

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

CONVENED AT EDINBURGH, 20 MAY 2017

*At Edinburgh, and within the Assembly Hall,
the 20th day of May 2017 years, at 9.30 am,
Session I.*

After public worship in the Assembly Hall, conducted by the Right Rev George Russell Barr BA BD MTh DMin, Moderator of the General Assembly, the Commissioners elected as members of the General Assembly appointed to be held this day convened, and the General Assembly was duly constituted with prayer.

The Roll of Commissioners was laid on the table.

The General Assembly proceeded to the election of a Moderator, when it was unanimously agreed that the Rev Derek Browning MA BD DMin be appointed Moderator.

The appointment was intimated to Dr Browning who was welcomed by the Moderator, and, after the Prayer of Consecration, took the Chair.

Her Majesty's Commission to HRH The Princess Anne, Princess Royal, appointing her to represent Her Royal Person in this Assembly, was then read with all due honour and respect and ordered to be recorded.

Her Majesty's Gracious Letter to the General Assembly was also read with all due honour and respect and ordered to be recorded.

Her Grace, The Lord High Commissioner addressed the General Assembly in a speech from the Throne, and the Moderator made suitable reply.

The Very Rev G Russell Barr BA BD MTh DMin, Retiring Moderator, addressed the General Assembly, and was thanked by the Moderator for his distinguished and valued service during his year of office.

A Committee was appointed to prepare an answer to Her Majesty's Gracious Letter, viz:

Rev Philip J Majcher	(688)
Mrs Norma Rolls	(48)
Mrs Myrtle A Gillies MBE	(655)

Very Rev Dr G Russell Barr, *Convener*

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Standing Committee on Commissions, which was given in by the Principal Clerk who reported as follows:-

That all commissions had been received and were in order.

The Standing Orders of the General Assembly were laid on the table.

The General Assembly appointed a Committee for arranging the Order of Business, viz:

Rev Richard Baxter	(629)
Mr Alan Beattie	(175)
Miss Jennifer Boag	(223)
Rev Sarah A Brown	(239)
Rev Donald Campbell	(128)
Rev David W Clark	(350)
Rev Alistair Cumming	(685)
Rev Jane M Denniston	(242)
Mrs Lorraine E Fraser	(442)
Dr Grace Gibson	(377)
Mrs Ella Gill	(632)
Ms Elspeth Gordon	(693)
Mr Douglas Gow	(529)
Rev Donna M Hays	(507)
Rev Trevor G Hunt	(614)
Rev Bryan Kerr	(198)
Rev Alan Kimmitt	(450)
Rev Robert Kinloch	(361)
Mr David Lloyd	(708)
Mr David MacDougall	(517)
Ms Christine Mackenzie	(623)
Mr Kenmuir Mackie	(205)
Ms Alice MacLeod	(592)
Mr Iain A Macleod	(670)
Rev Louise J E McClements	(264)
Ms Anne S McGregor	(229)
Rev Julia M Meason	(675)
Miss Patricia M Munro DCS	(504)
Mr David Nicholson DCS	(408)
Rev Carol Anne Parker	(417)
Ms Elizabeth Paterson	(498)
Rev Andrea E Price	(690)
Mr Samuel Scobie	(145)
Rev Duncan Shaw	(62)
Rev Dr John B Sterrett	(648)
Rev Martin Thomson	(189)
Rev Mary E Thomson	(610)
Mr Ruud Witte	(711)

Ms Judith Pearson, *Convener*
Rev Fiona Smith, *Vice-Convener*

The General Assembly agreed that the members of the Business Committee should serve as the Panel of Tellers.

The General Assembly appointed a Committee to prepare a Minute on Deceased Ministers, Missionaries and Deacons, viz:

Very Rev Dr G Russell Barr, *Convener*
Principal Clerk
Depute Clerk

The General Assembly called for a Report anent the Celebration of Holy Communion in the Assembly Hall on Monday 22 May 2017 at 9.15 am.

The General Assembly approved the Report.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 10.57 am until 11.24 am.

APPOINTMENT OF ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL CLERK AND ACTING DEPUTE CLERK

Section 11 of the Council of Assembly's proposed Deliverance was moved, seconded and agreed:

The General Assembly:

11. Appoint the Rev Dr George J Whyte as Principal Clerk to the General Assembly with effect from 29 July 2017 and as Associate Principal Clerk from the commencement of the General Assembly.

The Rev Dr George J Whyte was welcomed by the Moderator on his appointment. Dr Whyte took the oath *de fide*.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Council of Assembly's proposed Deliverance:

Add a new Section 12 and renumber:

Appoint Ms Christine Paterson as Acting Depute Clerk of the General Assembly until the opening day of the General Assembly 2018.

The Moderator administered the oath *de fidei* to Ms Paterson.

The General Assembly received the following Delegates and Visitors:

The Presbyterian Church of Wales

Rev Dr Elwyn Richards, former Moderator, and Rev Gwenda Richards

The United Reformed Church

Rev Kevin Watson, Moderator, and Mrs Lynne Watson; Rev Mark Robinson, Chaplain, and Mrs Tessa Henry-Robinson

The United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland

Rev Dr David Pickering, Moderator

The Church of England

Canon Dr Jamie Harrison, Chair of the General Synod's House of Laity

The Methodist Church in Scotland

Rev Andrew Letby, Superintendent Minister of Edinburgh and Fourth Circuit

Religious Society of Friends – General Meeting for Scotland

Pamala McDougall, Representative Friend, and James McDougall

The Roman Catholic Church Bishops' Conference of Scotland

Rt Rev Mgr Philip Kerr, Vice-President of the Office of Ecumenism

The Salvation Army

Major Steven Turner, Assistant to the Secretary for Scotland

The Scottish Episcopal Church

The Rt Rev Kevin Pearson, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, and Dr Elspeth Atkinson

The United Free Church of Scotland

Rev Alexander Ritchie, Moderator

The Congregational Federation in Scotland

Rev Janice Andrews, Minister, Musselburgh Congregational Church

Action of Churches Together in Scotland

Rev Matthew Ross, General Secretary

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

Rev Sarah Moore, Trustee

Churches Together in England

Bishop Dr Joe Aldred, Pentecostal and Multicultural Relations

Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kenya

Rev Francis Ndungu Njoroge, Former Deputy General Secretary; Rev Edwin Kibathi, Minister

Synod of Blantyre, CCAP, Malawi

Rev Alex Benson Maulana, General Secretary

Igreja Evangelica de Cristo em Mocambique

Mr Favorito Eduardo, General Treasurer; Mr Ganizane Daniel, Projects Department

Coordinator

Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa

Rev Johanna Boitumelo Gaborone, Minister

The Presbyterian Church of Canada

Rev Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Mr Kerry Rice, Associate Stated Clerk and Ms Grace Rice Cushman

Alliance of Reformed and Presbyterian Church in Latin America and Uruguay

Rev Dr Dario Barolin, Executive Secretary

Waldensian Church of the River Plate

Rev Carola Tron Urban, Moderator

Church of Bangladesh

Mr John Bickrom Biswas, Member

Amity Foundation

Ms Ying Xie, Senior Executive of International Partnerships

Church of North India

Rt Rev Dr Prem Chand Singh, Deputy Moderator

The Presbyterian Church of Korea

Rev Dr Yie Shik Kim, Moderator, Seoul Gangnam Presbytery and Mr Bong Sun Jang

Presbyterian Church of Singapore

Rev Fion Fei Fong Sin, Senior Minister and Chairperson of the Women's Council; Elder Angelia Bih Shya Wong, Church Treasurer

The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan

Mrs Ming-Min Lin Cheng, Chairperson of the Ecumenical Advisory Group; Rev Dr Prof Yang-En Cheng, Professor of Church History, Taiwan Theological College and Seminary and Mrs Yu-Yang Yen

Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren

Rev Petr Peňáz, Minister

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland

Rev Tiina Reinikainen, Minister

Evangelical Church in Germany

Pastor Verena Jantzen, Minister of the German speaking congregations in Scotland and North East England

Evangelical Church of Greece

Rev Dimitrios Boukis, General Secretary

Reformed Church in Hungary

Ms Diána Erdélyi, Ecumenical Secretary

Union of Methodist and Waldensian Churches

Pastor Giuseppina Bagnato, Minister

Igreja Evangelica Presbiteriana de Portugal

Mrs Silvina Queiroz, President

Spanish Evangelical Church

Rev Dr Israel Flores Olmos, Minister and Member of the Permanent Commission of the Spanish Evangelical Church and Rev Eva Dominguez

Reformed Church in Carpatho-Ukraine

Rev Géza Kacsó, Minister and Mrs Dora Kacsó

Synod of the Nile, The Evangelical Church of Egypt

Mrs Rozet Refki Younan

Diocese of the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East

Rev Fares Elias Naoum, Rector and Mrs Pascal Mattar Naoum

Middle East Council of Churches, Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees

Mrs Sylvia Haddad, Executive Director

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Rev Dr Cleveland Buchanan Yates, Minister Emeritus

*Mission Partners on Leave:**St Andrew's Galilee*

Rev Kate McDonald

United Church of Zambia

Mrs Ida Waddell; Mr Keith Waddell

The reception of the Delegates and Visitors being completed, the Moderator welcomed them on behalf of the General Assembly.

Rev Dr Elwyn Richards and Mrs Ming-Min Lin Cheng addressed the General Assembly in the name of the Delegates and Visitors and were thanked by the Moderator.

ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Assembly Arrangements Committee which was given in by Ms Judith Pearson, Convener.

It was moved and seconded-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the Order of Business for the first two days.
3. Appoint Mr Roy Pinkerton to index the verbatim record.
4. Invite commissioners to submit to the first meeting of the Business Committee nominees for consideration to serve on the Selection Committee.
5. Appoint Mr Craig Marshall as Assembly Officer from June 2017.
6. Remind commissioners of the deadline of noon on Monday 22 May for submitting nominations for the Committee to Nominate the Moderator.

SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY

7. Urge the Scottish Bible Society to pursue its ongoing efforts to address the challenge of global Bible translation.
8. Support the Society in its desire to work in partnership with congregations to improve people's experience of the Bible and its impact on their life.
9. Encourage congregations to consider using Bibleworld Books as a way to improve literacy levels amongst children in their communities.
10. Endorse the Society in its efforts to encourage confidence in the gospel and in providing Scripture resources for mission purposes.
11. Commend the Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members.

The Moderator welcomed Ms Elaine Duncan, Executive Director, Scottish Bible Society, who addressed the General Assembly.

On behalf of the Directors of the Society, Ms Duncan presented a Bible to the Moderator, who gave thanks for the gift and the work of the Society, wishing it well for the future.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:-

Add a new Section 9 and renumber:

Thank the Scottish Bible Society warmly for the ministry of the Bibleworld mobile classroom, and commend to God the faithful work it carried out during the course of its service.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

DELEGATION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Delegation of Assembly which was given in by the Principal Clerk, Chairman.

It was moved, seconded and agreed-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report of the Delegation of the General Assembly and thank it for its work.
2. Continue the appointment of the Delegation with the same powers as hitherto – the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly to be Chairman, the Depute Clerk of the General Assembly to be Vice-Chairman and the Solicitor of the Church to act as Secretary.
3. Pass an Act amending the Congregational Constitutions Act (Act XIX 1964) as set out in Appendix A.

APPEALS COMMITTEE OF THE COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly called for the Minutes of the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly which were laid on the table.

COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND CASES

This Committee had not met and there was no Report.

MINISTRIES APPEAL PANEL

The General Assembly called for the Minutes of the Ministries Appeal Panel which were laid on the table.

RETURNS TO OVERTURES

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Committee on Classifying Returns to Overtures which was given in by the Principal Clerk, Convener.

It was moved and seconded-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Convert into a Standing Law of the Church the Registration of Ministries Overture, as printed in Appendix B.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 2:

Add at the end:

‘with the following additional amendment to Schedule 4 (Amendments and Repeals) of the Overture under the heading **Act VIII 2010 (Deacons)**:

Add the following sentence at the end of section 8(d):

‘A Deacon who does not occupy such a parish appointment, or other qualifying post, but who is registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **R**, shall be entitled to apply for membership of Presbytery on the same basis as a Minister of Word and Sacrament holding Category **R** registration, being in terms of section 14 of Act III 2000.’

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

The General Assembly suspended their sitting at 12.33 pm until 2 pm.

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly called for the Report of the Legal Questions Committee which was given in by the Rev George Cowie, Convener.

It was moved and seconded-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Amend Standing Order 95(i) as detailed in Section 1 and Appendix A of the Report.
3. Approve the principles outlined in Section 2.7 of the Report and instruct the Committee to bring a draft Discipline Overture, written in accordance with these principles, to the Assembly of 2018.
4. Instruct the Committee, jointly with the Ministries Council, to consider whether there is scope to reformulate the Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland as a set of rules which might allow breach of the Code, or of a version of it, to be defined as a disciplinary offence, and to report to the General Assembly of 2019.
5. Note that the Unitary Constitution has been amended (a) to include reference to the requirement to hold a Stated Annual Meeting and (b) to correct a reference to an appeal process, and agree to amend the Model Deed to similar effect, all as outlined in Appendix C.
6. Pass an Act amending the Model Deeds of Constitution Act (Act II 1994) as set out in Appendix C.
7. Agree that the process known as ‘Arbitration’, which has been used to make decisions between buildings in certain readjustment cases, should cease to be available from 1 January 2018.

8. Instruct Presbyteries to review any agreed Bases of Union or Linking which have yet to be implemented and, where any such Basis includes a clause indicating that the Panel of Arbiters should be asked to choose a building, instruct the Presbytery to amend its Plan by categorising the buildings in the proposed Union or Linking in terms of section 5(2) of Act VII 2003.
9. Instruct the General Trustees, in consultation with the Central Properties Department, to compile a guidance document for Presbyteries, outlining good practice which can be employed when choosing between buildings in the appraisal process.
10. Instruct the Committee, in consultation with the Ministries Council, to revise and consolidate the provisions of the Ministries Act, as outlined in the Report, and to report to the Assembly of 2018.
11. Pass an Act amending the Ministry Act (Act II 2000) as set out in Appendix D.
12. Instruct the Committee to undertake a consultation exercise in relation to membership of Church Courts and to report to the Assembly of 2018.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of Section 9:

After 'Instruct the General Trustees, in consultation with' add 'the Committee on Church Art and Architecture and'.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly called for the Report and Supplementary Report of the Council of Assembly which were given in by Dr Sally Bonnar, Convener.

It was moved and seconded-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report and Supplementary Report.
2. Issue a call to the Church of Scotland to pray that God will do a fresh work amongst us as God's people and instruct Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to consider how best to respond to this call.
3. Instruct the Council, working together with other appropriate Councils, to prepare as soon as possible, resources to support individuals, congregations and Presbyteries in prayer for the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan.
4. Affirm the work undertaken to this point on the creation of a Strategic Plan for the Church and note the Council's intention to bring a full report indicating strategic priorities for the next phase of the Church's life and work to the General Assembly in 2018.
5. Welcome the report of the Council's review of the work of the Ecumenical Relations Committee and instruct that Committee to continue its own review of the Church's Ecumenical Policy in consultation with the Council of Assembly, reporting to the General Assembly in 2018.
6. Approve the revised Remit of the Ecumenical Relations Committee as set out in Appendix 3.
7. Affirm the planned changes to the way in which the Ecumenical Relations Committee intends to relate to Councils and the Theological Forum and instruct those bodies to engage appropriately.
8. Encourage Presbyteries and congregational office bearers to ensure local compliance with the Data Protection Act and instruct the Council to present to the General Assembly in 2018 measures to ensure ongoing compliance throughout the Church

with the new General Data Protection Regulation being introduced across the European Union.

9. Affirm the work undertaken by the Council in benchmarking senior staff salaries.
10. Approve the revised Job Description for the post of Principal Clerk as set out in Appendix 4.
11. *Consideration of Section 11 was dealt with earlier in this Session.*
12. Instruct the Council, in cooperation with the Assembly Arrangements Committee and the Legal Questions Committee, to review the terms and processes relating to the future appointment of a Principal Clerk and report to the General Assembly in 2019.
13. Note the Council's report on the future of interfaith relations and affirm the ongoing development of this work.
14. Approve the total to be contributed by congregations in 2018 of £46,055,000 based on the projection of congregational income for 2018 and its disposition among local congregational expenditure, the Parish Ministries Fund and the Mission and Renewal Fund. *(Section 1 and Appendix I)*
15. Note the indicative budget for 2018.
16. Receive the 2016 Report and Accounts of the Unincorporated Councils and Committees of the General Assembly.
17. *Consideration of Section 17 was deferred until Session II.*

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 8 and renumber:

Welcome the establishing of the Gaelic Working Group and encourage the Group to press forward timeously with the development of the Gaelic language plan for the Church, and with other activities aimed at encouraging the use and enlivening of Gaelic in the Church.

It was moved, seconded and agreed as an amendment of the Deliverance:

Add a new Section 8 and renumber:

Instruct the Council, in consultation with the Nomination Committee, to investigate the opportunities, costs and financing of making video-conferencing more widely available for meetings of the Councils and Committees of the Church and report to the General Assembly in 2018.

The Deliverance as amended was then agreed.

JOINT REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF ASSEMBLY, MINISTRIES COUNCIL, MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP COUNCIL, PANEL ON REVIEW AND REFORM AND LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

It was moved, seconded and agreed-

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Instruct the Council of Assembly, working jointly with the Mission and Discipleship Council, the Ministries Council, the Panel on Review and Reform and the Legal Questions Committee to complete its work on resourcing the implementation of Local Church Review as outlined in section 5(c) of the Deliverance of the Council of Assembly's Report to the General Assembly in 2016, and report to the General Assembly in 2018.

The General Assembly adjourned at 3.23 pm to meet again in this Hall on Monday 22 May at 9.15 am for Holy Communion, and thereafter for business, whereof public intimation having been made, the Sederunt was closed with prayer.

ASSEMBLY HALL
EDINBURGH, 20 May 2017, 3.23 pm