is expected to hold additional roles and responsibilities including becoming a member of one of the Assembly Trustee subcommittees such as governance, finance or the Israel Palestine Committee. These require extra time and may involve evening meetings, check-in conversations or an occasional weekend event.

Preparation and support

Induction and refresher training are part of the deal, and fellow trustees help newcomers get up to speed.

Remuneration

All of us as Church members make a commitment to give of our time, talents and money to the Church and this role is unpaid. Associated expenses will be met.

Eligibility

Assembly Trustees must be members of the Church of Scotland. Employees of the Church and members of its Agencies are ineligible for appointment. Apart from those requirements of our constitution, for this appointment we welcome applications from members, elders, ministers, deacons and those locally employed by a presbytery or congregation of the Church.

A basic disclosure check is required from Disclosure Scotland, in line with the Church of Scotland's Safe Recruitment practice: a trustee is viewed as holding a leadership role in a position of trust. In addition, all applicants must satisfy statutory requirements in order to be eligible to become a trustee.

Equal Opportunities

We welcome applications from all suitably qualified and eligible candidates. As Assembly Trustees we are keen to seek diverse representation. Please contact Karen Smith, below, if you would like to discuss any accessibility requirements.

Contacts

If you would like to talk through any aspect of the role of Assembly Trustee, please contact any of the people below and we would be delighted to have a discussion with you.

David Cameron: Convener, Assembly Trustees

david.cameron@churchofscotland.org.uk

Geoff Miller: Vice-Convener, Assembly Trustees

gmiller@churchofscotland.org.uk

Barry Hughes: Administrative Trustee, Assembly Trustees

bhughes@churchofscotland.org.uk

Karen Smith: Human Resources Manager

ksmith@churchofscotland.org.uk Tel: 0131 376 5765

How to Apply

Please provide a tailored CV and covering letter outlining why the role of Assembly Trustee interests you and how your gifts would add to and complement our current group. Additionally, please sign and return the eligibility declaration.

These should be returned to: hr@churchofscotland.org.uk

These must reach the HR team by the closing date of 12 noon, Monday 25 November with interviews taking place in December 2024.



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www.churchofscotland.org.uk