

FAITH NURTURE FORUM MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to work with Priority Area Congregations and the supplementary network of congregations to ensure their stories, including the learning and experience from their mission are shared with the wider church via the Church's website and other platforms (*Section 2.1*).
3. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to support congregations' and Presbyteries' engagement with response to poverty (*Section 2.1*).
4. Commend the work of the Education and Schools Group and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to encourage Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to support Ministers, paid workers and volunteers in their ministry to schools (*Section 2.3*).
5. Urge Presbyteries to recognise their Local Education Representatives' contributions to Local Authority policy and the welfare and holistic development of young people generally by encouraging networking across the Local Authority boundaries (*Section 2.3*).
6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team through the work of the Mission Support Programme Group to welcome new Gaelic-medium resources for children from Scottish Bible Society and the Gaelic Committee of the Church of Scotland, and urge Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to be alert to opportunities for mission with Gaelic-speaking communities and schools, and to make use of the Gaelic-medium resources now available (*Section 2.7*).
7. Pass an Act on Ministries for Deaf Congregations as set out in Appendix i (*Section 3.12 and Appendix i*).
8. Pass an Act amending the Ordination of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons Act (Act I 2018) as set out in Appendix ii (*Section 3.13 and Appendix ii*).
9. Approve the allocation of the total number of planned ministry posts among the Presbyteries as contained in Appendix iii for 2024 (*Section 3.2 and Appendix iii*).
10. Note the proposal from the Diaconate Council to use endowment funds to create a part-time Development Worker post to research and shape proposals for the future of the Diaconate and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to bring a report to a future General Assembly (*Section 3.13*).
11. Re-appoint Rev Dorothy U Anderson as a Trustee of the Housing and Loan Fund for Retired Ministers and Widows and Widowers of Ministers, in the capacity of Chair of said Fund.
12. Note the introduction from 1 January 2024 of an integrated support allowance of £250 per year for those in fulltime ministry (*Section 3.17.1*).
13. Pass an Act amending the Act on Selection and Training for Full-time Ministry Act (Act X 2004) as set out in Appendix vi (*Section 4.1 and Appendix vi*).
14. Encourage the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to develop work on an Apprenticeship Route with hope to pilot in 2024, subject to further General Assembly approval (*Section 4.4.1*).

Report

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 Governance

Since last year's General Assembly, the Faith Nurture Forum ("the Forum") has continued to work to fulfil the deliverances agreed by previous General Assemblies. In addition, this year we have worked closely with the staff based at the national office to plan our work and governance properly in line with the Assembly Trustees D10 Strategic Planning Team (D10 SPT) (see Section 13.4 of the Report of the Assembly Trustees).

1.2 Staff Structure

In September 2022 the staff who previously worked for individual Forums became one Faith Action Programme staff team and the agenda for the Forum meetings was adjusted to reflect this change under the new Programme Group areas, namely: People and Training; Mission Support (including Presbytery and Partnership Support); Public Life and Social Justice; and Resource and Presence.

1.3 Budgets

In preparation for the expected closing of both Forums to be replaced by a single Faith Action Programme Leadership Team (FAPLT) the individual budgets of both Forums were united in January 2023. As regards both sets of Forum financial accounts, we can report to the General Assembly that net savings were made between both Forums of over £1m (Faith Impact Forum net saving of £384,732 and Faith Nurture Forum net saving (excluding ministries staffing costs) of £722,348).

1.4 Reporting

Recognising the changes made and anticipated to governance, staff structure and budgeting, Commissioners may note changes to where previous work areas sit; these are highlighted in the new Programme Group areas reflecting the movements made in the last year. Please find below a short executive summary to cover the areas of our output over the last year. We hope this means of reporting to the General Assembly will help Commissioners.

The report following this summary will deal directly with the deliverances relating to the Forum, and the strategic plans we have developed with the Assembly Trustees as priorities to deliver the Faith Action Programme over the next 3-5 years.

1.5 We invite the General Assembly to recognise and acknowledge that, with new staff structures, changing committee structures and with a new strategic Faith Action Programme, the immediate capacity for developing or taking on new areas of work this year is limited. With that in mind, it will be hard for Conveners to be willing to accept significant new and unplanned work in the form of additional deliverances. If the Assembly were to insist on new work, we must caution that it may not be possible to fulfil its instruction in a timely manner or to the high standards which would be expected. A stay on instruction of new work would help us all as we move forward into these new governance and staffing arrangements and develop focus on Programme delivery. We do not envisage the same situation to be facing us next year by which time we expect work to be running smoothly, and so we would be prepared to return to normal and discuss significant new deliverances at the 2024 General Assembly.

1.6 Mission Support

Since last year's General Assembly, we have been working hard to deliver programmes and projects to support congregations in their mission. We have also been restructuring; aligning with the D10 report, working initially to bring together four staff teams under one Mission Support Programme Group:

Priority Areas
Congregational Engagement
Mission Development
Digital Ministries

We have outlined a strategy which will allow us to continue to run existing programmes that are well established and successful in supporting the local but also will allow us to develop new areas of work. Our overall objectives are to:

- Establish a programme to develop and support congregations and communities to grow in Christian faith and deliver missional activity throughout the year; alongside establishing 100 new worshipping communities.
- Establish a comprehensive programme of support to equip all those responsible for evolving fresh forms of worship including digitised ministry alongside continued support for developing best practice in existing worship.

Delivery methods will include direct Faith Action Programme staff support, support from external partners, support to access funding streams and access to learning programmes.

All of this will be delivered working in partnership and establishing good respectful relationships with our Presbyteries as they work towards fulfilling Presbytery Mission Planning and Presbytery Reform.

1.7 Presbytery and Partnership Support

Pastoral Support continues quietly and effectively, supporting those in need of this service.

1.7.1 Mission Planning

Four Presbyteries had not submitted a Mission Plan by 31 December 2022. Discussions continue with a further seven Presbyteries, all, save one, now part of a larger Presbytery.

Issues of implementation and review of plans are critical, particularly where ministers have been inducted on a basis of reviewable charge. Phasing reviews of Mission Plans needs to be carefully teased through, especially with most Presbyteries now merged into a larger Presbytery.

Further issues to be resolved include the question of Team Ministry, as in the Presbytery Mission Plan Act, and whether there would be vacancy allowance should a member of a Team Ministry demit, and whether lack of provision would prevent the development of a more flexible form of ministry.

1.8 Resource and Presence

The major area of work ongoing surrounds the Scottish Storytelling Centre and John Knox House, as the Forum considers future work with the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust or indeed reimagining the usage of these historic premises with interesting possibilities for mission and for income generation. Discussions are ongoing to seek the best outcome for all parties, with an emphasis on ensuring that the legacy of John Knox is not lost to the building. The options are either to sell or lease the complex to the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust, or, alternatively, to explore how it might continue to be used, and further developed, as a resource for mission.

The Life and Work team continues to work hard to refresh and renew the magazine, including a new design launch in early 2023. There have been many successes in 2022 both with content and finances, whilst the team is always trying to further improve the offering.

1.9 People & Training

This has been a year of recalibration and of preparation in People & Training. Our Recruitment & Training Teams are working together to support discipleship and leadership in local church. Candidates for our Recognised Ministries have returned to in-person at university as well as the fullness of placement opportunity returning. Familiarisation candidates have, once again, been able to come to the UK to take up their places.

Finishing Probationers and Familiarisation candidates have found roles in Presbyteries, many of which give opportunity for developing new initiatives. The Forum commits to continuing to provide for those completing training until our vacancy process is moving smoothly once more. Development of training for congregations has been focused on the preparation of materials for the Integrated Training Programme, coming later this year. Our Summer Elders' conference 'Rising to the Challenge of Change' was of great help to many.

2. MISSION SUPPORT REPORT

2.1 Mission Support Team

2.1.1 We continued to develop our work with Priority Area congregations and those on our supplementary list as a key priority in response to the deliverance at last year’s General Assembly

2.1.2 Connecting

We connected with our congregations on a regular basis; renewing contact, building relationships, offering support, listening for needs and signposting to resources and other agencies.

2.1.3 Learning and Development

We were alert to requests for learning opportunities and accordingly fed these into our learning programme offer of support. These included continued support for missional learning community and asset-based community development learning pieces, and support for congregations to build worship teams. We are working with colleagues in Resourcing Worship to develop a Hymnary Supplement to the Church Hymnary, 4th edition (CH4); ensuring the context of worship in Priority Areas is reflected.

2.1.4 Challenge Poverty Week and Campaigning

During Challenge Poverty Week in October, we ran our first in person event for this campaign. This was an ecumenical event run in partnership with the Xaverian missionaries at Conforti Institute. Called “Practice, Policy and Prayer”, the conference was framed around some key questions in how we respond to poverty during this economic crisis and what is significant about our Christian witness. We explored how we work in practice with communities and how we engage with policy and how do we bring these areas together so each supports each other.

Open to people with lived experience and/or those with a leadership role with a specific interest in this, we heard about the impact of poverty that we were seeing or experiencing, and understood more in relation to underlying systemic causes. It was a good starting point to develop our work both as part of the campaign but also as a model for learning more about how we could use this collective voice for change.

We connected up with other faith-based campaigning organisations during the year and were pleased to see that Church Action on Poverty produced their most recent report “Church on the Margins”, looking at the church’s presence in low-income communities. They were inspired by the Church of Scotland’s model of work in Priority Areas. <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/news-release-poor-communities-hit-hardest-by-church-closures-study-finds%ef%bf%bc/>

2.1.5 Poverty Alliance and Third Sector

Challenge Poverty Week is a campaign led by the Poverty Alliance. We sit on the Board of Poverty Alliance and work with other faith-based and third sector partners to ensure the injustice of poverty is kept high on the agenda. It is also a place to highlight the work of the Church of Scotland and ensure this is visible to politicians and policy makers.

2.1.6 Peer Support – Wee Conversations

This is about the expertise of Priority Area congregations themselves and our work is to support them to develop as a network so that we can share our learning and practice, get peer support, and encourage the Church in its mission.

As well as our annual network gathering, we ran weekly meetings online throughout the whole of the year. Called the Wee Conversation, it was an opportunity for people to gather on a Friday morning, discuss the widest range of issues and find a place to support each other. People can share good news, get behind the issues of the day, lend support and generally connect with each other. It is also another place to connect with the Priority Areas team; one of the team will always be there on a Friday morning.

2.1.7 Young Adult Volunteer (YAV) Programme; Extending our Work with Young Leaders

The Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA) is our partner in this and we will continue to work with them. This year their recruitment programme did not attract a large number of applicants. We are committed to running the programme in Dundee again in this coming year and we are hopeful that the problems of recruitment have been addressed. These posts will support Priority Areas and the new clusters that are being established as part of mission planning.

At the same time, we are developing a whole new extension to the programme to send young people from Scotland to two YAV sites in the USA, in New Orleans and New York. This fits within our Faith Action Programme strategy, and it is wider than the existing YAV programme. It will link to the Intergenerational Task Group work, support new thinking in recruitment and will also feed into our development around apprenticeships for ministry. It also fits into our clear objectives particularly around engaging young people and renewing the life of the church.

2.1.8 Fife Presbytery Poverty Forum

As part of our work in engaging with Presbyteries about poverty and mission planning, we welcomed the opportunity to be a partner in the Fife Presbytery Poverty Task Force (“the Task Force”). This is a coming together of a range of agencies including third sector and statutory organisations alongside our churches. The Task Force launched the Poverty Forum with a hearing taking place in Wellesley Parish Church Centre, Methil, in November. People from our Priority Areas talked first hand of their experiences and we heard about a range of projects and initiatives that are responding and challenging. Former UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown attended and spoke about his support for Fife based project, The Big Hoose, in its attempts to scale up its operations in response to the scale of poverty being experienced. We will continue to develop our work as part of the Task Force and support the development of the Poverty Forum.

2.1.9 The Big Conversation

Our gathering of the network in November was our first in-person since the pandemic; drawing together representatives from our congregations and communities across Scotland. Working over two days, our focus was on

how Priority Areas are working with communities in this crisis, and building the strength of our network to challenge inequality.

Through workshop sessions we explored how poverty impacts in multiple layers through fuel poverty, basic unmet needs, addictions, homelessness, food insecurity and more. We concentrated on what congregations were doing in response and how learning from these approaches could benefit communities and encourage involvement in our mission planning.

Our keynote address was on The Hive initiative from its founder, Brian Honey-Morgan. The Hive is a project started in Cornwall, processing surplus food in order to address the critical challenges of food poverty, food waste and climate change. At the Big Conversation, we discussed how this approach to food poverty could translate to our communities in Scotland. We are now continuing to work with The Hive and other partners to develop work in this area.

2.2 Mission Development

2.2.1 Supporting Children, Families, Young People and Young Adults

Throughout the last year the team have continued to develop provision for those involved in children, youth and family ministry.

We offered regular opportunities for those employed by the Church of Scotland as children/youth/family workers to gather online as a community of practice. Through the series of thematic conversations, book groups, prayer gatherings and a conference, participants have been supported and connected.

In December 2022 we hosted a 2-day training event on coaching for Presbytery Children/Youth/Mission/Pioneer Enablers, in partnership with Fresh Expressions UK. Since then, many of the participants have gone on to develop their skills further taking part in an ecumenical coaching hub and we look forward to seeing how this develops further.

In March 2023 we were delighted to return to having an in-person conference, held on Iona in partnership with the Iona Community, which provided some much-needed space for reflection, reconnection with God and time with each other.

2.2.2 Support for volunteers

Support was offered to volunteers by means of our monthly thematic newsletters. Through 2022, we have focussed on the Five Marks of Mission. Sharing of resources and information has also been through the 'Now You're Talking' Facebook group. Work is continuing with our ecumenical partners on re-developing the Core Skills training courses on children's ministry, and developing new material on intergenerational ministry. It is hoped that these courses will be available at the end of 2023.

2.2.3 Webinars

Throughout 2022, 12 ReNew webinars were held covering various topics relating to ministry with children and young people, to encourage a renewed vision and inspire new ways of thinking for our church life and worship. These had good engagement of people ordained or otherwise from across the country. Participants appreciated sharing stories and experiences with each other. The [ReNew](#) recordings on the Church of Scotland YouTube channel have also been well received. A further series is being planned in 2023.

2.2.4 Intergenerational Church

Faith Action staff from the Mission Development and Priority Areas teams have been instrumental in the work of the Intergenerational Church Task Group; a group of the Assembly Trustees tasked with creating a strategy for the whole church to support and enable the vision to be an intergenerational church. See their report for more details. (<https://digital.lifeandwork.org/magazine/reader/246658>)

Of particular note at this time is the book 'Being Intergenerational Church' which is due to be published by St Andrew Press in the autumn. This is designed to provide readers with an exploration of the theological basis for intergenerational church, alongside practical ideas and stories to inspire congregations along the journey to being more intergenerational. A series of articles in Life and Work offers a preview as to some of the content that will be covered.

2.3 Education and Schools

2.3.1 The Church of Scotland has a longstanding commitment to education and all aspects of young people's development. This includes spiritual development and learning about faith and religion, but we have a concern also for their welfare and well-being: that they may grow up in a Scotland free from poverty, discrimination and fear. Our vision is of a future Scotland that is fairer, more equal and more just. This is our tradition, and the opportunity for us to serve our communities and bring hope and life to all parts of Scotland.

2.3.2 The Education and Schools Group aims to increase and improve the Church's mission in schools and on education issues, to support improvements in education across Scotland, and to benefit pupils, staff and the wider school community. From the annual congregational statistics of 2022, it is very encouraging to see that 723 congregations across Scotland support schools, in some way. Many ministers are active as school chaplains. Some congregations have paid staff who connect with schools regularly and others have volunteers who are committed to schools' ministry. Every local authority also has a Church of Scotland Local Authority Representative, who can contribute to and support on areas of policy and quality improvement, particularly in the areas of Religious and Moral Education and Time for Reflection.

2.3.3 We are working to develop a database of people engaged in schools' ministry. We are making plans for a variety of training events in 2023 including schools' ministry roadshows in 11 Presbytery areas, to encourage church involvement and equip those working in schools' ministries.

2.3.4 We also seek to be involved and contribute to areas of Education Policy and held a focus group discussion as part of the recent National Discussion on the future of Scottish Education.

2.4 Pioneering

2.4.1 In 2019, the General Assembly approved the decision to support the formation of 100 New Worshipping Communities by 2031. In the Church Statistical Returns for 2021, 400 congregations indicated they had at least one new worshipping community in some stage of development. A small team have following up with each of them to understand what is actually happening. At the time of writing, initial findings from the returns show:

- About one third report running a Messy Church
- Approximately a quarter have a café church event
- Many churches report a move to digital ministry. We suspect that a good portion of these do not represent a new worshipping community, but the transfer of the activities of the existing congregation to online during COVID
- There will be those who are not yet a New Worshipping Community, but have the potential to become one, and follow up support will be offered.
- Work is continuing to see what further information may be collected via the statistical returns in future years, but we need real investment in the ability to gather and make sense of data in as close to real time as possible in order to make good strategic decisions.

The Pioneer Grant fund was launched and grants totalling £100k have been awarded to congregations. The Pioneering Scotland network which we established in Spring 2022, has almost 300 members online, is an active group, and is managed ecumenically. We delivered a Pioneering Practice tour in conjunction with the Church Missionary Society in May 2022. Our first pilot pioneer community of practice is running in the Highlands and a second, thematic community of practice is in the process of formation around outdoor forms of church.

2.5 Acorn**^[1]

2.5.1 After two successive years of deliverances that urged congregations to adopt the practice of 'Acorn', it is pleasing to note the significant increase in its activity across Scotland. In 2022, two Roadshows were held – one in the Spring, at four venues, covering the east side of the country and one in the Autumn, at three venues in the west and north. Together, approximately 150 people attended, with over a third taking part in pilot Acorn groups. Furthermore, a short promotional video was produced over the Summer. In October, Paul Haringman took up a self-funded post of National Co-ordinator for Acorn in Scotland. This has proved a welcome development, as Paul is based in Scotland and is now working closely with the Mission Development Team to highlight Acorn to an even wider audience within Scotland, as well as providing training for current leaders of Acorn groups.

2.6 Workplace Chaplaincy Scotland

In October 2022 the charity Workplace Chaplaincy Scotland sadly had to make the decision to cease operations. Their staff were made redundant and the charity officially ceased in March 2023.

The work of 100 volunteer chaplains in workplaces across Scotland is invaluable however, and so the Mission Development Team began the work of transferring support for the volunteer chaplains to the Church of Scotland, under the banner 'Scottish Workplace Chaplaincy'. The new, ecumenical agency was officially launched in February 2023 and is continuing to develop the workplace chaplaincy network along with the support of its dedicated volunteers.

2.7 Gaelic Committee

2.7.1 Over the last year the Gaelic Committee have been working to develop mission and outreach in Gaelic-speaking Communities with particular focus on the following areas of work:

- Nurture of the faith of children and young people within our churches.
- Supporting parents and families to nurture the faith of children within the home.
- The support of those who work with children, families and young people in Gaelic-speaking communities.
- Engaging missionally with those outwith the orbit of our churches, in Gaelic-speaking communities.

2.7.2 To this end, the Committee have formed productive relationships with the Intergenerational Church Task Group, the Education and Schools Group, Scottish Bible Society and others and have been engaged in the translation and distribution of a Lego movie which tells the Christmas story. The work was achieved in a very short timescale, and despite only being distributed on 16th December, it is estimated to have been viewed by 41,000 – over 8,000 of these in schools. The Group were able to negotiate not only distribution in Gaelic, but a re-recording in English with a Scottish accent, and both were made freely available to users within Scotland. It was issued as 'A Gift for the Children of Scotland from the Church of Scotland' and was sent to ministers, children's and youth workers, our ecumenical partners and education authorities.

2.8 Resourcing Worship

2.8.1 The Resourcing Worship team continue to facilitate the production of worship materials for every Sunday of the year. This is the result of work and contributions from a large number of individuals and agencies throughout the year. It is noticeable, however, that many regular contributors are feeling the pressure of the demands of other work, for example the Presbytery Mission Planning process, and so the Team are both actively seeking new contributors and adapting how the material is developed to accommodate the changing patterns of availability.

The development of a supplement to CH4 is a joint project of the Resourcing Worship Team and Priority Areas, working with a dedicated working group. The call for songs written in the last 20 years and the congregational survey issued to the church last year resulted in a huge number of submissions. The group have since been working towards a final selection. The resource is on target for launch at the 2024 General Assembly.

2.8.2 At the General Assembly 2022 the Forum was instructed:

Following the General Assembly calling the Church to pray, "to produce prayer resources to encourage and equip people to pray for the future well-being, peace and revival of the Church." (FNF 7)

Resourcing Worship team are taking the lead role in coordinating, commissioning, and disseminating this resource. The resource will 'encourage and equip' people to pray, but also seeks to be representative of the different voices within the Church of Scotland and to provide different styles of prayer and reflection for use in public worship, personal prayer rhythms, gatherings and meetings of the Church family and decision-making bodies.

"to commission a video series resource, telling the stories of churches who are thriving in the area of making new disciples, in an effort to provide 'real-life role models' of how congregations in different parish contexts can grow." (FNF 21):

Throughout our church there are many examples of the Great Commission in action, where people are beginning, or continuing a journey of discipleship. We have been capturing some of these stories of lives transformed, of communities blessed and of Christians deepening and maturing in faith. They are stories of personal relationships, supportive congregations, and churches adapting to the challenge of making disciples in a changed and changing context. Eventually it is hoped that "Insite", the newly created intranet for Church of Scotland ministers will host resources of this nature.

2.9 Digital Ministry

2.9.1 The Faith Action Programme has begun to discuss a digital strategy for the church that acknowledges different strands of digital expression that already exist within the Church of Scotland. Each have their own audience and so unique outputs and key performance indicators but all deliver aspects of the Faith Action Programme functioning diversely and harmoniously.

We would like to highlight the particular contribution of Sanctuary First. Sanctuary First, www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk, is a digital expression of the Church Without Walls Report which was enthusiastically received and endorsed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2001. It is the organic expression of the local church, working with Presbytery to create a world-leading digital ministry. In 2022 Sanctuary First was incorporated into the Faith Action Programme and was granted charitable status. Through this developing ministry it is hoped that the Church of Scotland will develop an integrated digital platform reaching out to become a global digital ministry inspired by the Church Without Walls Report's ethos and theology.

3. PRESBYTERY PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT REPORT

3.1 Presbytery Mission Planning

3.1.1 Presbytery Mission Planning has been an exercise unlike any other in the living memory of the Kirk. It has touched every Parish within Scotland and beyond. Mission is now embedded at the heart of the Church's thinking and acting. The instruction of the General Assembly of 2021 required that Presbytery Mission Plans were to be submitted by 31st December 2022 to the Faith Nurture Forum and the General Trustees. This radical rethinking of Mission for the 21st century, outlining the vision for the configuration of ministries and buildings within Presbyteries, has proved to be vital in addressing buildings that are not fit for purpose, releasing Elders from responsibilities which have become too much and releasing energy for new and different challenges, so that the work of the Church moves into the future in hope. This has required a huge commitment and trust by everyone involved and the Forum's thanks go to many people.

3.1.2 The Forum gathered a group of people from within the Forum and from the Church who committed to supporting Presbyteries as they developed their Plans and to deliver the instruction. The Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group (PMPiG) have given of their knowledge, as well as vast amounts of hours to this task. The Church owes them their thanks.

3.1.3 One of the consequences of beginning this exercise in a pandemic is that most of the work of PMPiG has been completed online, which in hindsight has aided the speed required by the General Assembly to comply with the instructions given.

3.1.4 The Forum wishes to express its gratitude to all at Presbytery level who have worked tirelessly in producing Presbytery Mission Plans – Clerks, Conveners, those who served on Committees and project groups, those who consulted and met local congregations, and those who facilitated discussions which were often fraught and challenging. In the deliberations of PMPiG, one member commented that Presbytery Mission Plans needed to focus on three different but complementary themes – creativity, comfort and challenge. The Forum is of the view that the best of the Church's Presbytery Mission Plans succeed in this and would like to pay tribute to the hard work which has gone into this exercise.

3.1.5 At the time of writing (February 2023), only four Presbyteries have still to submit a Presbytery Mission Plan and, of these, two had presented a version to their Presbytery which the Presbytery subsequently voted down. These four Presbyteries are Clyde; Forth Valley and Clydesdale; Caithness; and Uist.

3.1.6 The Forum would also like to celebrate the close working relationship which has been developed with the General Trustees. It is important in this new season in which the Church finds itself that closer working at every level becomes part of what we are as a people of faith. This deep bond which has developed has led to a creative synergy in responding to Presbytery Mission Plans and a hopeful sign for continued future working.

3.1.7 Moving forward towards the implementation of Plans, PMPiG will continue to support Presbyteries in all aspects of their approved Plans. Guidance for implementation will be produced at the earliest opportunity and PMPiG and the General Trustees will ensure that the Annual Review reflects the creative and organic nature of Mission in the Plans which does not stand still as the Church moves into the future.

3.2 Ministries Numbers

3.2.1 The Presbytery Mission Plan Act at section 2.4.1 requires that the Forum presents, annually, to the General Assembly, for approval, the proposed total number of ministry posts to be funded by the Parish Staffing Fund, allocated among the Presbyteries, in each of the next five years, so that there is a five-year rolling plan for such allocations. Discussions with the Assembly Trustees indicate that the figures presented to the General Assembly of 2022, and agreed for 2023, will similarly apply for 2024 and through to the end of 2025 and thereafter, with any amendments coming to subsequent General Assemblies.

3.2.2 These numbers, as outlined in Appendix iii, will form the shape of the Church's ministry over the next five years. The question of the finances available to the Church is one where the Forum takes its lead from the Assembly Trustees, and questions on any adjustment to ministries numbers are for the Assembly Trustees and not the Forum.

3.2.3 This work takes place against the background of Presbytery Reform, and the General Assembly of 2022 instructed Presbyteries to ensure that, in the period up to the General Assembly of 2025, where a weighting of resources is allocated to part or parts of the area of a Presbytery, the allocation of ministry in the Presbytery Mission Plan is demonstrably distributed so as to fulfil the spirit and purpose of the weighting; and instructed the Forum to take this principle into account in approving Presbytery Mission Plans.

3.2.4 Since the General Assembly of 2022, significant change has taken place in many of the Scottish Presbyteries in the Church of Scotland, and this is reported on elsewhere in the Report of the Assembly Business Committee to this year's General Assembly.

3.2.5 The inclusion of the former Presbytery of Falkirk into what is now the Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale; the creation of the Presbytery of the South West on 1st October 2022; and the creation of the three Presbyteries of Lothian and the Borders; Perth; and the North East and the Northern Isles on 1 January 2023 are significant developments in the life of the Church.

3.2.6 The Forum has sought to follow the aforementioned instruction to it in approving Presbytery Mission Plans, and the numbers shown at Appendix iii represent the aggregate of weightings previously reported to the General Assembly and allocated across the 21 Presbyteries currently in existence.

3.2.7 The Presbytery of Gordon and its Ministry Allocation

3.2.7.1 The General Assembly of 2022 instructed its Selection Committee to appoint three persons, to mediate a meeting with Gordon Presbytery, Faith Nurture Forum and the Assembly Trustees to:

- i. Verify, according to the principles applied across all other Presbyteries, the appropriate weighting and allocation of ministries to Gordon Presbytery;
- ii. In the light of the outcome of section (i) above assist (if required) the Presbytery of Gordon to complete their Presbytery Mission Plan; and
- iii. Advise, where appropriate, on opportunities that might exist in:
 - a. Local ecumenical collaboration,
 - b. The shape of ministry allocation within the proposed new Presbytery, and
 - c. Initiatives that might qualify for funding under the newly create Seeds for Growth Fund;

and report the outcome of their work to the General Assembly of 2023.

3.2.7.2 The membership of this group was agreed as Rev Richard Baxter; Ms Sheena MacFarlane OBE, and Mr David Watt, both Elders, in Port Glasgow: New and Airdrie: New Wellwynd respectively. This group met and conferred appropriately with those identified in the original section of deliverance, and met with both the Forum and representatives of the Presbytery in the fulfilment of the task set by the General Assembly.

3.2.7.3 The group concluded that changes in the allocation system, the factors considered and the consequences of changes on both the overall system and on individual presbyteries, had not been well understood or communicated at a number of stages by the then Ministries Council and the Forum. The group recognised that the Presbytery had not been provided with up-to-date and accurate information at an early enough stage, and that had hampered the work of the Presbytery of Gordon in compiling its Mission Plan.

3.2.7.4 In its review and reworking of the statistics, however, the group concluded that both the current weighting factor of 1.5 as an Urban-Rural Presbytery, and the current planning figure of 16.5 posts for Gordon were correct. The Presbytery by this stage had completed its Presbytery Mission Plan and submitted it to the Faith Nurture Forum for approval, which approval was duly issued.

3.3 From Planning to Implementation

3.3.1 Now the hard work of implementation begins; compiling a Presbytery Mission Plan is but the first step in the exercise. PMPiG has been much involved in the work of compiling guidance, and has uploaded information relating to Local Mission Church, and Team Ministry, on to the Church of Scotland website and also on to Insite. These resources can be found at this link: <https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/resources/presbytery-planning>.

3.3.2 This guidance will be of value to the wider Church, and to all Presbyteries, as the time comes for annual reviews of Presbytery Mission Plans to take place. The first tranche of Presbytery Mission Plans to be approved, in July 2022, were those from Wigtown and Stranraer; Ardrossan; Argyll; and Lochaber. Of these Presbyteries, two have now been absorbed into the Presbytery of the South West. At the time of writing the Presbytery Mission Plan for the former Presbytery of Dumfries and Kirkcudbright is still the subject of conversation and negotiation among the Forum, the General Trustees and the Presbytery of the South West. It would not make sense for the aggregated plan of the Presbytery of the South West, once all components have been agreed and any involvement of the Presbytery Mission

Plan Review process had been disposed of, to be reviewed as a whole, given that some parts of that Presbytery will have had a longer timeframe in which to implement than others. The same considerations apply for all the newly created Presbyteries, and for already existing Presbyteries such as Edinburgh and West Lothian, Glasgow, and Fife.

3.3.3 The Forum wishes to encourage all Presbyteries, no matter when they came into existence, to be awake to the possibilities of working across boundaries, whether those be internal legacy boundaries from previous Presbyteries or boundaries with neighbouring Presbyteries. Equally, in seeking to have an overview of the Presbytery Mission Plans which have been submitted, it is clear that the ecumenical dimension of Presbytery Mission Planning is one where there is still scope for further work. The Forum's successor body will continue to work collaboratively with the General Trustees and with Presbytery Clerks and Conveners engaging in a conversation as to how best to phase annual reviews in a meaningful way, while still seeking an integrated approach, without causing an undue burden. It is clear that larger Presbyteries are able to operate at a more strategic level, and the Presbytery of Fife in its anti-poverty work is working fruitfully with the local authority and other agencies. The Forum would also seek to encourage inviting peer review of Presbytery Mission Plans by involving colleagues, not just from neighbouring Presbyteries, but from those where there are other similarities.

3.4 Team Ministries

3.4.1 The Forum has been involved in conversations with Presbyteries where there is significant interest in Team Ministries and has produced guidance notes to support the implementation of such creative and challenging models of ministry in this time of change. Places as diverse as Aberdeen, Shetland, Orkney, St Andrews and Irvine are exploring what might be possible and model Bases of Union and Bases of Team Ministry are available for use. What might be called mixed-mode Team Ministry is being developed, in situations where ministers who have already been working together along with their congregations, are moving into closer relationship, serving both the congregations to which they had been historically inducted, along with committing to other spheres of ministry. The content of these Bases of Union and Team Ministry are for local parties and the Presbytery to discern together, drawing from the Mission Narratives contained in the Presbytery Mission Plans, and reflecting them in more detail within the wording of such Bases.

3.4.2 A Basis of Team Ministry will also reflect the requirement of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act that there be a single named Moderator in a Team Ministry. It will not be possible for another member of the Team Ministry who might normally be eligible to serve as Interim Moderator to take on such a role, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to be consistent with requirements in the Vacancy Procedure Act (Act VIII, 2003) or any succeeding legislation.

3.4.3 Presbyteries are advised that there is a need for a Team Coordinator in such Team Ministries, who may or may not be the Interim Moderator. These can be complementary roles, and they are about role and function. The Team Coordinator should be clearly named, with a set of terms of reference for what the expectations of the role will be, and his or her identity should be recorded in Kirk Session and Presbytery Minutes.

3.4.4 This model of ministry marks a significant shift in our ministry culture and will be an ongoing learning arena for some time to come.

3.5 Local Mission Church

3.5.1 There has been a number of expressions of interest and we are pleased to report that a Basis of Local Mission Church has now been drafted and agreed and we anticipate this being applied in Presbyteries in the near future. As this represents a new model of ministry in terms of congregational relationships, it is anticipated that there will be ongoing learning as each Local Mission Church takes shape.

3.6 Consultation with Presbytery Clerks

3.6.1 In passing the Presbytery Mission Plan Act in 2021, one of the helpful sections of deliverance was to require consultation with the Presbytery Clerks' Forum in compiling guidance. With the advent of nine full time clerks, and the coming together of Presbyteries in the Highlands and Hebrides, the Forum asks that future consultation might take place with the body of full-time and other clerks.

3.7 Vacancy Procedure Act

3.7.1 Invitations were offered to those who were interested to submit comment on the workings of the Vacancy Procedure Act to the mailbox at VacancyAct@churchofscotland.org.uk. With the dearth of vacancies being advertised because of the sist on proceedings as a result of Presbytery Mission Plan work, no responses have come in. This piece of work will continue into the life of the FAPLT.

3.8 Capability Process

3.8.1 At the General Assembly of 2022, an outline for a capability process was presented. Given the amount of flux in the life of the Church at this time, it has not been possible to progress this work. Regretfully, the Forum also feels that while this is something to which the Church should return, it is not a priority for the work of the FAPLT in the next year and asks the General Assembly to note that this project will be revisited when resources allow. The work to date has been valuable and allows for a sound foundation on which to build.

3.9 Ministries Development Staff (MDS)

3.9.1 The Forum has sought to maintain regular contact with Presbyteries, and with individual MDS, over these last months, offering guidance and consultation on new ways of working, planning and change management. Staff, and external support, have offered individual and group sessions for MDS and line managers on Presbytery Mission Plan implications and change management policy and practice.

3.9.2 Place for Hope Workshops – Journeying Through Change & Transition – have been running since June 2022 and will continue running through 2023. These workshops focus on the personal experiences and understanding of change and transition.

3.9.3 Forum staff, together with colleagues in the Church's Human Resources Department, continue to meet regularly with the formally constituted Joint Consultative Group comprising MDS Representatives.

3.10 Interim and Transition Ministries

3.10.1 A number of Interim and Transition Ministries came to a successful end in 2022, releasing resources for new applications in 2023. As predicted, enquiries and applications are already underway, with a noticeable shift towards Transition Ministry to support and deliver some of the radical changes expressed in Presbytery Mission Plans. This suggests a positive direction where Presbyteries are seeking this specialist ministry to press on and work on their recently articulated plans and commit to achieving them.

3.10.2 These ministries are focused on clear objectives and outcomes, usually over a five-year period, where there is a committed input and support to deliver these objectives by Kirk Sessions and congregations, Presbytery representatives and the national interim ministry team. Whilst it is true that many, if not all, ministries include elements of transition, these ministries deliver against set objectives, shared accountabilities and within a fixed term. The Interim Ministry team continues to operate and support in more acute placements of conflict and change across the country where shorter term interventions are required and with the intention to steady and focus local ministry for longer term goals.

3.10.3 It may be that there is more demand than budget currently exists, and the Forum, and its successor, the FAPLT, will keep this under review.

3.11 Pilot Pioneer Ministries

3.11.1 Following the submission of the Church Army Research on the Church of Scotland Pioneer Ministry project to the GA 2021, the Pioneer Pilot officially came to an end in December 2022. At the time of writing, two Presbyteries have indicated that they wish the posts to continue into the Presbytery Mission Plan; the posts in Ayr and Glasgow will feature in the future mission strategy in these contexts. The Faith Nurture Forum would like to thank the five pilot ministries for their contributions and insights over the six-year programme.

New Charge Development (NCD)

3.11.2 The Faith Nurture Forum would like to thank the Reverend Daniel Frank and the ministry team for their long-term dedication and commitment to Wallacewell NCD Congregation, Glasgow. The ten-year review reported clear evidence of community engagement and highly commended this. Wallacewell NCD will be handed back to the Presbytery of Glasgow in the first half of 2023, and the formalities around this are still to be concluded.

3.11.3 This marks the last NCD congregation, and whilst there are no plans to begin any new NCD congregations, there are recognised learnings from the numerous and varied NCDs over the past twenty-three years since the passing of the NCD Act (Act 13 2000), and thanks are given to all who have contributed.

3.12 Deaf Ministry and Congregations

3.12.1 A commitment was made at a previous General Assembly to update and revise the existing legislation and regulation pertaining to Ministry for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. A new Act has now been drafted that will replace the existing Act and harmonise with the regulation. (Appendix i)

3.12.2 Further conversation, particularly with regard to recruitment for ministry with Albany Congregation in Edinburgh, is ongoing in consultation with the Presbytery of Edinburgh and West Lothian.

3.13 The Diaconate

3.13.1 The Forum reported to the General Assembly of 2022 on progress following the instruction of the previous year's General Assembly to it "together with Diaconate Council and others, to review the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010) and to bring to the General Assembly of 2022 a revised or, if appropriate, a new Act on Diaconal Ministry within the Church of Scotland.", advising that discussion had taken place with Diaconate Executive Committee, and Forum officials, and at that stage, conversations were continuing and that a report on this would come to a future General Assembly.

3.13.2 A conversation took place in January 2023, with the Executive Committee of Diaconate Council, and representatives of the Forum; the Legal Questions Committee; and the Principal Clerk's Office.

3.13.3 The meeting identified fundamental issues in relation to the current context of Diaconal Ministry within the Church of Scotland. It was felt that these issues had to be addressed by the Church before a meaningful review of the Act could be undertaken. Issues identified included:

- Work being undertaken by the Theological Forum on "call and vocation"
- The role of MDS staff (Diaconal and non-diaconal)
- Structure of the Church going forward and the role of Presbyteries
- Current Diaconal training and formation

3.13.4 At its meeting in January, the Diaconate Council agreed to pursue how these issues might be addressed prior to any revision of the Act. In the light of significant legacies left to the Diaconate in recent years, Diaconate Council agreed to use a proportion of these endowments to fund a Development Worker to work with key stakeholders (including Council, Forums and key individuals). The General Assembly is asked to note this and to encourage engagement with relevant stakeholders at this critical stage in the life of the Diaconate in the Church of Scotland, where there are more retired Deacons than active Deacons; and where the number of Deacons directly employed within the Church is shrinking.

3.14 Manses

3.14.1 The Presbytery and Partnership Support Manager, the Reverend Angus R. Mathieson, serves on the General Trustees' Manse Committee. There is considerable regret on the part of the General Trustees and the Forum, not to mention anger and hurt in Manse families, that some Presbyteries have seen fit to regard some Manses as acceptable

which would not pass the tolerable accommodation standard seen as good practice by local authorities and social housing, never mind Private Residential Tenancies. The General Trustees comment on this in their Report to this year's General Assembly. The Forum is mindful of the need to bring forward a more detailed report to a subsequent General Assembly once Presbytery Mission Planning has come to the end of this first stage and greater clarity exists about the extent of the Manse estate which is to be retained.

3.15 Ministries Support

3.15 The Support Team

3.15.1 While primary pastoral support for those serving in the Recognised Ministries of the Church lies within each Presbytery structure, Faith Nurture provides further dedicated support.

3.15.2 The Support Team can offer confidential conversations and facilitate support interventions. Access to support for ill-health management, counselling, hardship and support grants, retreats, and a variety of advice relevant to the lifecycle of ministry [vocational advice, pre-retirement planning, insurance provisions etc] are the day-to-day work of the Team.

3.15.3 The Support Team also oversees ill-health matters and absence management, receiving and recording Fit Notes and liaising with Presbyteries accordingly. Requests for Compassionate Leave are also made through the Support Team, and claims for pulpit supply or locum costs in cases of illness are also handled by the Team.

3.15.4 The Team also support Presbyteries in their provisions of local support, and are always willing to be contacted to shape best practice together.

3.15.5 The Team can be contacted via pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk

3.16 Developing Support Services Under Ascend

3.16.1 While early aspirations for the Ascend programme focussed on supporting those in the first years of ministry, the greater aspiration was to have these support services available to every minister. Since 2018/2019 through the re-organisation of the Ministries Benevolent Fund, full-time ministers can access an allowance of £240 per year towards Pastoral Supervision. This also applies to Probationers, and Deacons in Deacon-specific MDS posts.

3.16.2 While Spiritual Accompaniment has remained only available to those in Probation/First Five Years, and Coaching has been free to all at point of access [due to the Coaching model inherited initially out of the Priority Areas Coaching Team], from 2024, a new integrated Support Allowance will be available.

3.17 New Integrated Support Allowance

3.17.1 From January 2024 a Support Allowance of £250 per calendar year will enable access to any [or all] of the above services, as best fits the individual's support needs at any one time. The Support Allowance will be available to full-time stipendiary ministers, Probationers, those in Familiarisation, and Ordained Deacons in Deacon-specific MDS posts.

3.17.2 The Support Allowance will be able to be used for personal or group pastoral supervision, for coaching [either from existing Ascend provision or paid externally], or for spiritual accompaniment [all subject to agreed invoicing arrangements and appropriate qualifications/credentials for each support provision]. The Ascend website will be updated in due course to reflect these changes from 2024.

3.17.3 The changes are being brought forward, out of the learning of the last years, to enable the fullest benefit to be received. We understand the value in having the widest choice of support, as well as the pragmatism of expanding resource, knowing people are trained, accredited and able to offer their services, practising under the appropriate professional body.

3.18 Funded Retreats

3.18.1 Further, the launch of funded Retreats, up to £250 per year, through the Todd Endowment Trust [Scotland] since April 2022 has been a welcome addition to the support provisions, and ministers and deacons with at least 2 years' service are already benefitting from this opportunity.

3.19 Additional Support

3.19.1 Access to Counselling remains in addition to the Support Allowance/Retreat Allowance, as does the ability to benefit from hardship and support grants.

3.19.2 Some support provisions are also able to be accessed by Ordained Local Ministers (OLMs), Readers and MDS, but due to the nature of policy decisions, employment terms, and/or Trust Fund terms, we recommend either speaking first with a Line Manager or contacting pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk We do not seek to minimise the contribution of any who serve in the variety of ministries of the Church, but we also do not want to mislead inappropriately by generalising here.

3.19.3 Review

All Support provisions and funding arrangements remain under ongoing review as would be expected for good governance and sustainability, but the Forum is committed to offering the best support it can to those serving in ministry into the future.

3.20 Access through ascend <https://ascend.churchofscotland.org.uk>

3.20.1 Access to the full variety of support provisions outlined, alongside the development provisions of Ascend [Study Leave, Ministerial Development Conversations, Postgraduate Funding] means that ministers have/will have access to much that could only have been hoped for in the past.

3.21 Time Away for Rest and Restoration

3.21.1 The Forum also reminds stipendiary ministers of their Pulpit Supply provisions for rest and recuperation throughout the year and hardship funds where there is need. Congregations are encouraged to exercise their duty of care role in supporting Office Holders to take time off, for physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.

3.22 Partnership with Place for Hope – Living Peace

3.22.1 The Forum has entered into an exciting new Partnership with Place for Hope from 2023-2027 as part of the Faith Action Programme.

3.22.2 Place for Hope was born out of the Report on Congregational Conflict that was presented to the General Assembly in 2008.

“5.11.3 The challenge then, is to resource the church with peacemakers; women and men of spiritual stature who can lead the church from the troubleshooting model to the healing model of ministry.... This is the gift that the church can give to those who are in deep dispute with one another, and this is the example that the church should be setting before the community it serves.”

3.22.3 Since 2009, Place for Hope has risen to this challenge through the provision of mediation, facilitation, and coaching support to Church of Scotland leaders and congregations in times of change and conflict, and training to understand conflict, live well with difference and equip people and congregations to realise their potential as peacemakers.

3.22.4 This next phase in the relationship between the Church of Scotland and Place for Hope offers a collaborative and mutually beneficial programme of work, intended to release the spirit of conflict transformation and reconciliation in the culture, systems, mission, and ministry of the Church of Scotland as was hoped for in that 2008 General Assembly Report on Congregational Conflict.

3.22.5 To reflect the hopes and intent of this new agreement to transform conflict and change as well as strengthen peace and hope in these challenging times, we have named this joint programme of work: Living Peace.

3.22.6 The programme uses a capacity development approach to:

- systematically embed the awareness, understanding and skills towards equipping and supporting the Church of Scotland to be a people of peace and reconciliation
- support individual Presbyteries and Kirks to be places of hope, peace and reconciliation in their communities during a time of great change and challenge
- provide tailored understanding and skills in peace and reconciliation appropriate for the wide spectrum of needs, challenges and capacity of the different congregations and ministries.

3.22.7 The five-year window allows the approach to start to embed peace and reconciliation throughout the Church, and build up the understanding and skills for peace, conflict transformation and reconciliation (across key ministry groups as well as more generally across the church).

3.22.8 Living Peace is a responsibility shared by all serving in ministry, and every member, congregation, Kirk Session and Presbytery of the Church of Scotland. It is not only the call of Christ to live peacefully, but a mark of the Church, to be a people of peace, grace, forgiveness and reconciliation.

4. PEOPLE AND TRAINING REPORT

4.1 Revision of Act X 2004 (As Amended). Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act

4.1.1 The proposed changes to Act X 2004 (as amended), detailed in Appendix vi are being made for two main reasons:

- To standardise the appraisal process from the beginning of candidature to completing probation, giving decision-making powers to the panel at every stage of training.
- To bring Forum / FAPLT input into the appraisal process for everyone during their probationary period; meaning there will be Presbytery, Forum / FAPLT and Training Team representation on all pre-, interim and final probation appraisals. It is during probation, when both the hours and the expectations increase, that greater care must be taken in assessing, directing and deciding next steps for our people in training.

4.2 Changes to Placement Supervisor Selection, Training and Development

4.2.1 Time spent on placement is so valuable for our recognised ministry candidates, allowing them to experience all aspects of ministry, enabling them to ground their theological learning in ministry practice, encouraging them to grow in character and formation for ministry and sharing with them the experience of leadership in local church. In taking on the role of Supervisor, individuals are responding to a call by God and play a crucial role in developing our church for the future.

4.2.2 It is time to bring in some further developments so this crucial provision continues to meet the needs of the Church going forward.

4.2.3 A summary of these developments is as follows:

- *Application:* to enable a more consistent selection process, a short but focused application form will be required to be completed by a prospective Supervisor and signed off by the Presbytery.
- *Training & assessment:* whilst prospective Supervisors would be expected to come with some of the abilities, knowledge, experience and willingness referred to above, training will be provided in order to meet the full competence requirements, before being fully deployed as a Supervisor. Existing Supervisor training will be further developed and an appropriately rigorous assessment element will be introduced.

- *Ongoing learning & development:* Supervisors are expected to continue their own ongoing formation. More opportunities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will be provided. The Forum will apply a more rigorous approach to ensuring that serving Supervisors are engaging with CPD to be able to remain in the role of Supervisor.

4.3 Recruitment

4.3.1 We experienced lower numbers applying for Discernment during Covid times and were unable to set up Discernment placements during lockdowns. Admissions numbers, of ministers coming from outside the Church of Scotland, have been impacted by our new process, as we can now assess up to 20 in the new two-stage process.

Overall, we suspect that interest in training for our recognised ministries has been limited by uncertainty attributed to Presbytery Mission Planning as well as visa issues for some potential Admissions candidates.

4.3.2 The table below provides statistics relating to Enquirers and Applicants at different stages in the Discernment and Assessment processes. [Discernment Conversations replaced Vocations Information Days in 2019 and the table reflects this change.] However, it should be understood that an Enquirer might not choose to apply for/enter Discernment until a subsequent year.

Year	2018	2019	2020	Jan-Dec 2021	Jan- Dec 2022
Enquirers		170	124	95	85
Discernment Conversations		93	65	36	36
Applicants for Ministry (all types)	49	74	50	28	29
Entered Local Assessment	43	62	52	31	35
Chose to Withdraw (locally)	6	5	3	3	7
Readership (Applicants)	4	2	1	6	1
Readership Accepted	3	2	0	6	1

4.3.3 The table below reflects the Assessment Year with a cycle of Assessment Conferences taking place across a year e.g., those accepted as noted in 2022 would be eligible to begin training in that same year, but may choose to defer to a later date.

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Completed Local Assessment	37	29	37	45	20
Attended Assessment Conference	37	29	36	39	13
Full-time Ministry (Applicants)	21	17	25	26	7
Full-time Ministry Accepted	16	15	17	15	5
Ordained Local Ministry (Applicants)	14	11	9	12	6
Ordained Local Ministry Accepted	10	8	7	9	3
Deacons (Applicants)	2	1	2	1	0
Deacons Accepted	1	0	1	1	0
First Time Applicants	31	25	30	31	8
Accepted	21	19	21	21	4
Returning Applicants	6	4	6	8	5
Accepted	6	4	4	4	4

4.3.4 Admissions

Numbers of attendees at Admissions Conference.

YEAR	ATTENDEES	ACCEPT	NON-ACCEPT
2018	24	17	7
2019	23	13	10
2020	27	15	12
2021	27	12	15
2022	18	2*	16

*A new process was implemented in 2022 and the impact of this is being monitored.

4.4 Review of Initial Ministerial Training:

4.4.1 Following the approval of our Vision Statement at GA22, the Forum have identified as a priority the development of an apprenticeship training route. This could extend access to all our recognised ministries, while utilising the skills and life experience of those who may in the future or presently work for a church, while studying and being supported by training.

A development day where Forum members came together with representatives of our Church Colleges has provided much optimism for further exploration to determine the infrastructure and curriculum for ministry formation.

<i>Candidates who started training in August 2022</i>	
Full Time Word and Sacrament (FTWAS)	6
Ordained Local Ministry (OLM)	4
Diaconal	0
<i>Total across categories</i>	10
<i>Candidates accepted for entry for August 2022 but deferred entry</i>	
FTWAS	0
OLM	0
<i>Deferred training total</i>	0
<i>Candidates across all years prior to probation as at August 2022 including those who have deferred</i>	
FTWAS	39
OLM	15
Diaconal	2
<i>Total across all categories</i>	56
<i>FTWAS candidates studying at recognised providers 2022-23</i>	
Aberdeen campus based	0
Aberdeen distance learning	2
Glasgow campus based	12
Edinburgh campus based	9
Highland Theological College campus based	2
Highland Theological College distance learning	9
St Andrews campus based	1
<i>OLM candidates studying at recognised providers 2022-23</i>	
Aberdeen distance learning	7
Highland Theological College distance learning	5
<i>Diaconal candidates studying at recognised providers 2022-23</i>	
Aberdeen campus based	1
Highland Theological College distance learning	1
<i>Number of probationers completing training in 2022/early 2023</i>	
FTWAS	25
OLM	8
Diaconal	1
<i>Total</i>	34
<i>Probationers beginning summer 2022</i>	
FTWAS	7
OLM	5
Diaconal	0
<i>Late Starts 2022/early 2023</i>	
FTWAS	1
OLM	0
Diaconal	0
<i>Total</i>	0
<i>Readers</i>	
Readers in training in 2022	11
Readers set apart in 2022	2

4.5 Integrated Training Programme

4.5.1 Church of Scotland Learning will launch in August, offering in the first instance a suite of materials to be accessed by individuals, local congregations and Presbyteries in the areas of Sharing Faith, Theological Reflection, Discipleship, Violence Against Women and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. In response to last year's deliverance, there will be materials for congregations and those in ministry to learn more about the confessional position of the Church and the vows office holders make.

4.5.2 A leadership course, modules for Elders and pastoral carers, further discipleship materials and equipping for funeral ministry are in the development stages, with many being piloted in partnership with Presbyteries and specific constituencies.

4.6 Finishing Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates

4.6.1 Over the last year, 35 Probationers (25 FTWS, 8 OLMs, 1 Diaconal) and 15 Familiarisation Candidates have completed training. Many are now deployed as Assistant Ministers, working with Presbyteries to develop new ministries, caring for congregations and progressing partnerships at local level. Provision continues to be made for those completing Probation and Familiarisation and this will be reviewed every six months until we have a settled vacancy scene.

4.7 Eldership Training

4.7.1 Following the success of Elders Training run by some Presbyteries and at a national level, a greater degree of collaboration was desirable. The Training Team are supporting all Presbyteries who wish to develop their training for Elders and the Integrated Training Programme will provide materials for this purpose in the time to come.

4.7.2 The Forum have considered the Caleb Stream, recommended at the General Assembly of 2022. It is felt that this is a season for the strengthening of our existing recognised ministries. In the coming months, we will begin discussions with the Church of England to explore future possibilities for Elders.

5. RESOURCE AND PRESENCE

5.1 Life and Work

5.1.1 Life and Work has again played a key part in keeping congregations connected over the last year as the Church moves forward. This is best expressed by our readers:

- "I look forward every month to Life and Work. It is an incredible publication"
- "Life and Work has been the only way of keeping connected with the church and what is going on"
- "I am writing this personal letter to you and your team (not for publication, unless you wish!) in appreciation of your imaginative editorship of the 'Life and Work'".

5.1.2 The year was not without challenge. However, as new ways of working and new revenue streams opened up through reader offers, official updates and paid partnerships, the magazine has been placed on a firmer financial footing.

5.1.3 Much work has taken place to reposition the magazine and a draft five-year business plan has been developed – which is under continual review – to ensure the long-term sustainability and service of the magazine of the Church of Scotland in connecting the people in the pews. New partnerships within the Church are emerging as part of this work.

5.1.4 The magazine was redesigned and repositioned for 2023 to reflect the new way forward.

5.1.5 During 2022, the team faced up to the challenges of the year – including increased costs beyond our control relating to paper, energy and fuel – and were again committed to deliver the magazine to our loyal readers every month – and to them (and our team of promoters) we again owe a huge debt of gratitude.

5.1.6 The Life and Work Advisory Committee met on two occasions in 2022 via TEAMS and the Editor remains thankful for the support of this valuable and helpful group and its collective wisdom.

5.1.7 To help shape and resource commissioners and followers of the General Assembly, digital access to the May issue of Life and Work is available here <https://digital.lifeandwork.org/magazine/reader/246658>.

5.2 Scottish Storytelling Centre and John Knox House

5.2.1 The work of the Scottish Storytelling Centre continues, and has largely recovered from the enforced closure over the months of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is not immune, however, from financial pressures and work continues to discern where its future lies.

5.2.2 The Forum has engaged with the Edinburgh UNESCO City of Literature Trust, to explore the future of the Scottish Storytelling Centre and John Knox House. It is hoped that, during the course of 2023, an agreement will be reached between the Church and the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust, which will secure the future of the Storytelling Centre and the House, either through a long-term lease, or a sale of the property.

5.3 Saint Andrew Press

5.3.1 Summary

In the publishing year that ended 30 September 2022, Saint Andrew Press (SAP) published two titles: *The Church of Scotland Year Book 2022-3* and *Assist Our Song* by Douglas Galbraith.

The pandemic was not a fruitful time for commissioning new titles because of other urgent priorities in the Church of Scotland, and so in the current financial year, just two new titles are expected: the next edition of the *Year Book*, and *The Intergenerational Church* by Suzi Farrant and Darren Philip.

It is encouraging that conversations with authors have rekindled and a number of new titles for 2023-24 are scheduled. These include:

Finding Our Voice by Neil Glover

Scottish Religious Poetry, a completely new edition edited by Alison Jack, Linden Bicket and Emma Dymock

A Narrative of Generosity by Pauline Wilson

In addition, work is advancing on a supplement to CH4, led by Phill Mellstrom and Iain McLarty.

5.3.2 Sales

Financial year October 2021 to September 2022

Budget £78000	Actual £67229	Variance -£10771
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Financial year October 2022 to September 2023

Budget £76000	Year to date (Oct to Jan) budget £37000	Actual £30800
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Church of Scotland Yearbook 2022-2023 sold all 1600 copies including despatch to all ministers in Church of Scotland; set up as print on demand title to ensure continued availability.

Assist our Song sold 200 copies/850 stock.

5.3.3 Marketing work

Hymns Ancient and Modern have supported new titles with a mix of launch and online event support, press and PR, web and e-newsletter work and advertising in Life and Work. SAP ran a General Assembly online bookshop offer – April/ May 2022.

SAP continued to offer print, Kindle and epub editions of all new books and many backlist titles.

SAP continued to focus on website sales/email and social media communication. Decline in stock-holding religious book trade accelerated.

SAP improved its presentation and availability via multiple ebook platforms in 2022.

SAP also improved availability on backlist (older titles) by continued programme of moving out of stock older titles to the print on demand programme and enable worldwide availability.

In the name of the Faith Nurture Forum

REV ROSEMARY FREW, *Convener*

REV ALAN HAMILTON, *Vice Convener*

REV DR SCOTT SHACKLETON, *Head of Faith Action Programme*

ADDENDUM

Rev Rosemary Frew

The Forum records its appreciation of the Rev Rosemary Frew – Rosie – whose term as Convener ends with the advent of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team. Rosie began as Convener of the Ministries Council, at the General Assembly of 2019, and then took on the Convenership of the Faith Nurture Forum in January 2020. She has led the work of the Forum with grace and firmness, alongside serving as parish minister of Bowden and Melrose in the Scottish Borders. In the midst of the challenges of parish ministry, Rosie has brought a concern for the mission of the Church, a pastoral concern for ministers, and the lived experience of church life and a sense of what needs to be prioritised in the life of the Church at this season. The Forum is grateful to her for her wisdom, insight, and all that she has brought to the role of Convener.

Rev Alan Hamilton

Alan Hamilton has served on the Faith Nurture Forum from its inception and was instrumental in helping shape a new Forum and a new way of working. In everything he does he is driven by a real passion for mission. He became Vice Convener in May 2022. Throughout all this time I have greatly appreciated Alan’s friendship and support, his sharp mind and attention to detail. He’s never afraid to ask the difficult or searching question; to help tease out possibilities and assist with decision making. Staff and Forum members are most grateful to him.

REV DR SCOTT SHACKLETON, *Head of Faith Action Programme*

Appendix i

[ZZ] MINISTRIES FOR DEAF CONGREGATIONS ACT (ACT ZZ 2023)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly enact and ordain as follows:

Congregations of Deaf People

1. There shall be Church of Scotland fellowships of Deaf People in the following regions:
 - Aberdeen and the North;
 - Edinburgh and the South East; and
 - Glasgow and the South West.
2. These fellowships shall individually be referred to in this Act as a “congregation” and together as the “congregations”. For the avoidance of doubt, there may be more than one fellowship within each region.
3. These congregations will not fall within the planning provisions of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021).

Ministry for the congregations

4. In respect of each congregation, the Presbytery and the Faith Nurture Forum shall confer in making the appointment of a person to minister to the congregation (the “Ministry Appointee”). The Ministry Appointee shall be employed by the Faith Nurture Forum and shall be introduced by the Presbytery.
5. Persons eligible to be a Ministry Appointee shall be as follows:
 - (A) If a Minister, a person who:
 - (a) is a Minister as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) in good standing, or who would be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022); and
 - (b) has fulfilled as a minimum the requirements for academic study specified in sections 12 to 14 of the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004);

OR

- (B) If a Deacon, a person who:
 - (c) is a Deacon as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) in good standing, or who would be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022); and
 - (d) has fulfilled as a minimum the requirements for academic study specified in section 4 of the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010);

OR

- (C) If an Ordained Local Minister or an Auxiliary Minister, a person who:
 - (e) is an Ordained Local Minister or an Auxiliary Minister as defined in the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) in good standing, or a person who would be eligible to apply for a Certificate of Eligibility under the Admission and Readmission of Ministers Act (Act XIII 2022); and
 - (f) has fulfilled as a minimum the requirements for academic study specified in sections 10 and 11 of the Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX 2011);

OR

- (D) If a person who is not ordained (but subject to section 6 below), a person who:
 - (g) is a member of the Church of Scotland in full communion or a member in good standing of a denomination mentioned in sub-sections 1(2), 1(3) or 1(4) of the Sacraments Act (Act V 2000);
 - (h) has fulfilled as a minimum academic study equivalent to that specified in sections 10 and 11 of the Ordained Local Ministry Act (Act IX 2011);
 - (i) has experience in participating in and leading worship in different congregational settings; and
 - (j) has the ability to carry out effective and empathetic pastoral care;

AND, in all cases:

- (k) they shall possess communication skills to a level described by the National Occupational Standard CFALANG4.6, i.e. to “Understand Complex Signed Language in a Wide Range of Work Situations”, failing which they shall be a person who has attained communication skills to a level CFALANG4.5, i.e. to “Understand Extended Signed Language in a Wide Range of Familiar or Work Situations”, in which latter case they shall be appointed subject to a condition of working to improve signed language skills up to CFALANG4.6 within a specified timescale, the appropriate course or method being funded by the Faith Nurture Forum; and
 - (l) they shall be able to demonstrate substantial and relevant recent experience of working with the deaf community.
6. If the Ministry Appointee is a person who is not ordained and who is thus unable to administer the sacraments, they shall ensure that suitable alternative arrangements are in place.
7. For the avoidance of doubt, a Ministry Appointee in terms of this Act shall be restricted to that ministry, unless they are otherwise qualified to undertake other forms of ministry consistent with the Registration of Ministry Act (Act II 2017).

- Each Ministry Appointee shall be entitled to the appropriate membership of the relevant Presbytery and shall, if one exists and they are entitled to do so in terms of the Kirk Session Meetings Act (Act VI 2004), moderate the Kirk Session.

Presbytery membership

- Each congregation shall be entitled to appoint a representative elder to the Presbytery within whose bounds the congregation is situated. Each Ministry Appointee who is eligible shall be a member of, and be subject to, the supervision of one Presbytery only. If not a member, the Ministry Appointee may be a Correspondent of the relevant Presbytery.

Presbytery Mission Initiative or Local Mission Church

- It shall be open to the congregations to apply to the Presbytery of the bounds to be a Presbytery Mission Initiative in terms of the Presbytery Mission Initiatives Act (Act V 2015) or a Local Mission Church in terms of the Local Mission Church Regulations (Regs II 2021).

Deaf interpretation at Presbytery meetings

- Presbyteries which have among them members from the congregations shall employ a suitably qualified interpreter as required at Presbytery meetings and shall not rely on the Ministry Appointee being themselves a member of Presbytery to fulfil this additional function. The cost of the interpreter shall be met by the Presbytery.

Congregational Finance

- The salary of the Ministry Appointee shall be met from the budget of the Faith Nurture Forum. Otherwise, each congregation shall be responsible for its own expenses. Where the congregation is not able to meet its expenses, it may seek support from the Presbytery in the first instance failing which the Faith Nurture Forum.

Superintendence of Presbytery and Church law and practice

- The congregation shall be subject to the superintendence of the Presbytery and the law and practice of the Church of Scotland.

Repeals

- The Ministry and Deaf Congregations Act (Act IX 2017) and the Congregations of Deaf People Regulations (Regs II 2017) are hereby repealed.

Appendix ii

[] ACT AMENDING THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS OF WORD AND SACRAMENT AND DEACONS ACT (ACT I 2018)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Ordination of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons Act (Act I 2018), shall be amended as follows:

- In section 2(3) add a new subsection (x):*
“(x) in connection with introduction as a Minister to a congregation of deaf people in terms of the Ministries for Deaf Congregations (Act ZZ 2023)”

Appendix iii

Ministries Numbers for 2024

Presbytery Number	Name	Allocation	New Presbytery Number	New Presbytery	Allocation
1.	Edinburgh & West Lothian	65.5	1	n/a	65.5
2.	Lothian	25	3	Lothian and the Borders	44
3.	Melrose and Peebles	9			
4.	Duns	4.5			
5.	Jedburgh	5.5			
		44			
6.	Annandale and Eskdale	8.5	7	South West	78
7.	Dumfries and Kirkcudbright	12.5			
8.	Wigtown and Stranraer	6			
9.	Ayr	24			
10.	Irvine and Kilmarnock	13.5			
11.	Ardrossan	13.5			
	South West Total	78			
14.	Clyde	40	14		40
16.	Glasgow (inc. Cumbernauld)	84	16	n/a	84
17.	Forth Valley and Clydesdale	44	17	FVC inc Falkirk	59.5
19.	Argyll	18	19	n/a	18
22.	Falkirk (excl. Cumbernauld)	15.5			
24.	Fife	44.5	24	n/a	44.5
23.	Stirling	21.5	28	Perth	78
25.	Dunkeld and Meikle	6.5			
26.	Perth	16.5			
27.	Dundee	18			
28.	Angus	15.5			
		78			
31.	Aberdeen and Shetland	28	31	North East and the Northern Isles	87
32.	Kincardine and Deeside	10.5			
33.	Gordon	16			
34.	Buchan	14			
35.	Moray	11.5			
45.	Orkney	7			
		87			
36.	Abernethy	4.5		n/a	4.5
37.	Inverness	16.5		n/a	16.5
38.	Lochaber	5.5		n/a	5.5
39.	Ross	10		n/a	10
40.	Sutherland	4		n/a	4
41.	Caithness	5.5		n/a	5.5
42.	Lochcarron-Skye	5		n/a	5
43.	Uist	2		n/a	2
44.	Lewis	5		n/a	5
47.	England	4		n/a	4
	International	5		n/a	5
		665.5			665.5

Appendix iv

Stats as per s.12 of GA Deliverance 2022 on FNF Report

Minister numbers: In order to reduce the uncertainty and anxiety for existing probationers, ministry students, potential ministry candidates and those in familiarisation and reviewable tenure, the Faith Nurture Forum will publish by September 2022 full ministries numbers and projections of expected vacancies during the latter half of 2022 and 2023; full ministries numbers would entail

- ministers of FTWS currently in charges,
- number of MDS staff counted towards the 600 fulltime ministries target figure by end of 2025,
- number of ministers in reviewable tenures,
- number of ministers in familiarisation,
- number of probationers (already normally included in the Faith Nurture Forum Report), and
- number of ministers expected to retire that year;

with similar ministries numbers and vacancy projections to be included in subsequent Faith Nurture Forum (or its successor) **Reports to the General Assembly.**

The information is:

Minister numbers (FTE)	593 ministers in a parish
Interim / Transition Ministers (FTE)	8
Ministers inducted on basis of reviewable charge	56
Pioneer ministers	3
Probationers	10
Familiarisations	7
MDS numbers (FTE)	91
Fixed term assistant minister contracts	34
Actual retired in 2022	38
Actual demitted in 2022	23
Expected retirements and demissions in 2023	58

Appendix v

FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND ALLOWANCES

X.1 Stipends and Salaries

The Assembly Trustees approved the recommendation of the Faith Nurture Forum that stipend & salary scales be increased by 5% for 2023.

Stipend Scale (including Associate Ministers) 2023

- Point 1 £30,135
- Point 2 £32,106
- Point 3 £34,076
- Point 4 £36,048
- Point 5 £37,032

Ministries Development Staff Scales 2023

MDS General Scale

- Point 1 £27,443
- Point 2 £28,341
- Point 3 £29,235
- Point 4 £30,133
- Point 5 £31,024

Team Leader Scale

- Point 1 £33,412
- Point 2 £34,158
- Point 3 £34,903
- Point 4 £35,650
- Point 5 £36,395

Deacon Scale (Genuine Occupational Requirement)

- Point 1 £29,235
- Point 2 £30,133
- Point 3 £31,024
- Point 4 £31,920
- Point 5 £32,815

Island Allowance

Island allowances increase for 2023 to bring into line with stipend increases.

Outer Island Allowance: £1,964 pa

Inner Island Allowance: £772 pa

Travel Expenses 2023

Travel expenses payable remain as:

Rates for those providing their own car:

a) reimbursed to ministers and MDS providing their own car for pastoral duties:

45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles

25p per mile for all additional mileage

Ministers also receive capital reimbursement of £80 per month.

b) reimbursement of travel expenses for students, probationers, OLMs, auxiliary ministers and locums:

45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles

25p per mile for all additional mileage

c) reimbursed to ministers and MDS providing their own motor bike for pastoral duties:

24p per mile travelled per annum

d) reimbursed to ministers and MDS providing their own pedal bike for pastoral duties:

20p per mile travelled per annum

X.2 Recommended Pulpit Supply Fee and Expenses

In Charges where there is only one diet of worship, the Pulpit Supply Fee shall be a Standard Fee of £60. In Charges where there are additional diets of worship on a Sunday, the person fulfilling the Supply shall be paid £30 for each additional service.

In all cases, Travelling Expenses shall be paid. Where there is no convenient public conveyance, the use of a private car shall be paid for at the standard rate of 45p per mile.

X.3 Removal and Disturbance Allowance

When a Minister is called to a Charge, the congregation(s) to which the Minister is called shall meet the removal costs incurred in transporting the minister's personal effects into the manse of the Charge. In addition, a manse disturbance allowance of up to £1,740 can be paid on production of appropriate receipts.

If a Charge has an average income base of less than £60,000, application may be made to the Faith Nurture Forum for assistance in meeting removal costs. This assistance may take the form of a grant or loan or a combination of both.

When a minister retires on account of age or infirmity, and in the case of a widow(er) of a Minister who dies in service, the Faith Nurture Forum will meet the cost of removal expenses.

x.4 Funerals

Where a congregation calls upon the services of a minister not already in receipt of a stipend, or other suitably qualified person, to conduct a funeral, a fee of £60 may be paid by the congregation. On no account should such a fee be charged to the family of the deceased.

For the avoidance of doubt, no fee may be offered to or received by a serving Parish Minister for the conduct of a funeral service, whether in their own or another parish.

x.5 Vacancy Allowance

For 2023 the Vacancy Allowance remains at £933 per month and £1,082 for linked charges. This is sufficient to cover pulpit supply and two days per week pastoral cover at the rate of £315 per month for each day of pastoral cover per week should a vacant congregation choose to engage a locum. The Vacancy Allowance is deducted directly from each vacant charge's 'Giving to Grow' Allocation. The vacancy allowance and rate of locum pay are currently under review.

x.6 Guardianship Allowance

For 2023 the Guardianship Allowance also remains at £933 per month in line with the vacancy allowance.

Appendix vi

[] ACT AMENDING THE SELECTION AND TRAINING FOR FULL-TIME MINISTRY ACT (ACT X 2004) (AS AMENDED)
 Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Selection and Training for Full-Time Ministry Act (Act X 2004), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *Delete section 1(a) (Definition of the Forum) and substitute:*
 “(a) “The FAPLT” is the General Assembly’s Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.”
and throughout the Act where “Forum” appears, substitute “FAPLT”.
2. *In section 1(i) delete “persons” and substitute “Candidates”.*
3. *Add a new definition in section 1 (Definitions):*
 ““Candidature” means the whole time during which a person is a Candidate (including the period during which they are a Probationer).”
4. *In section 2(1) delete “Recruitment Team” and substitute “People and Training Team”.*
5. *Throughout the Act for “he or she” substitute “they” and for “his or her” substitute “their”.*
6. *In sections 12(1)(b) and (e) amend “shall consist of” to “shall normally consist of”.*
7. *In section 13(a)(v) delete “Church, Ministry” and substitute “Ministry and Mission”.*
8. *In section 17 (Placements):*
 - (a) *In sub-section (1) after “Church requirements” add “in section 13”.*
 - (b) *Add a new sub-section (2) as follows and renumber thereafter:*
 “At the beginning of each placement a Learning Covenant will be agreed by the supervising minister and the Candidate on placement.”
 - (c) *Make the last sentence of the existing sub-section (1) a new sub-section (3) and at the beginning add “Without the consent of the FAPLT,” and between “full-time” and “placement” add “probationary”.*
 - (d) *In the existing sub-section (4), between “final” and “placement” add “probationary”.*
9. *Rename section 18 “Presbytery Supervision during Course”.*
10. *Rename section 20 “Initial Course Preparations” and delete the existing sub-sections (1) and (2), substituting the following:*
 - (1) *At the outset of the Candidate’s training an Initial Course Meeting shall be held, attended by the Candidate and whichever member of staff of the FAPLT has been allocated responsibility for the care of the Candidate.*
 - (2) *At the Initial Course Meeting the Candidate and the staff member will discuss a personalised training plan, training policies (including the performance review policy) and the Expectations and Responsibilities document. Academic, practical and personal goals for the first year of training will also be discussed. In due course all of these documents will be agreed.*
11. *Delete the existing sections 21 and 22 and substitute the following, including part of the existing section 22 as a new section 22A:*

“Appraisal during Candidature

21. (1) *An Appraisal Meeting shall take place at the end of each academic year in which training has been undertaken, whether or not a Candidate has undertaken academic study during that year, and shall be carried out in terms of this section except during the final fifteen month probationary placement when the provisions of section 22 shall apply in supplement of this section 21.*
- (2) *The functions of each Appraisal Meeting shall be to confirm whether or not there is satisfactory progress, to set formation and learning goals through a facilitated conversation and discussion, and to implement the performance review policy if applicable. Other tasks of the Appraisal Meeting shall be as determined from time to time by the FAPLT.*
- (3) *The member of staff of the FAPLT who has been allocated responsibility for the Appraisal Meeting shall receive written reports from the Candidate, the supervising minister (if any) and the College (if academic study has been undertaken during the year); and shall use them along with any other written reports which the staff member obtains and the Formation Framework to prepare a Pre-Appraisal Form, to be circulated to all those attending the Appraisal Meeting, containing a satisfactory or unsatisfactory recommendation regarding the Candidate’s progress.*
- (4) *A satisfactory recommendation on the Candidate’s progress shall mean that one of the following conclusions may be reached after the Appraisal Meeting:*
 - (a) *that progress is satisfactory; or*
 - (b) *that pieces of work require to be completed, or areas of work require to be improved, within a period of time to be specified in the report.*
- (5) *An unsatisfactory recommendation on the Candidate’s progress shall mean that one of the following conclusions may be reached after the Appraisal Meeting:*
 - (a) *that progress is satisfactory; or*
 - (b) *that pieces of work require to be completed, or areas of work require to be improved, within a period of*

- time to be specified in the Report; or
- (c) that an extension of training requires to be arranged by the FAPLT and a further, final Appraisal Meeting conducted; or
- (d) that the Candidature should be terminated.
- (6) At the Appraisal Meeting the following shall apply:
 - (i) Any person who acts as a representative of Presbytery or the FAPLT shall receive appropriate training as shall be determined and provided by the FAPLT.
 - (ii) The representatives appointed by the Presbytery and the FAPLT shall each be appointed with powers to make decisions on behalf of the Presbytery and the FAPLT respectively; if a member or representative of the FAPLT is not present, it shall be the member of staff who has powers to make decisions on behalf of the FAPLT.
 - (iii) In the case of a Pre-Appraisal Form containing a satisfactory recommendation, in attendance shall be the Candidate, the member of staff of the FAPLT who has been allocated responsibility for the Appraisal and a representative of Presbytery.
 - (iv) In the case of a Pre-Appraisal Form containing an unsatisfactory recommendation, in attendance shall be the Candidate, the member of staff of the FAPLT who has been allocated responsibility for the Appraisal, a member or representative of the FAPLT and a representative of Presbytery. In this situation, the Candidate shall be notified prior to the Appraisal Meeting that there are concerns regarding their performance and that a member or representative of the FAPLT shall be present.
 - (v) In addition, at the final Appraisal Meeting which takes place before the final (fifteen month) probationary placement is due to commence, and whether the Pre-Appraisal Form for that Appraisal Meeting contains a satisfactory or unsatisfactory recommendation, a member or representative of the FAPLT shall attend in addition to the member of staff of the FAPLT.
 - (vi) The Meeting shall be co-convened on behalf of the FAPLT and the Presbytery.
- (7) Following the Appraisal Meeting, an Appraisal Report will be prepared by the member of staff of the FAPLT who has been allocated responsibility for the Appraisal and circulated within 3 working days of the Meeting to all those who attended the Meeting. If the Candidate dissents from the Report or any part thereof, their dissent and the reasons for it shall be recorded in the Report, but shall not alter the status of the Report for the purposes of this Act.
- (8) The Appraisal Report shall contain one of the following decisions:
 - (a) that progress is entirely satisfactory; or
 - (b) that pieces of work require to be completed, or areas of work require to be improved, within a period of time specified in the Report.
 - (c) that an extension of training requires to be arranged by the FAPLT and a further, final Appraisal Meeting conducted (this option may be exercised only once in any academic year); or
 - (d) that the Candidature should be terminated.
- (9) The Candidate may appeal to the Ministries Appeal Panel against a decision in terms of sub-sections 21(8) (c) or (d) on one or more of the following grounds: (a) that in the course of the Appraisal Meeting there were irregularities in the process, (b) that the final decision was influenced by incorrect material fact, or (c) that the Appraisal Meeting was conducted contrary to the principles of natural justice. Notification of the intention to appeal shall be made to the FAPLT and to the Principal Clerk within 14 days of the date upon which the Appraisal Report was intimated to the Candidate. At the Appeal Hearing the Candidate shall be entitled to appear in person and the representative of Presbytery who co-convened the Appraisal Meeting shall appear to present the case for the Appraisal decision. The Candidate may be accompanied by a companion, who shall not be entitled to speak to the Panel but who may confer with the Candidate.
- (10) Notwithstanding the above provisions, at any time during Candidature, and including in terms of section 22, an Appraisal Meeting with full powers may be held.

Appraisal while a Probationer and sustaining the course

- 22. The Appraisal process during the final (fifteen month) probationary placement shall be as follows:
 - (1) The normal process shall be Interim Appraisal after six months and Final Appraisal after twelve months. Alternatively, in the discretion of the FAPLT, the FAPLT may determine that a pattern of three-monthly Appraisal Meetings, or such other pattern as may seem appropriate to the FAPLT in its discretion, may apply throughout the probationary placement, until Final Appraisal. A third possibility is that where the FAPLT has prescribed, under section 17(7) above, a part-time equivalent to the requirement of a fifteen month full-time probationary placement, the FAPLT may prescribe equivalent milestones for Appraisal Meetings, including the Final Appraisal, as are appropriate to the arrangements agreed for the part-time probationary placement.
 - (2) At all Appraisal Meetings held during the final probationary placement, including the Final Appraisal, the following shall apply:
 - (i) The procedure set out in section 21 shall be followed.
 - (ii) The full range of decisions in terms of section 21(8) shall be possible, in addition to a decision at Final Appraisal in terms of sub-section (3) below.
 - (iii) In attendance shall be the Candidate, the supervising minister (for the first part of the Meeting only), a representative of the Presbytery, a member or representative of the FAPLT and the member of staff of the FAPLT allocated responsibility for the Appraisal.

- (iv) Decisions shall be taken jointly on behalf of the Presbytery and the FAPLT.
- (3) At the Final Appraisal, in addition to any decision reached in terms of sub-section 21(8), it shall be decided whether the final placement can be sustained and whether the Candidate is fit to be ordained in due course. The Presbytery representative and the member or representative of the FAPLT shall each be appointed in such a way as to have powers to indicate the final approval of the Presbytery and of the FAPLT respectively to these matters at this stage.

Issue of Exit Certificate/Graduate Candidate Certificate

- 22A. (1) Where final approval on behalf of the Presbytery and the FAPLT has been given in terms of section 22, and the FAPLT is satisfied that the requirements of sections 12-17 have been fulfilled, including all academic requirements, the FAPLT shall thereafter have the power to issue an Exit Certificate upon completion of the probationary placement. At that point the Candidate shall become a Graduate Candidate and shall then remain under the supervision of the Presbytery within whose bounds the final placement was undertaken, pending ordination to a charge or appointment.
- (2) The Presbytery shall in each calendar year assess in terms of the criteria set out in section 9 above, the general suitability of each Graduate Candidate and, if satisfied, shall issue a Graduate Candidate's Certificate confirming continuing approval, and shall advise the FAPLT by 31 December. Candidates will have a right of appeal in terms of sub-section (3) below in the event of the Presbytery declining to issue a Certificate.
- (3) The Graduate Candidate may appeal to the Ministries Appeal Panel against a decision in terms of section 22A(2) on one or more of the following grounds: (a) that in the course of the Presbytery's decision there were irregularities in the process, (b) that the Presbytery's decision was influenced by incorrect material fact, or (c) that the Presbytery's decision was conducted contrary to the principles of natural justice. Notification of the intention to appeal shall be made to the Presbytery and to the Principal Clerk within 14 days of the date upon which the Presbytery's decision was intimated to the Graduate Candidate. At the Appeal Hearing the Graduate Candidate shall be entitled to appear in person and a representative of the Presbytery shall appear to present the case for the Presbytery's decision. The Graduate Candidate may be accompanied by a companion, who shall not be entitled to speak to the Panel but who may confer with the Graduate Candidate.
- (4) A Presbytery must obtain a current Graduate Candidate's Certificate for any Graduate Candidate whose call or appointment is to be sustained by that Presbytery after 31 December of the year in which their Exit Certificate was awarded.
- (5) A Presbytery may issue a Graduate Candidate's Certificate on up to three occasions only. Thereafter, in order to obtain a Graduate Candidate's Certificate, the Graduate Candidate must apply for such a Certificate to the Registration of Ministries Committee, following an application procedure equivalent mutatis mutandis to that set out in section 27 of the Registration of Ministries Act (Act II 2017) (Application for Category O registration)."
- 12. *In section 23 (Complaints Procedure) add a new sub-section (d):*
 "(d) where circumstances come to the attention of the FAPLT or Presbytery which give cause for concern about the Candidate's conduct during training."
and delete the existing final paragraph and substitute new wording as follows:
 "Any such claim, complaint or circumstances shall be intimated by lodging with the senior staff member of the FAPLT dealing with matters of People and Training, a written statement providing specific details thereof. The senior staff member shall intimate the statement to the Candidate, the Convener of the FAPLT and the Presbytery."
- 13. *In section 24:*
 (a) *In sub-section (1) delete "one of the Forum's staff" and substitute "a staff member of the FAPLT" and delete "claim or complaint" and substitute "claim, complaint or circumstances".*
 (b) *In sub-section (2) delete "any party to the document or covenant" and substitute "any of the parties mentioned in section 23".*
 (c) *In sub-section (3) delete "each of the parties to the document or covenant" and substitute "each party".*
- 14. *In section 25:*
 (a) *Delete the existing sub-section (3) and substitute:*
 "The Hearing shall be held as soon as is reasonably practicable. At such a Hearing the Candidate shall be present and may be accompanied by a companion who shall not be entitled to speak to the panel but who may confer with the Candidate. The panel for the Hearing, in addition to the Convener, shall comprise two representatives of Presbytery and two representatives of the FAPLT, none of whom shall have had prior personal involvement with the claim, complaint or circumstances giving rise to the Hearing. The two representatives appointed by the Presbytery and the FAPLT shall each be appointed with powers to make decisions on behalf of the Presbytery and the FAPLT respectively. A FAPLT staff member shall attend as an adviser."
 (b) *Delete the existing sub-section (4) and re-number thereafter.*
 (c) *In the existing sub-section (5) delete the third and fourth sentences and substitute:*
 "Such a decision shall be final and binding on all parties, subject only to appeal to the Ministries Appeal Panel in terms of Act VI 2007 on the following grounds:(a) that in the course of the Hearing there were irregularities in the process, (b) that the final decision taken at conclusion of the Hearing was influenced by incorrect material fact, or (c) that in the course of the Hearing there was a breach of the principles of natural justice. The intention to appeal shall be intimated to the FAPLT and to the Principal Clerk within 14 days of the panel's decision."

References

- [i] Acorn is a movement that seeks to connect Christians with the work God is doing in others through caring conversation. Acorn does this through missional discipleship, sending out to try the acronym A-C-O-R-N (Ask-Call-Obey-Report-Notice);