

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



ANNUAL REPORTS



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ORDER OF BUSINESS

- Notes:** (i) **Business commences at 10am on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. There are business sessions on Friday evening.**
- (ii) **Communion will be held on Friday at 11.45am and Worship on Thursday at 12.15pm.**
- (iii) **Figures in brackets refer to page numbers in the Annual Reports.**

Thursday

GA Business Committee –
Initial Report

Presbyteries

General Council (Section 1)

Training in Ministry

Listening to the Global Church

General Council (Section 2)

Friday

Trustees

Global Mission

General Council (Section 3)

General Council (Section 4)

Overtures

Linkage Commission

Mission in Ireland

Saturday

Private Session – Judicial
Commission etc.

Congregational Life and Witness

Social Witness

Public Affairs

General Council (Section 5)

GA Business Committee –
Final Report

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22

Assembly Buildings

7pm

Service of Worship

Constitution of Assembly

Moderator of the General Assembly

THURSDAY, JUNE 23

10am

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE:
Initial Report and Resolutions 1-5 (pages 3-4 and 259)
2. REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES (pages 99-105)
3. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 1 of Report and Resolution 6 (pages 1-21 and 259)
Executive Summary and Introduction; Decision Making and Dissent Task Group; Doctrine Committee

11.30am

4. Reception of Corresponding Members and Delegates

12.15pm

5. WORSHIP

1pm

LUNCH

2.00pm

6. COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY:
Report and Resolutions (pages 106-116 and 263)

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

2.45pm

7. Listening to the Global Church

3.45pm *COFFEE BREAK*

4.15pm

8. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 2 of Report and Resolutions 7-9 (pages 22-52 and 259-260)
Support Services Committee; United Appeal Committee;
Guysmere Panel

5.15pm

9. Code Republication Panel (pages 192-194 and 266)

5.45pm *DINNER*

7.45pm

10. Evening Celebration

(9.15pm) Close

FRIDAY, JUNE 24

10am

11. Trustees – Report and Resolutions (pages 117-123 and 263)

10.30am 12. COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION: Report and Resolutions (pages 124-137 and 264).

11.30am *INTERMISSION*

11.45am

13. Assembly Communion Service

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

1pm *LUNCH*

2.00pm

14. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 3 of Report and Resolutions 12-13 (pages 53-58 and 260)
Membership and People with Additional Needs Task Group;
Supporting Families in Challenging Times Task Group

2.45pm

15. Alternative Presentation

3.45pm *COFFEE BREAK*

4.15pm

16. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 4 of Report and Resolutions 14-16 (pages 59-79 and 260)
Pandemic Response (Governance) Task Group; Pandemic Response (Theological, Moral and Spiritual) Task Group;
Communications Strategy Task Group

5.15pm

17. Overtures (pages 254-258 and 264-265)

5.45pm *DINNER*

7.15pm

18. LINKAGE COMMISSION: Report and Resolutions (pages 138-169 and 265)

8pm

19. COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND:
Report and Resolutions (pages 170-191 and 265-266)

(9.00pm) Close

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

SATURDAY, JUNE 25

10am

20. Private Session – JUDICIAL COMMISSION etc.: Report and Resolutions (pages 192-196 and 266)

10.30am *COFFEE BREAK*

11am

21. COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS: Report and Resolutions (pages 197-213 and 267)

12pm

22. COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS: Report and Resolutions (pages 214-227 and 267)

1pm *LUNCH*

2pm

23. COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS: Report and Resolutions (pages 228-253 and 267-268)

3pm

24. GENERAL COUNCIL: Section 5 of Report and Resolutions 17-19 (pages 80-98 and 261-262)
Nominations Committee; Reconfiguration of Ministry Task Group; General Assembly Advisory Committee; Ad-Hoc areas of work; Reports for information (PHSI and PCS)
25. Lapsed Business (if any)
26. Final Report of the General Assembly Business Committee

CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY

Times in brackets may be anticipated but should not be passed.

REVISED GUIDE TO ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

Using this Guide

In this guide you will find definitions and explanations of important elements of the General Assembly.

If you want to know how to do something at the Assembly such as asking a question:

- You will also find practical guidance in boxes with bullet points.

Each section finishes with guidance in italics about where to find further information.

Reports of Councils and Commissions

Almost all of the time of the General Assembly is taken up with the reports of councils and commissions, as they report on what they have been doing throughout the year and what they hope to do in the future.

These reports are contained in the Annual Reports, or 'blue book', that is issued before the Assembly, and is also available to download from the PCI website immediately before the Assembly. It is important to read the reports in advance.

The Assembly cannot carry out the work of the Church directly, so it entrusts this to different councils and commissions.

Councils normally have a number of committees working under them, so there are separate sections in council reports for the work of these committees.

A commission has been entrusted with the power of the Assembly in its particular area of responsibility.

Members of councils and commissions are appointed by the Assembly itself. These appointments are contained in the Nominations Committee report of the General Council. A separate booklet is printed with the names being proposed to the Assembly. Councils and commissions are led by a convener, and supported by a secretary.

At the start of each session, a member of the Assembly (usually the convener of the council or commission) will speak about the written report and propose the resolutions – this is known as

‘presenting’ the report. Then another member of that council or commission will speak and will second the resolutions.

If the council or commission needs to report some things that happened after the main report was written, these are included in the Supplementary Reports booklet - this should be read in conjunction with the main blue book.

Every report must be ‘received’ by the Assembly. This does not mean that the Assembly agrees with everything that the report says, nor that it accepts responsibility for what a report contains. Rather, it means that the council or commission has presented its report to the Assembly in an acceptable way, and that the Assembly has received the report from the council or commission. The report does not have the authority of the Assembly, only that of the council or commission.

If a member of the Assembly believes that something important is not covered in any of the existing resolutions from a council or commission, they can submit an additional resolution.

If you want to submit an additional resolution:

- You should send the additional resolution to the Clerk of the Assembly in writing at least one week before the Assembly – email to clerk@presbyterianireland.org
- You will need a proposer and seconder for the resolution. If you are a member of the Assembly, you are able to propose or second it yourself. If you are not a member of the Assembly, you may ‘present’ a resolution, but only Assembly members can propose and second.
- If you want to rescind or reverse a previous decision of the Assembly then you must give notice of this at one annual meeting of the General Assembly, and then bring your resolution to the next annual meeting.

You can find further information on councils and committees in the Code Pars 268-310.

You can find further information on reports and resolutions in Pars III-V of the General Assembly’s Standing Orders and the Code Pars 144-7.

Ordering of Business

Each session of business is normally ordered in the following sequence:

- Speech by the proposer of a report and accompanying resolutions
- Speech by the seconder
- Questions
- Debate on each resolution
 - Speeches may be made about the resolution
 - Amendments may be proposed, although this is the exception
 - Speech by proposer of the amendment
 - Speech by seconder of the amendment
 - Questions about the amendment
 - Debate about the amendment
 - Closing speech by the proposer or seconder of the amendment
 - Vote to make the amendment the substantive resolution – which will still need to be debated and voted on
 - The proposer or seconder may close debate on the resolution with a speech
 - Vote on the resolution
 - Any dissent is recorded
- Debate on the final resolution ‘That the report be received,’ following the same sequence as above.

Questions

After the report has been presented and seconded, there is an opportunity for questions to be asked about anything in the reports and speeches.

Questions must be strictly asking for information about something in the report or speeches, or something not in the report but on a topic under the council’s or commission’s area of responsibility. A question should not be asked to score a point, or to make a speech.

If you wish to ask a question:

- You can ask without giving any advance warning, but you will get a better answer if you submit your question in advance.
- If submitting your question in advance you should write it out and place it in the box provided at the front of the hall, or you can submit it by email to *deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org*.
- You should do this at least 15 minutes before the report in question. The more notice you give of a question, the more time there will be for the person responding to provide you with a full and accurate answer.
- Make sure that you are sitting in the main part of the hall, not the public gallery.
- Before asking your question, you should come up to the front in good time, and sit in the seats reserved for speakers, close to the microphone. By doing so, the Moderator will know that you want to speak and will invite you to do so when it is your turn - don't wait in your own seat.
- If the Moderator stands up again to speak while you are speaking, you must stop and listen to the Moderator.
- Normally, no one is able to ask more than two questions on any report, and the total time for questions is limited to 10 minutes.

You can find more information on Questions in the Code Par 153.

Debate

After questions have been asked and answered, the resolutions from the council or commission are debated and voted on one at a time. The resolutions are numbered and printed towards the end of the report book page 259-268..

In the debate, speeches are made either in support of, or in opposition to a resolution.

The final resolution of every report is 'that the report be received.' This is the opportunity for speeches to be made (but not ask questions about) on any matters in the report or for which the council or commission should bear responsibility, but which are not included in any previous resolution.

If you wish to speak in a debate:

- Make sure that you are sitting in the main part of the hall, not the public gallery.
- Come up to the front in good time and sit in the seats reserved for speakers, close to the microphone. By doing so, the Moderator will know that you want to speak and will invite you to do so when it is your turn – don't wait in your own seat.
- If the Moderator stands up again to speak while you are speaking, you must stop and listen to the Moderator.
- To make sure everyone has a fair chance to speak, you can only speak once to each resolution, and there is a strict time limit on speaking. Those who present and second reports and resolutions are normally allowed up to seven minutes; other speeches are usually limited to four minutes, although these timings may be reduced by the Moderator if there is a backlog of business. There are two lights to help you know when your time is running out. The red light turns solid and a buzzer sounds when your time is up. You must stop speaking at this point.

You can find further information on Debate in the Code Pars 148-155.

Voting

When the Moderator thinks that a resolution has been sufficiently debated, they will move the Assembly to vote on it. Only voting members can vote.

There are three ways a vote can happen:

- Most votes are voice votes. The Moderator will ask everyone in favour of the resolution to say 'Aye', and then ask everyone opposed to it to say 'No'.
- If the voice vote is close, then the Moderator may call for a standing vote. First, everyone in favour will be asked to stand while holding up their voting cards. Then everyone opposed will be asked to stand while holding up their voting cards. A rough count will be taken by the Moderator. Only people on the ground floor of the hall can vote. Anyone in the public gallery will not be able to vote, so it is important that you are seated on the ground floor.

- If this vote seems close, then the Moderator may call for a card vote. When you arrive at the Assembly, you will have been given a voting card with tear-off strips for yes and no. During the vote, tellers will move throughout the ground floor with voting boxes. Put one voting strip into the box – either yes or no. The tellers will then count the votes and report the result to the Moderator.

Sometimes, the Moderator may decide to go straight to a card vote. A card vote must happen if 25 people ask for it.

Proxy voting for a member of the Assembly who cannot be present is not allowed.

You can find further information on Voting in the Code Pars 156-160.

Dissent

After a vote, you may disagree with a decision the Assembly has made.

If you feel very strongly that a bad decision has been made, then you can register your dissent in the minutes. However, if you are a minister or elder, even when you disagree, you still have a responsibility to loyally implement the decisions of the Assembly.

If you wish to register your dissent:

- Speak to the Deputy Clerk immediately after the vote has taken place.
- You can then sign a statement that the Deputy Clerk will print, which says that you dissent from the decision the Assembly has just taken.
- This is then recorded in the minutes.

You can find further information on Dissent in the Code Pars 104 and 160.

Amendments

As well as voting yes or no to resolutions, members of the Assembly can also amend resolutions.

An amendment is a change to the wording of a resolution. This may clarify what the resolution states or substantively change what is being proposed, but it cannot introduce another subject and it cannot be an outright negation of the original resolution.

When a valid amendment is proposed and seconded at the Assembly, then:

- Debate about the original resolution is paused
- The proposer and seconder may each give a speech about the amendment
- The Assembly may ask questions about the amendment in the same way as with a resolution
- The Assembly may debate the amendment
- Either the proposer or seconder may give a closing speech
- The Assembly votes on the amendment

If the vote on the amendment passes, then the amendment becomes the substantive resolution and debate continues about whether to pass that amended resolution.

If the vote does not pass, then the original resolution is not altered and debate about it resumes.

If you want to propose an amendment:

- You must submit the Amendment in writing to the Clerk of the Assembly, either in writing to the Clerk's desk or by email to deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org
- You must have a proposer and seconder for the amendment
- You must give at least one day's notice if your amendment substantially affects the scope of a resolution or overture.
- You cannot introduce another subject in your amendment or propose outright negation of a resolution.
- You may propose an amendment during debate if it does not substantially affect the scope of a resolution or overture.
- If you propose an amendment sufficiently in advance, the General Assembly Business Committee may licence it and it will then take precedence over other amendments.
- If you speak to the proposer and seconder of the original motion in advance, they may accept your amendment without the Assembly voting on it. If it is not accepted and you still wish to propose the amendment then, if you notify the Clerk, it will appear in the supplementary reports. If an amendment is accepted before the Assembly starts, then the updated resolution can be distributed in supplementary reports.

You can find further information about amendments in the Code Pars 148–152 and Par VI of the General Assembly’s Standing Orders.

Memorials

Memorials are requests made to the Assembly, usually by a person or body who is not a member of the Assembly – a presbytery, a church member or group of members, or a group of people not connected with the Church. If you are not a member of the Assembly, you are able to bring a memorial.

Procedures and forms are laid down to be used in bringing memorials.

If you wish to submit a memorial:

- You should contact your Clerk of Presbytery or the Clerk of the General Assembly (clerk@presbyterianireland.org) for advice
- It is advisable to first present your memorial to a lower court of the church such as your Presbytery. If the lower court supports the memorial then you will be able to present it to the Assembly with their support. If they do not support the memorial it is less likely that the Assembly would be supportive.

You can find further information on Memorials in the Code Pars 147(5); 217(5)(a) and (b); 262.

Overtures

Overtures are special resolutions which are used to change the Code, which is the constitution of the Church.

Some overtures are printed in the blue book. If these are agreed by a two-thirds majority, they will be adopted immediately. Others which have not had such notice, will be adopted if no one votes against. If overtures do not achieve the preceding majorities, they are ‘placed on the books’ for one year, and decided on by the following Assembly. This also applies to the rules governing the Central Ministry Fund and other Ministry Funds.

In the Basic Code, where it’s desirable that the proposed changes come into operation immediately, the change can be adopted temporarily during the intervening year as an ‘Interim Act’. If an overture is submitted that would result in a significant

constitutional change, it must also be sent to presbyteries to be voted on during the intervening year.

You can find further information on Overtures in the Code Pars 111 and 112.

Alternative Format Items

At each Assembly, one or two items of business will have an alternative format. This will often include presentations with speakers or videos which highlight the work of a council, for example, Global Mission Workers, or Mission in Ireland or Social Witness staff. Often there will be no formal resolutions or debates during these sessions, but they provide important updates on the work the Church through its councils.

Further information on the General Assembly can be found in the Code Pars 97–112.

The Code is available at *www.presbyterianireland.org/thecode*

The General Assembly's Standing Orders can be found in the Code.

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 1

Convener: Very Rev Dr J.N.I. McNEELY

Secretary: THE CLERK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Following the General Assembly in October 2021, the General Council held stated meetings on 10 November 2021, 29 March 2022, 13 April 2022 and one Special Meeting by MS Teams on 14 February 2022.
2. At the meeting of the Council in November 2021, it was agreed due to the easing of the Covid-19 restrictions that the Council Committees would resume meeting. The limited period of time between the 2021 Assembly and the 2022 Assembly put added pressure on the committees to complete their remits and provide full reports. The Council recognises the commitment of committee members and the time that members devote to the various meetings. Many members take time out of their vocational work to serve on the committees, task groups or panels.
3. The General Assembly in 2021 accepted the new format of conducting business on three days, including Saturday. The General Council's report is delivered in five separate Sections spanning the three days of business. The reports present the scope of work that has been conducted and reflect the measure of commitment by the conveners and committee members.
4. The Council's agenda has been influenced greatly by the Covid-19 pandemic and the setting of guidance for the church. At the meeting of the Council on 29 March 2022, the easing of Covid-19 mitigations and measures was approved for all PCI congregations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Clerk notified all congregations that the restrictions and mitigations previously recommended were no longer required.
5. The Council recognises that the Clerk carried much of the work load and the leadership regarding the Church's response to Covid-19. He regularly consulted with officers of other denominations, met with senior government officials and with the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Adviser. The church was regularly updated regarding restrictions and he advised the Council meticulously in advance of decisions that had to be made.
6. As a sequel to the Covid-19 pandemic, two Task Groups were appointed to review the Church's response. The Pandemic Response (Governance) Task Group report includes recommendations for the way forward for the courts of the church if meetings cannot be held in person, and interim measures in exceptional circumstances relating to congregations (see General Council Section 3). The Pandemic Response (T,M,S) Task Group

presents an interim report on theological, moral and spiritual principles to guide the Church's response in a situation similar to the pandemic (see General Council Section 3).

7. The report includes new areas of work agreed by the 2021 General Assembly. There are interim reports by the Communications Strategy Task Group (see General Council Section 3) and the Reconfiguration of Ministry Task Group (see General Council Section 5). The General Assembly Advisory Committee had its inaugural meeting and presents its first report (see General Council Section 5).
8. The report of the General Council to the General Assembly is the longest of the Annual Reports and will be taken in 5 sections:

Section 1

- Decision Making and Dissent Task Group
- Doctrine Committee

Section 2

- Support Services Committee
- United Appeal Committee
- Guysmere Panel

Section 3

- Membership and People with Intellectual Disabilities Task Group
- Supporting Families in Challenging Times Task Group

Section 4

- Pandemic Response (Governance) Task Group
- Pandemic Response (T, M, S) Task Group
- Communications Strategy Task Group

Section 5

- Nominations Committee
 - Reconfiguration of Ministry Task Group
 - General Assembly Advisory Committee
 - Ad-Hoc Areas of Work
 - Reports for Information
9. At this General Assembly, the Rev Nigel Craig resigns as the Convener of the Church Relations Committee. Nigel was appointed to the Covenership at the 2020 General Assembly and, despite the business of the Committee being restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic, he made a valuable contribution to the General Council Standing Committee. The Council thanks Nigel for his service and trusts he and Antonia will know God's blessing as they serve the Global Mission Council in Hungary.
 10. The General Council acknowledges the wise leadership of the Moderator during another demanding year and recognises his significant contribution to the deliberations of the many committees he attended. The Council is also very aware of the prodigious work and the extraordinary devotion of

the Clerk to the progress of the General Assembly and the public image of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The staff in the General Secretary's office is appropriately recognised for the administration and continuing support during another year of uncertainty and disruption.

INITIAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. The Business Committee has continued to review the work and arrangements of the General Assembly.
2. A Draft Order of Business for 2022 was drawn up by the Clerk on the basis agreed by the General Assembly and the committee, with a final draft tabled at the General Council. This includes the following:
 - (a) Following the decision of last year's General Assembly, business will commence on Thursday morning at 10:00am and conclude late on Saturday afternoon.
 - (b) All business sessions will commence each day at 10:00 am. There will be the Evening Celebration on Thursday and one evening business session held on Friday. As in previous years, the General Council business is split over a number of sessions.
 - (c) There will be 'alternative presentations' on Thursday and Friday afternoons featuring, respectively, 'Listening to the Global Church' and the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.
 - (d) Attendance at the communion service has been growing in recent years and so, in addition to the ground floor, communion will be served in the central section of the gallery. For this year, 'Fellowship Cups' will be used.
 - (e) On the ground floor of the Assembly Hall, a section of seating will be set aside for any who request greater social distancing at meetings.
 - (f) Live streaming of all meetings will continue except for the private session.
 - (g) A Lanyard system will be used this year, to assist with identification of members. This will work on a colour code system for ministers, elders and non-voting delegates. Lanyards will be needed for entrance to the ground floor for all business meetings. The ground floor of the Assembly Hall is reserved for members and delegates only.
 - (h) The private session will be held on Saturday morning at 10:00am
 - (i) The General Council recommends to the General Assembly that each year a decision should be taken by the Assembly on whether any items of business for the week should be assigned to the private session. A resolution to this effect is presented to test the mind of the Assembly.

3. **The Arrangements Panel** has appropriate matters in hand and a budget of £20,000 has been agreed for recommendation to the Assembly.
4. **Registration Procedure.** On recommendation from the Business Committee, the General Council at its meeting on 14 February 2022 agreed that the system used for the registration of representative elders at the 2021 General Assembly be adopted for 2022 Assembly. A relevant Overture will be presented to the 2022 General Assembly to make this a permanent change.
5. The **Thursday Evening Celebration** will be addressed by Mr Peter Lynas (Evangelical Alliance UK National Director).
6. An **Under 30s'** fringe event is planned for 6pm on Thursday evening.
7. The **General Assembly Reports** will be produced in printed versions as normal for 2022. Digital versions of the Annual Report Book will also be available via the website for this year's General Assembly.
8. The General Council has agreed that from 2023 onwards the reports of the General Assembly would be made available in a full electronic/digital format. Assembly members would be required to 'opt in' if they wished to receive printed reports.
9. The Creative Production Department will continue to develop the General Assembly pages of the website. The Creative Production Department and the IT Department will investigate the development of a 'General Assembly App' for use post 2022.

ROY MACKAY, Convener

INITIAL REPORT – APPENDIX

Reports from Other Church Assemblies etc.

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales

The Right Rev Dr David Bruce reports:

1. Report on the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, held on 20-21 September 2021, in the Seilo Chapel, Caernarfon, and by Zoom conference.
2. I was warmly welcomed as a visiting delegate to the General Assembly at its opening session, when the report of the Assembly Board was received. Along with other delegates from other churches, including the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, we were each personally introduced. It was a source of regret for many that we were not able to be in Caernarfon to meet face to face.
3. During this period of pandemic, which has included lockdown, alternative arrangements for the various Boards and Committees of the church to meet

have had to be made – and arrangements put in place for congregations to vote on significant matters, including the call of new ministers. The denomination has agreed that until regular arrangements are restored, as so far as possible decisions are not made that are “far-reaching”, and involve significant changes to Rules.

4. The Assembly Reports with numerous Appendices were pre-circulated digitally. The first language of the church is Welsh, but English translation was proved for those who needed it.
5. The Reports covered broadly similar ground to those debated at the PCI Assembly, including technical matters regarding finance, along with wide-ranging input on women’s ministry, youth and children’s work, ministry, outreach and mission and the connections the PCW has with other denominations in Great Britain and globally. A report was tabled regarding connections with the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar.
6. Proposals to re-structure the governance arrangements of the Church were considered, including a proposal to consider moving away from Presbyteries to fewer Provinces (5), each accountable to the General Assembly.
7. The term of office of the Moderator of the General Assembly was debated in the report of the Assembly Board, and it was agreed that in the future the Moderator when elected, would be given the opportunity to consider whether a second year in office might be appropriate for them.
8. In expressing appreciation for the invitation to attend online, we thank the General Secretary, Meirion Morris, for his work in preparation for the Assembly, and for the warmth of the welcome received. It is hoped that in future years, such hospitality may be received and reciprocated in person.

Church of Ireland General Synod 2021

The Very Rev Dr William Henry reports:

1. Yet another fixed landmark affected by Covid-19! Having resolved to host as many delegates and members as was possible during the continuing restrictions (felt particularly strongly in Ireland), it was necessary to host the synod via Zoom. Perhaps even more planning than might have been usual was required to pull off the logistical nightmare of so many attendees. Though conversely, at the end of the Synod it was noted how well it had been attended, with nearly 400 still online and connected in the closing moments.
2. The prospect of screen after screen of tile images of all the delegates might indeed have induced the common sensation of being “zoomed out!” However, the reality was surprisingly fresh. The accustomed General Synod service was pre-recorded, with Bishop Andrew Forster preaching from Neh 8 with the backdrop of St Augustine’s Church on the Walls of Londonderry – reflecting on the life of St Columba who had built the first abbey on that site. His words were uplifting and encouraging, reminding us all of the purposes of God for our present lives and our futures.

3. The Presidential address given by Archbishop McDowell was also recorded ahead of time. Much of the theme of his address, focusing on 1921 with the centenary of Northern Ireland, questioned how the church might be a place of welcome for all people throughout Ireland especially in an age when there has been mass movements of people and immigration. He drew on remarks by Eamon De Valera in 1943 regarding a vision for the island that he and his generation had dreamed of. The Archbishop noted: “To live in an integrated society of men and women, living at peace with themselves and their neighbours, and who have had their humanity deepened and not stunted by living the life that God desires. Why, as a Church, would we not move heaven and earth to play our part in achieving these things?”
4. Turning to business, the programme was structured so as not to be too burdensome over the three days of the Synod. Business was contained within two-hour slots, and only two slots per day. Despite the numbers of the delegates online, business was well guided and interaction, though obviously limited, was enabled within the matters under discussion. Inevitably, there was not as much debate as there might have been during a “normal” Synod meeting, but they achieved their purposes well in the context.
5. The main early item of business was the presentation of a bill to reduce the number of representatives at General Synod from 648 to 597 and eventually to 534 (over time by 2031). This matter had been under consideration for several years and was ready for decision again. Such a bill was attempted in 1998, 2001 and 2002 but failed each time. It was good to be reminded that in all churches the wheels of progress turn slowly. As an outsider to Anglican process, the method of presentation, leaving on the books and having three readings of the bill, does seem somewhat ponderous but does follow a rather parliamentary procedure. The issue of representation may be different from ours, but the problem of engagement with lower courts and the church generally is a problem with which all denominations struggle.
6. The Church of Ireland has been as familiar as ourselves with the necessity of linkages in the modern church context. This is equally true of the number of Bishops. Legislation was passed in 2019 to provide for the union of the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry with the United Dioceses of Limerick and Killaloe under one bishop, and for related changes. However, the legislation did not consider a situation in which both sees would become vacant at the same time which was due to occur on 31 October 2021 as the Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry and the Bishop of Limerick and Killaloe have both signalled their intention to resign on the same date. So, an amended bill was required for such a situation.
7. There were further bills, including one on ensuring gender balance amongst parochial nominators. This resulted in quite a significant debate when the implications of such principles were outlined for groupings of churches (as opposed to single charges) where the overall number of nominators would be split among the individual congregations.

8. Like our own assembly, there were also reports of the Board of Education, Church of Ireland Youth Department, Covenant Council, Commission for Christian Unity and Dialogue, Liturgical Advisory Committee, Council for Mission, Commission on Ministry, Marriage Council, and the Church of Ireland Historiographer (well perhaps PCI doesn't usually have one akin to the last one!).
9. Within a greatly limited General Synod it was still a pleasure to represent the General Assembly and renew acquaintances and friendships via the occasional surreptitious WhatsApp message to other delegates in an attempt to generate a feeling of community and fellowship!
10. The General Synod will next meet in Croke Park in 2022.

DECISION MAKING AND DISSENT TASK GROUP

1. The Decision Making and Dissent Task Group (DM&DTG) to date has met on four occasions since the 2021 General Assembly, Monday 13 December 2021 and Mondays 17 January, 14 February and 14 March 2022, with all meetings having in-person and on-line participation.
2. The Task Group had before it copies of its 2021 Report to the General Assembly along with a copy of the 2014 General Board report, 'Freedom of Individuals in Leadership to Express Opinions'.
3. The Task Group noted its remit for 2022, as outlined in the 2021 report namely:
Recommendation 10:
That on the basis of par 26(e), the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group be instructed to draw up a comprehensive report, for consideration by the 2022 General Assembly, on the "*Freedom of those in Ordained Leadership to Promote Opinions at variance with the clear position of the General Assembly*".
4. Following detailed discussion on this remit the Task Group would note the following points:
 - (a) There is a need to enable and indeed encourage biblically and theologically informed discussion and debate within the church, and especially within its ordained leadership.
 - (b) The Task Group would affirm, and draw attention to, the following statements in the Code, including the rule of faith which state:
 - (i) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a witness for Christ, has adopted subordinate standards. In these are found what the Church understands the Word of God to teach on certain important points of doctrine and worship. These subordinate standards are a testimony for truth and against error, and serve as a bond of union for members of the Church. (Code Par 12)
 - (ii) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland adheres to the fundamental doctrines of the faith, set out in the Supreme and Subordinate

Standards of this Church. Do you promise to teach them and defend them to the utmost of your power, against all error? (Code Par 212 (3)(v) – questions to a candidate for ordination)

- (c) Recommendation 7 in the 2021 Report of the Task Group to the General Assembly was noted. The Doctrine Committee has been instructed to draw up a contemporary “Brief Statement concerning Faith and Order” for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly in 2023.
 - (i) The Task Group agreed that this revised statement will obviously be of significance and therefore needs to be taken account of prior to finalising its report.
 - (ii) It was noted that any ‘Brief Statement concerning Faith and Order’ was likely to be seen as a framing document for the understanding of PCI’s existing subordinate standards. As such, its purpose will be to equip those preparing for ordination, or already serving as teaching and ruling elders with the historical and theological insight to interpret the subordinate standards of the church in the contemporary world. It is this historical and theological insight that enables the church to interpret the standards.
- (d) The question arises as to public comment upon or debate surrounding doctrinal, moral or administrative positions which are held by PCI, possibly by resolution of the General Assembly, but which may not be referenced specifically in the subordinate standards of the Church. The Task Group noted the following points of principle:
 - (i) Code paragraph 11. In exercising this God-given right of private judgment, individual Christians are not to set their reason above the Word of God, or to refuse light from any quarter. Guided by the Holy Spirit, they are to use their reason to ascertain the divine will, as revealed in Scripture, and are to refuse to subject conscience to any authority except that of the Word of God...” Thus, the Presbyterian form of Church government rests upon debate, prayerful discernment, and decision to ascertain the divine will.
 - (ii) The primary fora within which such debate and discernment takes place is the courts of the church. This is not to preclude discussion or debate elsewhere, but to honour and acknowledge that “The Church alone has the right to interpret and explain her standards, under the guidance of the Spirit of God.” (Code, Par 14).
 - (iii) Ministers and elders therefore should ensure that any public statements they might wish to make in connection with matters under consideration by the Courts of the Church are both personal to them and provisional upon any decision taken by such courts.

- (iv) Similarly, in private discussion, or as part of debate in wider groups outside the courts of the church, ministers and elders should approach such matters in a spirit of grace and humility, acknowledging their ordination vow to “yield submission in the Lord to the courts of this Church” and to “preserve the peace and unity of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as part of the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ” (Code Par 212(5) for ministers and Par 205(4) for elders). It would therefore not be appropriate for an ordained minister or elder to fail to implement a decision taken by the courts of the church, or publicly to promote a view which undermines a stated position of the church, whether doctrinal, moral, or administrative.
- (v) A Kirk Session or a Presbytery may seek to formally alter a policy or decision of the Church by presenting a Memorial to the General Assembly. The Task Group welcomes the planned revision and simplification of this process, to make it more accessible.
- (e) Often the point is made that not all elders are members of the General Assembly and therefore do not have direct input into the taking of decisions and setting of policy by the Assembly.
 - (i) While this is clearly the case, nonetheless the Code makes it clear that all in ordained leadership are bound by decisions of the General Assembly.

Par 104. (1) The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church, representing in one body the whole Church, including all subordinate courts and particular congregations, and acting as its supreme legislative, administrative and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it.

(2) As such authority, the Assembly exercises the powers stated by this Code; and, in particular, it may –

(a) deliberate upon and superintend matters which concern the whole Church in its doctrine, worship, witness, discipline and government, and declare the mind of the Church thereupon;

.....

(3) Decisions of the Assembly are final and binding upon the whole Church.....

- (ii) Therefore, when significant issues are to be decided by the General Assembly, it is important that the processes for wider debate and scrutiny are followed as agreed by the 2021 General Assembly (see 2021 General Assembly Reports, pages 114-125 ‘Report of the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group’). This will often include both ‘pre-legislative scrutiny’ and formal consultation with Presbyteries prior to the final adoption of significant new or amended policy by the General Assembly.
- (iii) As part of the process of wider consideration, especially at Kirk Session level, it will be important to equip and assist ministers

in the role of facilitation of such discussions. This will include both an understanding of the issue under consideration and the scope of relevant discussion.

- (f) An elder or a minister of the church has easy access to the public media or social media to express an opinion which is contrary to the policy or decision of the General Assembly. The views expressed on such media may be personal or the position adopted by a group of which the minister or elder is a part. There is, however, a responsibility to be clear that this is the capacity in which the person is speaking and that they are not representing the Church's position. For those in Ordained Leadership who oppose a decision of the Church, it is appropriate that they should use the processes available through the Courts of the Church, to express their questions and concerns, recognising, however, that inferior courts are bound by decisions of superior courts and, indeed, do not have the right to review the proceedings of a superior court (Code Par 21(4)).
5. Concluding remarks:
- (a) As noted above, during the next year the Task Group will seek to take account of the work of the Doctrine Committee as it draws up the new 'Brief Statement concerning Faith and Order'. The Task Group will also be giving further consideration to the issues addressed in paragraph 4(f) above, particularly in relation to ministers or elders who serve in public roles in other organisations or bodies, which may on occasions promote a very different position to that of PCI.
 - (b) It is hoped, that while the Task Group's final report will come to the 2023 General Assembly, that this interim report is helpful.

VERY REV DR NOBLE MCNEELY, Convener

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

1. The Doctrine Committee has so far met on two occasions since the 2021 General Assembly: 18 February 2022 and 18 March 2022. Both meetings were in person.
2. The Doctrine Committee has had two items remitted to it by resolution of the 2021 General Assembly:
 - (a) from the report of the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group (2021 GA Reports, pages 119-120), instructing the Doctrine Committee to draw up an updated and contemporary 'Brief Statement concerning Faith and Order,' for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly, ideally in 2023.
 - (b) from the report of the General Council (2021 GA Reports, page 139), asking the Doctrine Committee to undertake a detailed consideration of the subject of 'virtual communion services,' to enable the General Assembly to come to a final and settled mind on the matter, with a report to be brought to the 2023 General Assembly.

The following summarises the Doctrine Committee’s progress to date towards fulfilling its remit.

3. Brief Statement concerning Faith and Order.
 - (a) In 1974, the General Assembly adopted ‘a succinct statement on what the Presbyterian Church in Ireland believes concerning faith and order for the guidance of ordination candidates’ (1974 GA Reports, page 18; see full report pages 18-27; see statement, pages 22-24). The statement in question consists of ‘a preamble, a list of fundamental doctrines and a statement of these in modern non-technical language;’ in sum, it is ‘a short explanation to help ordination candidates’ (p.18) as they contemplate subscribing to the Westminster Confession of Faith in terms of the General Assembly’s formula.
 - (b) The Doctrine Committee notes that its task, almost fifty years on, is therefore to update this statement on faith and order for use by the Church today, in language that serves the contemporary Church and in context of the on-going work of the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group.
 - (c) To date, the Doctrine Committee has had opportunity to review what the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, with its unique blend of Reformed and revivalist traditions, has sought to do throughout its history, but particularly when adopting the 1974 statement, in:
 - (i) expressing twin convictions concerning both truth and unity, in a way that edifies the whole Body;
 - (ii) articulating and practising subscription to its Confession of Faith and resolving any controversies over what this might involve; and
 - (iii) framing relevant questions to be put to candidates for ordination as ruling or as teaching elders in PCI.
4. ‘Virtual communion services.’
 - (a) Against the backdrop mainly of the Covid-19 pandemic, during which forms of ecclesial expression in the digital space came to some prominence, the Doctrine Committee has so far sought to gather information and interpret it, endeavouring to identify and engage with a range of presenting issues – both theological and practical – that call for careful account to be taken when assessing this matter. This has principally included:
 - (i) consideration, and some preliminary theological evaluation, of experimental approximations of gathered congregational worship generally that have been made available and been accessed via the digital space, whether through recorded or live-streamed services;
 - (ii) recognition of, and some preliminary reflection on, Scriptures concerning God’s self-revelation, or God’s message to humanity, that especially commend themselves as helpful to the Church in thinking about what is entailed when meeting God in Christ

through the Spirit and meeting one another in corporate worship; and

- (iii) pursuit of appropriate theological criteria by which the Church might rigorously assess ‘virtual communion services’ in light of both Scripture and our understanding of the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

The Doctrine Committee intends to continue its work on both of the above remitted items, with a view to presenting its report to the 2023 General Assembly.

GORDON CAMPBELL, Convener

MEMORIAL RECORD

The Rev John Trevor Williamson, BA, BD, PGCE, Minister Emeritus, Urney and Sion Mills, died on 25 July 2021, in the seventy-seventh year of his age and the forty-sixth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 21 January 1945, the eldest of three children to the Rev John Williamson, late minister of First Garvagh congregation, and his wife, Reena, née Black. He was educated at Garvagh Primary School and the Coleraine Academical Institution 1956 to 1963, and continued his education at the Queen’s University, Belfast, 1963 to 1968, studying English and Spanish and graduating with a BA honours degree. From 1968 to 1971, he was an assistant teacher at Cullybackey Secondary School, and from 1971 to 1972, he completed a Certificate of Education course at Stranmillis Teacher Training College, Belfast. However, he did not return to the classroom, but went to Edinburgh where he studied for the ordained ministry at New College, and the Assembly’s College, Belfast, graduating BD from Edinburgh in 1974. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Coleraine on 8 June 1975 and assigned as assistant to the Rev William Dermot Boyd of Eglinton, Belfast, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of North Belfast on 21 January 1976. The congregation of Glastry called him in the spring of 1977 and he was installed there on 18 August 1977 by the Presbytery of Ards. He remained there for twenty-five years until he moved to the joint charge of Urney and Sion Mills where he was installed by the Presbytery of Derry and Strabane on 6 September 2002. He retired on 30 April 2010. In his work as a preacher and pastor he sought to exalt Christ as Saviour and Lord in whom he had a deep personal faith. He was a conscientious pastor of his people, sharing with them the joys and the trials of life, ministering the spirit of thankfulness and compassion. He took a keen interest in young people and, at Glastry, he was instrumental in founding a Boys’ Brigade Company. He was an accomplished organist and, for some years, he conducted the Choir at Portavogie Primary School. Mr Williamson played an active part in the work of the central Church, as Convener of the Church House Redevelopment Committee, 1988-1994, which required considerable skills of organisation and collaboration,

and as Convener of the Church Architecture Committee, 1993-1999. Mr Williamson married Pamela Neill in Stormont Presbyterian Church on 22 August 1972 and they were blessed with a daughter, Alessandra. We express our sympathy to Mrs Williamson, Alessandra, son-in-law William, Mr Williamson's sisters, Yvonne and Jennifer, and the wider family circle, giving thanks to God for our brother's 'work produced by faith,...labour prompted by love, and ...endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.'

The Rev **Robert Trevor Anderson, BA**, Minister Emeritus, Berry Street and Richview, died on 7 August 2021, in the eighty-first year of his age and the forty-eighth year of his ministry. He was born at Lisburn on 25 October 1939, the eldest, and only son, of four children to Robert Anderson, a Belfast City Missionary, and his wife, Elizabeth, née Turkington. He was raised in the congregation of Windsor and educated at Malone Primary School, 1944-1951, and Methodist College, 1951-1957. On leaving school in 1957, he worked in the Secretary's Department of the Ulster Transport Authority until 1965. His commitment to Christ was expressed particularly in his work with Youth for Christ, of which he became a Director. Convinced of the call of God to the ordained ministry, he studied at the Queen's University, Belfast, 1965-1969, and graduated with a BA in Modern History. During this time, he assisted the Rev Alan Flavelle in the congregation of Mourne, Killeel. He taught history at Lisburn Technical College and Ballygomartin Secondary School, for one year before beginning theological study at the Assembly's College, Belfast, in 1970. On completing his studies, he was licensed by the Presbytery of South Belfast on 20 June 1973, and he served an assistantship in Immanuel congregation with the Rev James Walker Neilly, where he was ordained on 3 January 1974. The congregation of Raffrey, County Down, called him as their minister and he was installed there on 21 February 1975 by the Presbytery of Down. Eleven years later, he returned to Belfast to the congregation of Richview in which he was installed on 26 June 1986 by the Presbytery of South Belfast. Responsibility for Berry Street was added to his duties in 2000 and he was installed there by the presbytery on 26 July. Mr Anderson was untiring in every sphere of his ministry. A conscientious visitor, and evangelist in and out of the pulpit, he planted the seeds of faith in many lives and nurtured the spiritual welfare of his people. Ministry around the Donegal Road was complicated by the growing strength of paramilitary influence in the area, especially among young men, and the changing demography reduced the strength of the congregation. He extended his pastoral ministry on being appointed as a chaplain in the Royal Victoria Hospital, where his warm and approachable character gained the confidence of patients and staff. In the work of the wider church, his earlier experience in secretarial and administrative work prepared him well for his appointment as Clerk to the Presbytery of South Belfast in 1992, in which capacity he served until 2008. He acted as Convener of the Assembly's City Area Committee 1989-1996, and as National Chairman of the Girls' Brigade, Ireland, for several years. He retired on 3 July 2005, but continued in part-time ministry for

several years, particularly in the congregation of Second Newtownards. Mr Anderson married Dorothy Duncan on 31 July 1965 and they have two children, Nigel and Charis. To them, together with Mr Anderson's surviving sisters, Myrtle and Joan, and the wider family circle, we extend our sympathy and prayers, as we give thanks to God for the fellowship and service of our brother.

The Rev Norman Rayner McCormick, BA, Minister Emeritus (Released) Ballygawley and Ballyreagh, died 7 November 2021, in the eighty-sixth year of his age and the forty-third year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast, 10 August 1936, the eldest of two children, to James Mills McCormick, a building contractor, and his wife, Mary Agnes, née Mills. The family worshipped in Orangefield congregation where he came to faith in his teenage years. Mr McCormick was educated at Mountpottinger Primary School, and Cabin Hill Preparatory, followed by Campbell College, 1949 to 1953. On leaving school, he trained as a draftsman and was employed in the aircraft manufacturing industry with Short Brothers and Harland, for 21 years. In his thirties, he responded to the call of God to full-time ministry, and prepared himself by part-time study in Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Open University, from 1971 to 1975, graduating BA. On completion of his course, he entered the Assembly's College, Belfast, in 1975, to read theology. In the same year, he married Ruth Oliver, and they had a daughter, Victoria. He was licensed by the Presbytery of East Belfast, 11 June 1978, and assigned as assistant to the Rev Dr Alan Flavelle, in Lowe Memorial, Finaghy, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of South Belfast, 14 January 1979. Called by the congregation of Trinity, Greyabbey, he was installed there by the Presbytery of Ards, 26 March 1980. Six years later, he moved to the linked congregations of Ballygawley and Ballyreagh, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Omagh, 2 April 1986. Mr McCormick was a diligent pastor to his people, and a thoughtful listener and adviser to those who sought his counsel. He walked closely with his Saviour and commended Christ as 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' to his people in his teaching ministry. He played his part in the work of the Presbytery of Omagh, and served as Moderator 1987-1988. Mr McCormick retired on 31 August 2001 and for some years assisted the Very Rev Dr David Clarke as Pastoral Assistant in Terrace Row, Coleraine, and had more time to enjoy his love of classic car rallies. We give thanks to God for the steady and faithful ministry of our brother, and pray for his family circle, especially his wife, Ruth, daughter, Victoria, and sister, Maureen.

The Rev Thomas Irvine Harte, BA, BD, Minister Emeritus, Trinity, Boardmills, died 16 November 2021, in the seventy-fourth year of his age and the forty-eighth year of his ministry. He was born at Banbridge 18 May 1948, to Samuel Harte, a farmer, and his wife, Elizabeth, née Bell. The family worshipped in Leitrim congregation. Mr Harte was educated at Gransha Primary School and Wallace High School, Lisburn, 1959-1966.

Following the call of God, and in preparation for the ordained ministry, he attended Magee University College, Londonderry, and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1970. This was followed by three years of theological study at the Assembly's College, Belfast, from which he graduated BD in 1973. During these years he served student assistantships in Kirkpatrick Memorial, Belfast, and in Mourne, Kilkeel. He was licensed 20 June 1973 by the Presbytery of Down, and served a full-time assistantship to the Rev Samuel Eaton, in the congregation of McQuiston, Belfast, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of East Belfast, 13 January 1974. A countryman at heart, he nevertheless responded to a call issued by the city congregation of Crumlin Road to become their new minister, and he was installed there by the Presbytery of Belfast North, 26 May 1976. Here he was to remain for the next twenty-six years. Mr Harte was a dedicated parish minister who served his Lord and his people with unflagging dedication and zeal. An unassuming man, he had a Christ-like presence, and an easy way with people. His caring showed in practical ways as in taking elderly people to hospital appointments and escorting young people home safely from evening church activities. The area was seriously affected by the Troubles and Mr Harte was often seen out in the streets working with others to calm tense situations, sometimes at risk to himself. Each year he organised a community Service to which people from across the community and religious divide, were invited. He was intellectually gifted and preached clearly and without notes. His desire was to glorify God and to win his hearers to the Saviour. Mr Harte was also closely involved in various community projects. He served as Chairman, and as a Director, of the Vine Centre on the Crumlin Road, a community outreach offering a wide range of programmes including advice, lunches, seniors' meetings, adult education and an after schools' club. He was also a member of the Committee for the Filor Housing Association. He was Deputy Chaplain to the Crumlin Road gaol, and he was a Chaplain to the Mater Hospital. From 1989 to 1996 he served as Convener of the Retired Ministers' House Fund. In 2002 he accepted a call to the congregation of Trinity, Boardmills, where he was installed 22 April by the Presbytery of Down. Given his farming background, he settled readily in this rural setting and applied his experience and gifts with characteristic diligence. Owing to ill-health, Mr Harte retired on 31 May 2011. Throughout his ministry, Mr Harte was lovingly supported by his wife, Audrey Denise, née Boyd, whom he met at McQuiston, and whom he married on 25 July 1975. They had five children. We extend our sympathy to Mrs Harte, along with her family, Rachel, Alison, David, Stephen and Karen, Mr Harte's brothers Uel and Drew, and the wider family circle, sharing with them in thanksgiving for the life and ministry of our brother.

The Very Rev Samuel Hutchinson, BA, BD, MTh, DD, Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Emeritus, died on 19 November 2021, in the eighty-fifth year of his age and the fifty-eighth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 14 September 1937, the eldest of two children, to Robert Hutchinson, a Constable in the

Royal Ulster Constabulary, and his wife, Mary (Minnie) née Lyttle. Mrs Hutchinson died shortly after the birth of their daughter, Mary (May), and brother and sister were brought up by their maternal grandmother and her three unmarried daughters. The family worshipped in the congregation of Berry Street. Dr Hutchinson was educated at Forthriver Primary School, and the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, 1948-1956. He studied classics at the Queen's University, Belfast, and graduated BA with honours, in 1960. Convinced of the call of God to the ordained ministry, he studied theology at the Assembly's College, Belfast, where he distinguished himself academically, and he graduated BD in 1963. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast South on 2 June 1963, and assigned as assistant to the Rev Dr James Dunlop in the congregation of Oldpark, where he was ordained on 4 December 1963 by the same presbytery. He served there until called by the congregation of Gilford in 1966, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Iveagh on 8 December and, from 1967, was made stated supply to Clare in the Presbytery of Armagh. On 30 September 1969, he married Margaret Kerr of Lurgan, who faithfully supported her husband in the many long years of marriage and service they enjoyed together. His gifts as an administrator were utilised in his capacity as Clerk of the Presbytery of Iveagh from 1977 to 1985. In this office he developed links with his brother clerks throughout the Church and with Church House, and he built up an extensive and detailed knowledge of the Church. Blessed with a retentive memory and a forensic mind, he had the ability to analyse problems and to devise solutions, and was a wise counsellor to many. He served as Clerk to the Synod of Armagh and Down, 1983 to 1986. Dr Hutchinson convened the Church's Jewish Mission from 1977 to 1984 in which he took a keen interest, and he visited Hamburg, and Damascus, several times. He shared his knowledge of the mission in a chapter of the publication *Into all the World*. During these years he also convened the church's Racism Committee, 1977-1986. This breadth and depth of experience led to his appointment as Deputy Clerk to the Very Rev Dr Tom Simpson in 1985. On the retirement of Dr Simpson, he was appointed Clerk and General Secretary of the Assembly in 1990. In this role he served as the convener of the Peace and Peace Making Committee, 1987-1990, and he and the Rev Edmund Mawhinney, Secretary of the Irish Methodist Conference, worked together as Joint Secretaries to the meetings of the four main church leaders, often liaising with local and national politicians, government ministers, and civil servants. Dr Hutchinson served on the European Ecumenical Commission on Church and Society for six years, and was influential with the Irish government in ensuring the Churches were exempted from EU Employment legislation. In 1997, he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly and, along with Mrs Hutchinson, represented our church as guest of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, USA. The visit enabled him to strengthen relationships which would prove increasingly important in the run up to the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. Dr Hutchinson retired in 2003, but continued to share his experience and gifting behind the scenes for many years. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is indebted to him for his outstanding service, and we extend our sincere sympathy to his wife,

Margaret, his sister May, and the wider family circle, confident in the faith that assures us that absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

The Rev Robert John Gordon Gray, BA, BD, DMin, DD, Minister Emeritus (Released) First Lisburn, died 15 December 2021, in the eighty-sixth year of his age, and the sixty-second year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast, 20 December 1935, one of two children to Robert A Gray, a shop keeper, and his wife Meta, née Gordon. He was brought up in Larne in connection with the congregation of Gardenmore. He attended Maghermourne Primary School and took his secondary education at Larne Grammar School, 1947-1952, and Methodist College, Belfast, 1952-1953. On leaving school, he proceeded to the Queen's University, Belfast, to study classics, and graduated with an honours BA in 1957. A keen sportsman, with a particular interest in rowing, he was a member of Queen's Irish Championship senior eight crew, 1956-1957, then Captain of Queen's Boat Club, and of the Northern Ireland Empire and Commonwealth Games crew at Cardiff in 1958. By this time, he had decided to enter the ordained ministry, and attended the Assembly's College, Belfast, 1957-1959, then New College, Edinburgh, graduating with a BD from Queen's in 1962. In later years, he undertook a course of further study with Princeton Theological Seminary, and was awarded a Doctorate of Ministry degree in 1982. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus, 29 May 1960, and served as Assistant to the Rev Jack Withers, minister of Fisherwick congregation, Belfast. Under new Assembly legislation, he was the first assistant to be ordained, and the Service was conducted by the Presbytery of Belfast, 7 December 1960. In the same year, he married Margaret Evelyn Allen, a teacher, in Seymour Street Methodist Church, Lisburn. They had three sons, Philip, Timothy, and Jeremy. He considered an invitation from the Overseas Board to do missionary work in Gujarat but, after prayerful thought, chose ministry at the church extension cause of Belvoir Park, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Belfast, 23 February 1963. Sited on the fringes of a large housing estate, Dr Gray was engaged in consolidating a congregation and establishing organisations and outreach. The congregation met in a temporary church hall, until a church building, and a minor hall were erected, and opened on 1 May 1965. In June 1966, Dr Gray was appointed by the General Assembly as the first full-time Youth Secretary of the Church. This involved travelling widely in Ireland, the UK and abroad, and developing contacts and partnerships with other churches and ministries. He gave voice to a growing concern that the Church was losing touch with the young and needed to adapt to the fast-changing world around. During these years, he served as Secretary and Chairman of the Youth Committee of Irish Churches, as a member of the British Council of Churches Youth Department, as a delegate to the Standing Conference of Youth Organisations N.I., and as Chairman of the Boys' Residential Club, Black's Road, Belfast. He moved to Lisburn in 1973 when called by First Lisburn as their new minister in succession to the Very Rev Dr William Boyd, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Dromore on 27 June. Over the years, Dr Gray became a well-known

figure in the community in which he formed numerous contacts. He was a founder member of the Corrymeela community, and was committed to breaking down barriers and to creating understanding and co-operation in a divided society. He was a regular contributor to Radio 4's 'Prayer for the Day' and to Radio Ulster's morning 'Thought for the Day,' when he often addressed the contentious issues of the times, and was unafraid to challenge the listener with a controversial view. First Lisburn church building was devastated by bombs in August 1981, and again in 1989, and Dr Gray was instrumental in having shards of the shattered stained-glass windows used in the creation of the Resurrection window which was dedicated on 3 May 1987. Due to Dr Gray's vision, the 'Downtown Centre' was established at the church in 1988, and continues to support those with learning difficulties and mental health issues. Dr Gray was committed to the vision and fellowship of the World Council of Churches and he was a strong advocate of continuing membership in the heated debates of the later 1970s. When the Assembly voted to withdraw from the WCC in 1981, he remained in a personal capacity as a member of the working group, 'Renewal and Congregational Life,' until 1983. The Degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty of Ireland, 25 May 1990. Beyond his church ministry, Dr Gray was appointed a Presbyterian Chaplain to the Commandery of Ards of the Order of St John and, in 2007, was invested as a Knight by the Duke of Gloucester at the Priory Church, Clerkenwell. Dr Gray retired on 31 March 2001, and settled in Ballycastle. He became active in the inter-church group, Ballycastle Church Action and, as the Convenor of its Peace and Reconciliation Committee, he initiated four "Faith in the Public Square" Community Forums on issues of the day. In 2003-4, he was invited by the Presbyterian Church USA, to be a member of their International Peacemakers' Team and, in the summer of 2008, he visited five of the denomination's presbyteries. Retirement gave him more opportunity to pursue his hobbies. He was a talented photographer, a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, and he provided the photographs for Dr Laurence Kirkpatrick's book, *Presbyterians in Ireland*. He was also a keen yachtsman. Tragedy struck in May 2013, when his wife, Margaret, died while driving her car near Ballymoney. We give thanks to almighty God for Dr Gray's ministry, and extend to his second wife, Patricia Crossley, Dr Gray's sons, his sister Marlene, and the wider family circle, our sincere sympathy, and commend them to the grace and comfort of Almighty God in whom is our strength and hope.

The Rev Victor Henry Ryan, MA, PhD, Minister Emeritus (Released) First Ballymacarrett, died 28 January 2022, in the ninety-eighth year of his age and the seventy-third year of his ministry. He was born at Dungiven on 16 June 1924 to Victor Henry Ryan, a Police Constable, and his wife, Elizabeth McCombe Ryan, née Pollock. He had a younger sister, Betty. He grew up in Limavady, attended the congregation of Drumachose, and was educated at Limavady Grammar School. Having decided to enter the ministry, he studied at Magee University College, Londonderry, 1942, and graduated

BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1946. While at Magee, he became an Irish Inter-Pro(vincial) hockey player. This was followed by theological study at the Assembly's College, Belfast. On conclusion of his studies, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Limavady on 17 October 1948, and served as assistant to the Rev Dr John Henry Carson (previously minister of Drumachose) in the congregation of Westbourne, Belfast. In 1949, he was called to First Donegal where he was ordained by the Presbytery of Donegal on 14 December. Two years later, he moved to the joint charge of Milford and Fannet where he was installed by the same presbytery on 10 October 1951. During his ministry, extensive renovations were carried out on the church building. Nine years later he moved to the congregation of Cliftonville, Belfast, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 10 March 1960. In the later 1960s and early 1970s, when community strife broke out in the area the congregation decided to port to Ballyhenry, Glengormley, in March 1972. With the help of the Church Extension Committee, temporary premises were opened and, on 4 March 1972, Dr Ryan was installed as the minister of the newly erected congregation which was known as Cliftonville/Ballyhenry. The name Armstrong Memorial was added in recognition of a generous gift of money from the family of that name. Dr Ryan moved to First Donaghadee in 1975 where he was installed by the Presbytery of Ards on 20 March. He ministered there until he returned to Belfast as minister of First Ballymacarrett where he was installed by the Presbytery of East Belfast on 1 February 1984. In all these spheres Dr Ryan gave himself unstintingly to his pastoral and pulpit work. He believed in regular visitation of his people in their homes and placed a strong emphasis on the ministry of the Word for which he prepared diligently. The well-being of the young was never far from his thoughts, which showed in his active involvement with the Boys' Brigade, at Cliftonville in particular. He had an enquiring mind and found time to study for a PhD which was awarded by Greenwich University School of Theology in 1997. Dr Ryan was a prominent member of the Orange Order and was Grand Chaplain of the County Grand Orange Lodge of Belfast for 50 years and, for the same length of time, Grand Chaplain of the City of Belfast Grand Royal Arch Purple Chapter. In 1994, at the Imperial Orange Council in Auckland, he was elected Imperial Chaplain, a post he held until 2015, after which he was elected as an Honorary Imperial Vice- President. Dr Ryan retired on 31 December 1994. He married Elaine Elizabeth Sloan from Castleberg on 7 September 1950 and predeceased him on 17 November 2016. They had four children – John, Gillian, Alison and Heather, to whom, with the wider family circle, we extend our sympathy, as we give thanks to God for the ministry of our brother in the service of the Gospel.

The Rev Robert Dickson (Bob) Larmour, MA, Minister Emeritus, Magheragall, died on 10 March 2022, in the one hundred and first year of his age and the sixty-ninth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast, 13 November 1921, the youngest of three children to Aaron Agnew Larmour, a plumber, and his wife, Mary. His brother, Aaron, and his sister, Pauline, have predeceased him. The family attended Saint Enoch's, Carlisle

Circus, where Mr Larmour became a leader in a two-hundred strong Sunday School and Bible class, and in an associated Youth Fellowship. This experience shaped his conviction to train for the ministry. On leaving school, he studied electrical engineering at the Belfast Technical College, and then Shaftesbury House College, from which he matriculated to the Queen's University, Belfast, to continue his engineering studies. Having decided for the ordained ministry, he attended Magee University College, Londonderry, and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1950. This was followed by theological study at the Assembly's College, Belfast. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast, 27 May 1952, and served a short relief assistantship in Ulsterville congregation before being assigned as assistant to the Rev Norman M Heaney of the, then, large congregation of Newington. Magheragall called him in 1953, and he was ordained there by the Presbytery of Dromore, 2 September. This was to be his sole charge for the next thirty-five years. He gave himself enthusiastically to the work of preaching and pastoring and used his practical knowledge and skills in the maintenance and improvement of the church property. Youth work was close to his heart, and he served for two periods as Captain of the Boys' Brigade and encouraged the work of the Girls' Brigade. He further served the interests of these organisations as Chairman of the Lisburn District of the Boys' Brigade and Chairman of the Lisburn District of the Girls' Brigade, holding this latter office for thirteen years. For three periods he was a part-time teacher of R.E. in Fort Hill Girls' School (now Fort Hill Integrated College), Lisnagarvey High School, and Wallace High School. For the whole of his ministry, he acted as Chairman of the School Management Committee of Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School, and he was a member of the Management Committee of Laurel Hill Secondary School (now Laurel Hill Community College) for a number of years. His pastoral skills were more widely utilised in his work as Chaplain to the Killowen Hospital (now closed) and as Presbytery Agent for Divine Healing, and as a member of the Churches Council for Health and Healing in Ireland. In the work of the Presbytery of Dromore, Mr Larmour acted as Temperance Agent, and as Overseas Mission Agent for two periods. In all of these capacities he was loyally supported by his wife, Edith Matilda, née Moore, from Monaghan, whom he married, 28 August 1962, and who founded a PWA in the congregation in 1965. Mrs Larmour was a Nursing Sister in the Lagan Valley Hospital. She predeceased her husband 24 October 2001. Mr Larmour retired, 30 September 1988, but he continued to minister for many years as part-time Pastoral Assistant in Hillsborough congregation. Mr and Mrs Larmour had one son, David Moore Larmour, and to him and the wider family circle we express the sympathy of the Assembly in their loss, as together we give thanks to God for the long life and service of our brother in Christ.

The Rev Thomas Crawford Ballentine, MPhil, PhD, DTheol, BD, Dip SCOT, Minister Emeritus, Grange, died on 20 April 2022, in the eighty-fifth year of his age and the forty-first year of his ministry. He was born at Ahoghill, on 1 July 1937, to Alexander Ballentine, a shop owner,

and his wife, Hannah, née Crawford. The family worshipped in Trinity Presbyterian Church, Ahoghill, and Dr Ballentine was educated at the Old Model School and at Ballymena Academy from 1949 to 1955. On leaving school he worked in the Old Green Woollen Mills, Kells, and later went to Scotland to study at the Scottish College of Textiles (now Heriot-Watt School of Textiles and Design), Galashiels, from 1956 to 1959. He returned to Northern Ireland and became a production manager at the Old Green Woollen Mills. While in Scotland he met Marian Chalmers Sanderson, whom he married on 1 April 1961. They had four children, Dorothy, David, Derek and Diane. In 1970 the family settled in Scotland where, as well as continuing in full-time employment, Dr Ballentine undertook further study, firstly at the Napier College of Technology during two periods, 1970 to 1971, and 1972 to 1974, gaining a Dip IM, followed by Leeds University from which he graduated MPhil in 1978. During these years a growing sense of call to study for the ordained ministry led him to apply to the Church of Scotland as a student for the ministry. He undertook theological study at New College, the University of Edinburgh, in 1978, from which he graduated BD in 1981. He was licensed at Ruthwell by the Presbytery of Dumfries, on 23 June 1981 and he was ordained and installed on 20 August of the same year in the linked charge of Ruthwell, Cummertrees and Mouswald. In 1983 he was called to the congregation of Grange and he was installed there by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 12 October 1983. A gifted preacher, he ministered the Word of God faithfully week by week. He enjoyed being among people and sought to bring comfort and help to all in his care. With an eye to the next generation, and the continuing witness of the church, he encouraged young people in their faith and service by involving them in Sunday Services, in leadership and through establishing an annual Holiday Bible Club. Under his leadership, new church halls were built and opened in 1990 and the church building was refurbished in 1997. Within the presbytery, he convened the Divine Healing Committee and led many of the services. He continued to study and was awarded a PhD in 1986. In the wider local community, he served on the Boards of Governors of Groggan Primary School and Ballee High School and he was, for a time, a chaplain in the Waveney Hospital, Ballymena. Dr Ballentine retired from full-time ministry on 31 December 2002, but continued to work part-time in Wellington, and First Antrim, and also in teaching economics and business management courses at the Ballymena and Antrim campuses of the Northern Eastern Regional College. He continued to study and he was awarded a DTheol by the Geneva Theological College in 2007 for his thesis on the 1859 Revival. He published *The Epistle to the Romans: Light, Love, Life; Nothing Compares to Jesus*; and *Studies on the Second Coming*. Mrs Ballentine predeceased her husband on 25 April 2019. We extend to Dr Ballentine's children, sister Letitia, and the wider family circle, our prayers in their loss, and commend them to the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in whom is the assurance of resurrection and life.

Very Rev Dr DONALD PATTON

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 2

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduction

The Support Services Committee met in November and December 2021 and also in April 2022. At its meeting in November 2021, the General Council authorised the Committee to review its structures (i.e. Panels etc.) and implement agreed changes and it is currently reviewing the best way to deal with the wide range of matters under its remit.

(A) FINANCE MATTERS

Congregational Assessments

1. The Committee considered in detail projections for 2021 and budgets for 2022 for the respective assessment funds, along with the balances in each of these. The projected income requirement from assessments for 2022 (excluding pensions) was agreed by the Committee as £3,680,000, compared to an updated projected figure for 2021 of £3,671,700 (the original budget was £3,500,000). Most of the funds are budgeted to require slightly less assessment income than 2021, but there is a significant increase in the requirement for the Students' Bursary Fund, due mainly to an increase in the number of students but also to a reduction in congregational income, with fewer licencing services etc taking place during lockdown. The overall requirement for 2022 is therefore marginally up on 2021 projected income.

The Committee noted that congregational assessable income for 2020 (which is used to calculate 2022 assessments) was lower than 2019 (which was used to calculate 2021 assessments) and therefore the rates of assessment used in 2021 will produce less assessment income in 2022 and indeed an amount less than the projected income requirement. The Committee decided that the assessment rates for 2022 should however remain at the same level as for 2021, which will result in a shortfall to be covered from reserves. The assessment rates for 2023 will be reviewed later this year and some uplift may be required. The assessment for the Pension Fund is to remain at 24% for 2022 of a minister's stipend as reported to, and agreed by, the General Assembly in October. Further details re assessments are shown in Appendix 1.

Pay and stipend increase

2. The Committee noted that there had been no increase in 2021 in either stipends or salaries. The Committee was keen to support staff and ministers but also anxious that, in a time when congregational income levels were more uncertain, unrealistic financial pressures should not be placed on congregations. Taking all factors into account, the Committee decided on the following increases for 2022.

| | Northern Ireland | Republic of Ireland |
|------|------------------|---------------------|
| 2022 | 2.25% | 1.0% |

The Committee noted that the increase in the basic ministerial minimum impacts on other allowances etc and a summary of these is noted in Appendix 2.

Accounts

3. The Committee reviewed the financial statements for 2021 and recommended to General Council that they be approved. Overall income is down from £28,208,405 in 2020 to £27,296,095 in 2021. However, expenditure in 2021 was in line with the previous year – £25,848,383 in 2020 compared to £25,677,375 in 2021. There was a surplus, before some accounting adjustments including pensions, in 2021 of £1,618,720 compared to £2,360,022 in 2020. This is considered a good outcome, bearing in mind the uncertainties during 2021 arising from the impact of Covid-19. The audited accounts for 2021 are included in the Annual Accounts Book.

Pensions

4. The following ministerial retirements have been noted.

| Name | Congregation | Retirement Date | Pre 66 |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| Rev R.S. McMullan | New Row Coleraine | 30/04/2022 | Yes |
| Rev J. Lamb | Townsend Street | 16/09/2022 | - |
| Rev D.J. Bruce | CMI Executive Secretary | 12/11/2022 | - |
| Rev C.F.D. Clements | Second Castleberg & Urney | 29/11/2022 | Yes |
| Rev Dr W.D. Cupples | Enniskillen | 31/01/2023 | Yes |

In view of his retirement date being before the 2022 General Assembly the General Council granted to Rev R.S. McMullan (New Row Coleraine), under Par 223(3) of the Code, leave to retire on or before 30 April 2022

(B) ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS

Human Resources

5. The challenges presented by Covid-19 continued, particularly for our care homes, where staffing levels have been greatly affected by both staff and residents testing positive and by staff having to self-isolate at home due to more stringent rules around self-isolation for care staff. The Committee met specifically in December to consider a range of HR issues on behalf of the Council for Social Witness. Non-care home recruitment included the appointment of a new Secretary of the Council for Social Witness, Head of Disability Services, and six new executive level posts at Union College following restructuring (Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry, three new Lecturers, Head of Operations and Head of Academic Administration). A range of other policies were agreed, including a non-contractual informal home working policy for staff in Assembly Buildings. The Committee wish to express their appreciation to Ms Laura Kelly, Head of Personnel, for her dedicated service over the last 14 years. Ms Kelly has decided to take up another position outside of Northern Ireland and, at the time of writing this report, a recruitment process is underway for her replacement.

Property

6. Work continued to manage health and safety in Assembly Buildings in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, and the NI Fire and Rescue recently completed a full audit which had a positive outcome. A Policy on Safe Working for Staff in Assembly Buildings was created and issued. The Belfast City Mission moved into the building in January 2022, and there has been an encouraging level of interest in the conference facilities, especially from public sector bodies, and bookings in 2022 are projected to recover from the lower than normal levels in 2020 and 2021.

Work on a number of properties under the Retired Ministers' House Fund has been completed or is being planned, and the future operation of the Fund is being examined, as it can no longer provide loan funding towards purchasing homes for eligible applicants.

Creative Production

7. CPD continued to support a wide range of communications, both printed and digital, including 'Hope at Christmas' in December. CPD is aware of the increasing challenges to the functionality of the website and the need to address the technical issues, in support of the work being carried out with the PCI communications strategy. The *Presbyterian Herald* magazine is returning to 10 issues in 2022 and the membership of the *Herald* Editorial Advisory Panel was agreed.

Information Technology

8. A considerable amount of network improvement work has been completed or is still under way, and a Dedicated High-Capacity network service between Assembly Buildings and UTC was installed to allow high-speed, secure traffic between both locations. New storage and server environments were installed in Assembly Buildings and all computing services have been migrated to them. Programming is continuing on the centralised telephone system for all sites. Assembly Buildings' phone lines will be migrated shortly and the new system will be fully operational in 2022. An organisational review is ongoing which will lead to some restructuring of work responsibilities.

APPENDIX 1

BUDGETED ASSESSMENT INCOME REQUIREMENTS FOR 2022 AND ANTICIPATED INCOME

(with comparison to 2021 projected income)

| | Budgeted Income Requirement | | Allocation | | Budgeted Income | | Projected Income | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------|----------------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|---|
| | 2022 | £ | 2022 | % | 2022 | £ | 2021 | £ |
| Central Ministry Fund | 1,200,000 | 1,200,000 | 32.60% | | 1,144,000 | 1,144,000 | 1,305,000 | |
| Retired Ministers' Fund | 0 | 0 | 0.00% | | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Widows of Ministers' Fund | 250,000 | 250,000 | 6.79% | | 239,000 | 239,000 | 287,000 | |
| Prolonged Disability Fund | 200,000 | 200,000 | 5.43% | | 191,000 | 191,000 | 209,900 | |
| Incidental Fund | 925,000 | 925,000 | 25.14% | | 882,000 | 882,000 | 965,000 | |
| Church House External Work | 500,000 | 500,000 | 13.59% | | 477,000 | 477,000 | 548,100 | |
| Ministerial Development * | 115,000 | 115,000 | 3.13% | | 110,000 | 110,000 | 135,800 | |
| Sick Supply Fund | 15,000 | 15,000 | 0.41% | | 14,000 | 14,000 | 20,900 | |
| Students' Bursary Fund * | 475,000 | 475,000 | 12.91% | | 453,000 | 453,000 | 200,000 | |
| TOTAL ASSESSMENTS (Excl Pension) | | 3,680,000 | 100.00% | | 3,510,000 | 3,510,000 | 3,671,000 | |

**RATES OF ASSESSMENT FOR 2022 (same as for 2021)
(applied to assessable income for 2019 and 2020 respectively)**

| Band | Income from | Income to | Rate |
|------|-------------|-----------|--------|
| 1 | 0 | 11,000 | 0.00% |
| 2 | 11,001 | 65,000 | 11.25% |
| 3 | 65,001 | 130,000 | 10.75% |
| 4 | 130,001 | 195,000 | 7.25% |
| 5 | 195,001 | 260,000 | 3.50% |
| 6 | 260,001 | above | 0.00% |

Note: The rates of assessments for 2020 were also as above except that the Band 2 rate was 14.50%.

APPENDIX 2

BASIC MINISTERIAL MINIMUM FOR 2022 (AND OTHER RATES)

| | Northern Ireland | | Republic of Ireland | |
|---|------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| | 2022 £ | 2021 £ | 2022 € | 2021 € |
| 1. BASIC AND APPROPRIATE MINISTERIAL MINIMUM | | | | |
| Basic Ministerial Minimum (BMM) | 27,774 | 27,229 | 40,757 | 40,353 |
| After 1 year's service | 28,052 | 27,501 | 41,165 | 40,757 |
| After 2 years' service | 28,330 | 27,773 | 41,573 | 41,161 |
| After 3 years' service | 28,608 | 28,045 | 41,981 | 41,565 |
| After 4 years' service | 28,886 | 28,317 | 42,389 | 41,969 |
| After 5 years' service | 29,164 | 28,589 | 42,797 | 42,373 |
| After 6 years' service | 29,442 | 28,861 | 43,205 | 42,777 |
| After 7 years' service | 29,720 | 29,133 | 43,613 | 43,181 |
| After 8 years' service | 29,998 | 29,405 | 44,021 | 43,585 |
| After 9 years' service | 30,276 | 29,677 | 44,429 | 43,989 |
| After 10 years' service | 30,554 | 29,949 | 44,837 | 44,393 |
| After 11 years' service | 30,832 | 30,221 | 45,245 | 44,797 |
| After 12 years' service | 31,110 | 30,493 | 45,653 | 45,201 |
| After 13 years' service | 31,388 | 30,765 | 46,061 | 45,605 |
| After 14 years' service | 31,666 | 31,037 | 46,469 | 46,009 |
| After 15 years' service | 31,944 | 31,309 | 46,877 | 46,413 |
| After 16 years' service | 32,222 | 31,581 | 47,285 | 46,817 |
| After 17 years' service | 32,500 | 31,853 | 47,693 | 47,221 |
| After 18 years' service | 32,778 | 32,125 | 48,101 | 47,625 |
| After 19 years' service | 33,056 | 32,397 | 48,509 | 48,029 |
| After 20 years' service | 33,334 | 32,669 | 48,917 | 48,433 |

| | Northern Ireland | | Republic of Ireland | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------|
| | 2022 £ | 2021 £ | 2022 € | 2021 € |
| 2. RETIRED MINISTERS' FUND | | | | |
| Pension (maximum) | 13,252 | 12,992 | stg converted | stg converted |
| 3. WIDOWS OF MINISTERS' FUND | | | | |
| Pension (maximum) | 7,288 | 7,145 | stg converted | stg converted |
| 4. PROLONGED DISABILITY FUND | | | | |
| Grant (maximum) | 13,326 | 13,065 | stg converted | stg converted |
| 5. REGIUM DONUM | | | | |
| Annual Payment | 360 | 360 | stg converted | stg converted |
| 6. SUPPLY FEES | | | | |
| Two or more services | 112 | 110 | 162 | 160 |
| Single service (at 2/3rd of above) | 75 | 73 | 108 | 107 |
| Travel – mileage rate | 15p | 15p | 22c | 22c |
| 7. VACANCY CONVENERS' FEES | | | | |
| Supply Fee plus | | | | |
| < 100 Families + 0% | 112 | 110 | 162 | 160 |
| 100<200 Families + 5% | 118 | 116 | 118 | 168 |
| 200<300 families +10% | 123 | 121 | 123 | 176 |
| 300+ Families + 15% | 129 | 127 | 129 | 184 |
| Travel – mileage rate | 15p | 15p | 22c | 22c |

| | Northern Ireland | | Republic of Ireland | |
|--|------------------|-----------|---------------------|--------------------|
| | 2022 £ | 2021 £ | 2022 € | 2021 € |
| 8. EXPENSES | | | | |
| Ministers' Car Allowance | 3,820 | 3,745 | 5,564 | 5,509 |
| Ministers' Taxable (Duties/Manse) Allowance | 2,547 | 2,497 | 4,204 | 4,162 |
| Associates' Car Allowance | 3,820 | 3,745 | % of Ministers ROI | % of Ministers ROI |
| Associates' Taxable Duties Allowance | 2,123 | 2,081 | % of Ministers ROI | % of Ministers ROI |
| Associates' House Allowance (CMF Max) | 1,000 | 1,000 | % of Ministers ROI | % of Ministers ROI |
| Licentiates' Car Allowance (80%) | 3,057 | 2,997 | % of Ministers ROI | % of Ministers ROI |
| Licentiates' Duties Allowance (42%) | 1,070 | 1,049 | % of Ministers ROI | % of Ministers ROI |
| Ordained Assistants' Travel Allowance | 3,820 | 3,745 | % of Ministers ROI | % of Ministers ROI |
| Ordained Assistants' Duties Allowance | 1,070 | 1,049 | % of Ministers ROI | % of Ministers ROI |
| 9. OTHER | | | | |
| Ignored for Augmented Grant Par.316(2)(d)(i) (i.e. 52 weeks' supply fee) | 5,824 | 5,720 | 8,424 | 8,320 |
| Ignored for Augmented Grant Par.316(2)(d)(ii) | 2,400 | 2,400 | | |

| | Northern Ireland | | Republic of Ireland | |
|---|------------------|-----------|---------------------|-----------|
| | 2022 £ | 2021 £ | 2022 € | 2021 € |
| 9. FAMILY GRANTS | | | | |
| Category 1. Birth to final year primary school | | | | |
| – Child Allowance | 391 | 383 | 587 | 581 |
| – Tuition Grants | 0 | 0 | 485 | 480 |
| Category 2. Secondary School | | | | |
| – Child Allowance | 572 | 561 | 868 | 859 |
| – Tuition Grants | 0 | 0 | 816 | 808 |
| Category 3. Further and Higher Education (to 24) | | | | |
| – Child Allowance | 859 | 842 | 1,276 | 1,263 |
| – Tuition Grants | 2,081 | 2,040 | 4,080 | 4,040 |

The above are maximum amounts as reduction apply above certain income levels.

APPENDIX 3

INCIDENTAL FUND BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

| | 2022 Budget £ | 2021 Actual £ |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| PAYMENTS TO/ON BEHALF OF COUNCILS | | |
| (i) General Council | | |
| General Work | 5,000 | - |
| Assembly Arrangements | 20,000 | 11,779 |
| Irish Council of Churches | 18,000 | 17,733 |
| Irish Inter-Church Meeting | 9,000 | 8,734 |
| Conference of European Churches | 6,000 | 6,000 |
| Comm Protestant Churches Europe | 1,300 | 1,300 |
| World Comm Reformed Churches | 13,000 | 13,000 |
| Guysmere Development Panel (balance of £75k) | 59,000 | 6,000 |
| (ii) Council for Public Affairs | | |
| Dealing with the Past / Considering Grace | - | -104 |
| Education Grants | 7,250 | 7,130 |
| (iii) Council for Congregational Life and Witness | | |
| | - | -5 |
| (iv) Linkage Commission | | |
| General Work | 7,000 | 6,846 |
| Church Architecture Committee | 9,000 | 8,500 |

| | 2022 Budget £ | 2021 Actual £ |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| OTHER COSTS | | |
| Costs of General Secretary's Department | 430,000 | 382,985 |
| Support Services Charges | 130,000 | 127,751 |
| Re-organisation costs | – | 5,934 |
| Moderator expenses allowance | 30,000 | 18,348 |
| Printing for General Assembly | 20,000 | 18,309 |
| Postage, admin and other | 15,000 | 10,661 |
| Insurance | 13,000 | 12,705 |
| Travel General Assembly and Councils etc. | 14,000 | 2,139 |
| Allowance to Congregations re Conveners | 6,500 | 5,700 |
| Legal fees | 32,000 | 31,128 |
| UTC Support Services rebate | 60,000 | 60,000 |
| UK Borders Agency | 1,000 | 536 |
| Presbyterian Historical Society | 23,000 | 23,000 |
| Youth Link | 11,500 | 11,297 |
| Peninsula Employment Law and Health and Safety | 20,000 | 18,801 |
| TOTAL | 965,550 | 816,207 |

APPENDIX 4

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT STAFFING

Sterling Salary Scales of posts in Assembly Buildings on 1 January 2022

EXECUTIVE POSTS

Scale 1 (£26,324 – £31,275)

IT Support Manager (ITD)

Operations and Maintenance Manager (PSD)

Scale 2 (£29,728 – £35,761)

Property Support Officer (FSD)

Children's Development Officer (CLW)

Creative Production Support Officer (including Editorial Responsibilities)
(CPD)

Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer (CLW)

Finance Manager (FSD)

Press Officer

Payroll and Assessment Manager (FSD)

Personnel Support Officer (PD) x 2

Youth Development Officer (CLW)

Discipleship Development Officer (CLW)

Mission Support Officer (Partnership) (MD)

Scale 3 (£33,262 – £40,539)

Finance Manager (CSW)

Mission Support Officer (Member Care) (MD)

Head of Creative Production (CPD)

Programme Development Officer (CLW)

Public Affairs Officer (GSD)

Training Development Officer (CLW)

Mission Support Officer (MD)

Head of Conferencing and Operations (PSD)

Scale 4 (£36,661 – £45,801)

Senior Finance Manager (FSD)

IT Development and Support Manager (ITD)

Head of Safeguarding (CSW)

Scale 5 (£40,539 – £49,401)

Head of Personnel (PD)

Scale 6 (£43,540 – £53,043)

Deputy Clerk of Assembly and Deputy General Secretary
 Secretary of the Council for Mission in Ireland
 Secretary of the Council for Social Witness
 Secretary of the Council for Global Mission
 Secretary of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness

Scale 7 (£49,401 – £63,545)

Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary
 Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS

Scale 2 (£16,121 – £18,645)

Personnel Assistant (0.6 post) (PD)
 Administrative Assistant (0.5 post) (Purchase Ledger) (FSD)
 Operations and Maintenance Assistant (PSD)
 Assistant Receptionist and Telephonist (PSD) (higher salary protected)

Scale 3 (£18,090 – £20,917)

Administrative Assistant (0.4) (GSD)
 Senior Personnel Assistant (Job Share) (PD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (job share 1.2 post) (CSW)
 Senior Administrative Assistant, PW (CLW)
 Taking Care Administrator (CSW)

Scale 4 (£20,497 – £23,605)

Senior Administrative Assistant (Partnerships) (MD)
 Payroll and Administrative Assistant (.77 post) (FSD)
 Senior Administrative Assistants (x 2 P/T) (CLW)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (0.6 post) (FSD)
 Senior Communications Assistant (Pub) (2 x 0.6 post) (CPD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (CLW)

Scale 5 (£22,426 – £25,892)

Senior Creative Production Technician (CPD)
 Personal Assistant and Senior Administrative Assistant (MD)
 Assistant Accountant (FSD)
 Senior Personnel Administrator (PD)

Personal Assistant and Senior Administrative Assistant (job share) (GSD)
 IT Support Officer x 3 (ITD)
 IT Support and Development Officer (0.8 post) (ITD)
 Payroll and Administrative Assistant (FSD)

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£24,768 – £28,313)

Personal Assistant and Office Supervisor (CLW)
 Personal Assistant and Office Supervisor (MD)
 Personal Assistant and Office Supervisor (CSW)

Scale 5 (Enhanced pt 25-34) (£24,768 – £30,525)

Senior Personal Assistant and Office Supervisor (GSD)

Sterling Salary Scales of posts in other locations on 1 January 2022

Scale 1 (£26,324 – £31,275)

Rural Chaplain

Scale 2 (£29,728 – £35,761)

College Librarian, Union College
 Minister/Ministry Co-ordinator, Kinghan Church (CSW)
 Chaplain in Residence (MD)
 University Chaplain UUJ, (MD)
 Lecturer in Historical Theology, Union College
 Lecturer in Biblical Studies, Union College
 Lecturer in Practical and Pastoral Theology
 Chaplain NI Prison Service and Co-ordinating Chaplain (Maghaberry)
 Operations Manager (Union College)

Scale 3 (£33,262 – £40,539)

Head of Academic Administration (Union College)

Scale 5 (£40,539 – £49,401)

Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Director of Post-Graduate Studies
 (Union College)
 Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry

Scale 6 (£43,540 – £53,043)

Professor of Systematic Theology, Union College

Scale 7 (£49,401 – £63,545)

Principal of Union Theological College

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS

Scale 1 (£16,121 – £17,304)

Clerical Officer (1 p/t) OPS (CSW) – Recorded as A2 on spreadsheet

Scale 2 (£16,121 – £18,645)

Clerical Officer – Carlisle House (part time) (CSW)

Clerical Officer, (4 FT and 2 PT) (CSW)

Clerical Officer, Kinghan Church (part time) (CSW)

Custodian, Union College

Library Assistant (part time), Union College

Receptionist/Telephonist (Union College)

Scale 3 (£18,090 – £20,917)

Senior Clerical Officer (part time), Carlisle House (CSW)

Senior Secretary, Union College (0.6 post)

Senior Secretary, Union College

Clerical Officer, (CSW)

Scale 4 (£20,497 – £23,605)

Administrator, and Personal Assistant to the Chaplain Derryvolgie (MD)

Senior Secretary, Union College

Scale 5 (Euro 34,153 – Euro 39,462)

Resident Manager, Tritonville Close (Euro Scale) (CSW)

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£24,768 – £28,313)

Assistant Chaplain, QUB (MD)

UNITED APPEAL

The Committee has met on two occasions since the last meeting of the General Assembly in October 2021

- On 8 February 2022 to consider the response to the 2021 Appeal
- On 1 April 2022 to review Council budget submissions for 2023 and to agree recommendations to the General Council for an Appeal and grants to Councils for that year.

Appendix 1 includes a summary of the Income and Expenditure Account for United Appeal (showing actuals results for 2019, 2020 and 2021 and projections / budgets for 2022 and 2023).

(A) THE 2021 APPEAL

At the meeting on 8 February 2022, the Committee considered the response to the 2021 Appeal and the financial outturn for that year. The accounts for 2021 show that £3,015,185 was received against the 2021 Net Appeal of £3,300,000 (being a gross Appeal of £3,600,000 less a Covid-19 reduction of £300,000). Despite this shortfall, the Committee acknowledges that this is still a significant response from congregations in the midst of another year, as in 2020, largely dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At that time, 53 congregations (2020: 71, 2019: 39, 2018: 38, 2017: 27) had not contributed to the Appeal and their targets totalled £237,216 (2020: £356,628, 2019: £202,088, 2018: £171,708, 2017: £133,605). In addition:

- (a) 148 congregations contributed above their target (2020: 148, 2019: 167, 2018: 195, 2017: 219)
- (b) 176 congregations did not achieve their target (2020: 181, 2019: 161, 2018: 124, 2017: 109) and
- (c) 154 congregations contributed to their target exactly (2020: 144, 2019: 177, 2018: 187, 2017: 188).

The accounts also showed that £313,890 was received in 2021 relating to earlier years' Appeals (2020: £165,388, 2019: 166,044, 2018: £118,943, 2017: £158,847).

At the time of writing, a further £173,577 has been received as “late contributions” for the 2021 Appeal and therefore 96.6% of the Appeal has now been received.

The Committee approved the following grants for 2021

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Mission in Ireland | 724,500 |
| Global Mission | 1,061,500 |
| Congregational Life and Witness | 402,000 |
| Training in Ministry | 412,500 |
| Social Witness | 224,500 |
| General – Creative Production | 123,000 |
| Total | <u>2,948,000</u> |

These grants were lower than what might be regarded as “normal” but were in accordance with what was reported to the October 2021 General Assembly. As a reminder, in 2020 Councils received 90% of what might have been regarded as a normal level of grants, with the reduced level of grants awarded in 2021 reflecting savings Councils had made/budgeted in both 2020 and 2021.

The net impact of this was that in 2021 the United Appeal Fund had an overall surplus of £395,627 – this included £50,000 of grants returned by the Council for Congregational Life and Witness. This level of surplus was anticipated and is needed to cover the projected deficit in 2022 – see below.

(B) THE 2022 APPEAL

The October 2021 General Assembly agreed that the Appeal for 2022 should (as per 2021) be a Net Appeal of £3,300,000 (being a gross Appeal of £3,600,000 less a Covid-19 reduction of £300,000).

The following grants were approved for 2022 but are subject to the response to the Appeal. The normal practice of releasing 7.5% of these amounts to Councils on a monthly basis with 10% held back pending the response to the Appeal with continue to apply.

| | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Mission in Ireland | 1,065,000 |
| Global Mission | 1,000,000 |
| Cong. Life and Witness | 640,000 |
| Training in Ministry | 375,000 |
| Social Witness | 245,000 |
| General – CPD | 200,000 |
| Total | 3,525,000 |

It is projected that in 2022, the level of income will not be sufficient to cover these grants and that there will be a deficit of £216,271. This will be offset by a projected return from the Council for Congregational Life and Witness of £35,000. This deficit will be covered by the 2021 surplus.

(C) THE 2023 APPEAL

At its meeting on 8 February 2022, the Committee agreed a range of assumptions that Councils should use in preparing their budgets for 2023. These included assumptions about cost of living increases, inflation and specific assumptions in relation to anticipated increases in electricity and gas prices as well as insurance premiums. There is already concern that some of these assumptions may be underestimated in light of current high rates of inflation.

The Committee met on 1 April 2022 to consider Councils' budget submissions for 2023. These submissions included revised projections for 2022, budgets for 2023 and actual figures for 2021. The submissions were accompanied by a letter explaining the rationale for the amount requested and any key assumptions made. The Committee would like to express appreciation to Councils Secretaries, Conveners and Finance Managers for their hard work in preparing these submissions.

The normal practice when annual budget requests are submitted is that interviews are held with representatives of each Council. At those meetings the representatives are able to explain their Council requests and the Committee has an opportunity to ask any relevant questions. In light of ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, interviews were not held and any queries were relayed to Councils via the Financial Secretary. The following are the key points identified from the requests.

Mission in Ireland

| | 2023 Request | 2022 Approved | 2021 Actual | 2020 Actual | 2019 Actual |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Request/ Grants | 1,085,000 | 1,065,000 | 724,500 | 958,000 | 1,065,000 |

- (a) The outturn for 2021 was better than anticipated, as expenditure was below budget.
- (b) 2022 includes significant Capital Projects totaling £1,700,000 – Maynooth £1,000,000 (church building), Donabate £500,000 (site) and Greystones £200,000 (ancillary rooms to rear of church).
- (c) 2023 also includes significant Capital Projects totaling £1,600,000 – Donabate £1,000,000 (church building), Fermoy £100,000 (repairs) and Taughmonagh £500,000 (new manse).
- (d) Some of these projects were originally budgeted in earlier years but have been delayed.
- (e) These projects are to be funded from bequests received in 2020, amounts received from various Presbytery Schemes (“amalgamation

funds” i.e. Gt. Victoria Street, South Belfast and Fortwilliam), the proceeds from sale of Boyle Church and the proceeds from the sale of three Irish Mission Worker Properties (Mullingar, Letterkenny, Cork).

- (f) A new Rural Chaplain was appointed in September 2021, and 2022 and 2023 includes full year costs. Overall, there are five full-time chaplaincy posts and six part-time included in the budget.
- (g) Additional staff at International Meeting Point (IMP2) (North Belfast) are to be funded from the Shankill Road Mission Fund.
- (h) An anticipated reduction in funding from Presbyterian Women has been budgeted for.
- (i) The Council has budgeted for four Irish Mission Workers in 2023 and 15 Deaconesses (plus two in training).
- (j) A short handover period to the new CMI Executive Secretary has been included in the budget.
- (k) A return to “more normal” levels of Irish Mission Fund and Mission Support grants has been budgeted for.
- (l) Mission Office costs reduced due to staff restructuring. These are charged 50% to Mission in Ireland and 50% Global Mission.

The Committee is recommending a grant to the Council for 2023 of £1,065,000 i.e. a reduction of £20,000 from the requested amount.

Global Mission

| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|--------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|---------|-----------|
| Request/ Grants | 900,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,061,500 | 958,500 | 1,065,000 |

- (a) Overall the outturn for 2021 was better than anticipated, as expenditure was below budgeted levels due, e.g., to restricted movements of GMWs to/from the field, disruption to education of GMW’s children’s education, reduction in admin costs, etc.
- (b) 25 global mission workers have been included in the 2023 Budget (27 at end of 2022).
- (c) The Council has flagged up that there may be the need for a mid-term review of global mission workers’ allowances, but this has not been budgeted for.
- (d) The budget for grants to partner churches is at “normal” levels in 2023.
- (e) An anticipated reduction in funding from Presbyterian Women has been budgeted for.
- (f) Over the last few years, properties at Marlborough Park and Gilnahirk have been sold and replaced with apartments at Osborne Mews, Osborne Avenue and Oakdene, Annadale Avenue, Belfast. This has released some funds to support the ongoing work of the

Council. The Wembley, London property is rented and has not been sold as originally anticipated.

- (g) Mission Office costs are reduced due to staff restructuring. These are charged 50% to Mission in Ireland and 50% to Global Mission.
- (h) The Council does have a larger than normal bank balance at the end of 2023 (£206,570) but this may be needed for the mid-term allowance review, as a reserve for additional GMWs and to cover some uncertainties re the level of education costs for children of GMWs.

The Committee is recommending a grant to the Council for 2023 of £900,000.

Congregational Life and Witness

| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Request/ Grants | 640,000 | 640,000 | 402,000 | 648,000 | 720,000 |

- (a) The outturn for 2021 was better than anticipated and the Council returned £50,000 to United Appeal. There have been some savings in overall staffing costs due to restructuring and a cut back of normal activities.
- (b) Unlike other Councils, this Council does not have other sources of income and is heavily reliant on their United Appeal Grant. The Assembly passed a resolution in October 2021 asking the United Appeal Committee to recognise this and to take account of it in its funding allocation.
- (c) While expenditure on events, training and resources was lower than normal in 2021 (and 2020), it is anticipated this will increase in 2022 and 2023. The pandemic has required the vast majority of activities to move online and many resources are available via free download.
- (d) 2022/23 will still not see a return to normal activities – Council will assess the needs of the local church as it emerges from the pandemic and respond appropriately.
- (e) It is not clear what impact the reduced staff team will have on the Council's capacity. The Council will continue to operate for some time with much uncertainty and many challenges.
- (f) The Council had budgeted to return £35,000 to United Appeal in 2022.
- (g) The Council has budgeted to have some financial reserves at the end of 2023 (£77,883) and has asked that these be retained as cover against the aforementioned uncertainties and challenges. The Council has committed to returning any unused funding to the United Appeal.

The Committee is recommending a grant to the Council for 2023 of £640,000.

Training in Ministry

| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Request/ Grants | 375,000 | 375,000 | 375,000 | 337,500 | 375,000 |

- (a) The transition to new arrangements with St Mary University (SMU) has been deferred one year to September 2022 with 20 offers of places already having been made,
- (b) The budget includes agreed financial support during the transitional period from Incidental Fund and Trustees’ Discretionary Fund. The College is projecting a breakeven from 2025.
- (c) Uptake of PTFI postgraduate programme has been encouraging.
- (d) College has planned for an increased draw from Magee and Torrens Memorial Funds.
- (e) The majority of Council funding (£367,000) goes towards Union Theological College.
- (f) Ministry Students – 4 starting 2022.
- (g) The restructuring of the new College Staff Team which includes three Professors, five Lecturers, two Library staff and six Support staff, including Head of Academic Administration and Head of Operations, is complete and has been budgeted for accordingly.
- (h) Significant repair expenditure in 2021 includes the library ceiling (£80,000) and College heating system (£100,000). The Budget includes the replacement of the College door access system in 2022 which is to be funded from the realisation of existing investments. Looking ahead, the Council has referred to the need to address AV in the Chapel, an upgrade of student IT facilities and a virtual learning environment.
- (i) The College has expressed concern about how the ongoing upkeep of Union College Building is financed, as it has limited resources. A building survey has been commissioned to facilitate a better programme of planned maintenance and to review what may be required and how it might be funded.
- (j) The College had benefited from significant bequests in recent years.
- (k) The new arrangements with SMU have highlighted the fact that many of the support services formerly provided by QUB now need to be provided by the College. The budget includes “Provision for Development” (e.g. disability services, careers service, student welfare).
- (l) The College has faced in recent years increased administration re Higher Education including QAA.

The Committee is recommending a grant to the Council for 2023 of £375,000.

Social Witness

| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Request/ Grants | 281,959 | 245,000 | 224,500 | 220,500 | 245,000 |

- (a) The United Appeal funding is largely towards central CSW staff including Taking Care.
- (b) New Office Manager to be appointed in 2022 – 6 months included in budget and full year in 2023.
- (c) There is no direct United Appeal funding to CSW projects (residential homes etc.).
- (d) The Council retains substantial cash reserves although these are reducing as the current level of United Appeal Funding is not sufficient to cover budgeted levels of expenditure.

The Committee is recommending a grant to the Council for 2023 of £245,000 i.e. a reduction of £36,959.

General Council – Creative Production Department

| | 2023 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Request/ Grants | 203,000 | 200,000 | 123,000 | 207,000 | 230,000 |

- (a) The outturn for 2021 has been better than anticipated.
- (b) The Budget includes 6 members of staff (2 F/T and 4 P/T) – the Department has been one member down since August but with budgeting this will be filled from May 2022
- (c) Bought-in services in relation to the web site and social media have been included in the budget.
- (d) The re-development of the website is still required but is dependent on the completion of the Communications Strategy Review.
- (e) The *Presbyterian Herald* will return to 10 issues in 2022. The *Herald* account contributes to the overall costs of the department and there is some concern about increasing production costs and a reduction in number of subscribers. Cover price to be increased in 2023.

The Committee is recommending a grant to the Council for 2023 of £203,000 i.e. a reduction of £3,000.

Summary

In summary, the requests received were as follows, and based on the Committee's review along with other information received, the recommended grants for 2023 are as follows;

| | Request Received 2023 £ | Adjustment 2023 £ | Recommended Grants 2023 £ | GA Approved Grants 2022 £ |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mission in Ireland | 1,085,000 | (20,000) | 1,065,000 | 1,065,000 |
| Global Mission | 900,000 | – | 900,000 | 1,000,000 |
| Congregational Life and Witness | 640,000 | – | 640,000 | 640,000 |
| Training in Ministry | 375,000 | – | 375,000 | 375,000 |
| Social Witness | 281,959 | (36,959) | 245,000 | 245,000 |
| General – Creative Production | 203,000 | (3,000) | 200,000 | 200,000 |
| TOTAL | 3,484,959 | (59,959) | 3,425,000 | 3,525,000 |

Having reflected on the level of an Appeal for 2023, the Committee concluded that it would recommend to the Council that it should be £3,500,000 (no Covid adjustment applies). Over the last two years, the Appeal has been for a gross Appeal of £3,600,000 offset by a Covid Adjustment of £300,000, giving a net Appeal of £3,300,000. The agreed view of the Committee was that congregations should be challenged with a slightly higher Appeal in 2023, although this is still not at the level of the pre-pandemic appeals.

MARTIN HAMPTON, Convener
CLIVE KNOX, Financial Secretary

APPENDIX 1

| UNITED APPEAL 2023 | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | Requests Received | Proposed Adjustment | Proposed Grant | Revised Forecast | Budget (to GA) | Actual | Actual | Actual |
| | 2023 | 2023 | 2023 | 2022 | 2022 | 2021 | 2020 | 2019 |
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| THE APPEAL | | | | | | | | |
| Gross Appeal | 3,500,000 | | 3,500,000 | 3,600,000 | 3,600,000 | 3,600,000 | 3,600,000 | 3,550,000 |
| Covid-19 Reduction | | | | -300,000 | -300,000 | -300,000 | | |
| Net Appeal | 3,500,000 | 0 | 3,500,000 | 3,300,000 | 3,300,000 | 3,300,000 | 3,600,000 | 3,550,000 |
| INCOME & EXPENDITURE | | | | | | | | |
| INCOME | | | | | | | | |
| Congregations (current year) | 3,300,000 | | 3,300,000 | 3,100,000 | 3,150,000 | 3,015,185 | 3,057,174 | 3,302,058 |
| Congregations (prior years) | 130,000 | | 130,000 | 175,000 | 150,000 | 313,890 | 165,388 | 166,044 |
| Income from Trust Funds | 28,000 | | 28,000 | 27,629 | 26,571 | 24,447 | 29,228 | 28,698 |
| Investment Income | 1,000 | | 1,000 | 1,100 | 698 | 1,109 | 768 | |
| Donations and Bequests | 10,000 | | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 17,323 | 33,411 | 101,341 |
| Bank Interest | 5,000 | | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 | 3,368 | 7,986 | 8,867 |
| TOTAL INCOME | 3,474,000 | 0 | 3,474,000 | 3,318,729 | 3,342,269 | 3,375,322 | 3,293,955 | 3,607,008 |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | | | | | |
| Promotional Costs | 10,000 | | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 5,454 | 4,555 | 8,463 |
| Reorganisation cost | | | | | | 76,241 | 15,386 | |
| | 10,000 | 0 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 81,695 | 19,941 | 8,463 |
| GRANTS | | | | | | | | |
| Mission in Ireland | 1,085,000 | -20,000 | 1,065,000 | 1,065,000 | 1,065,000 | 724,500 | 958,500 | 1,065,000 |
| Global Mission | 900,000 | | 900,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,000,000 | 1,061,500 | 958,500 | 1,065,000 |
| Training in Ministry | 375,000 | | 375,000 | 375,000 | 375,000 | 402,000 | 337,500 | 375,000 |
| Congregational Life and Witness | 640,000 | | 640,000 | 640,000 | 640,000 | 412,500 | 648,000 | 720,000 |
| Social Witness | 281,959 | -36,959 | 245,000 | 245,000 | 245,000 | 224,500 | 220,500 | 245,000 |
| General - Creative Production | 203,000 | -3,000 | 200,000 | 200,000 | 200,000 | 123,000 | 207,000 | 230,000 |
| TOTAL GRANTS | 3,484,959 | -59,959 | 3,425,000 | 3,525,000 | 3,525,000 | 2,948,000 | 3,330,000 | 3,700,000 |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | 3,494,959 | -59,959 | 3,435,000 | 3,535,000 | 3,535,000 | 3,029,695 | 3,349,941 | 3,708,463 |
| SURPLUS (DEFICIT) | -20,959 | 59,959 | 39,000 | -216,271 | -192,731 | 345,627 | -55,986 | -101,455 |
| Grants Returned - CCLW | | | 0 | 35,000 | | 50,000 | | |
| Gain on Investments | | | | | | 6,474 | 303 | |
| Added /(Deducted) to/(from) reserves | -20,959 | 59,959 | 39,000 | -181,271 | -192,731 | 402,101 | -55,683 | -101,455 |
| RESERVES AT START OF YEAR | 2,143,101 | | 2,143,101 | 2,324,372 | 2,324,372 | 1,922,271 | 1,977,954 | 2,079,409 |
| RESERVES AT END OF YEAR | 2,122,142 | 59,959 | 2,182,101 | 2,143,101 | 2,131,641 | 2,324,372 | 1,922,271 | 1,977,954 |
| RESPONSE TO THE APPEAL | | | | | | | | |
| Receipt in year for Appeal | | | 3,300,000 | 3,100,000 | | 3,015,185 | 3,057,174 | 3,302,058 |
| Late receipts "carried back" | | | 130,000 | 130,000 | | 175,000 | 313,890 | 165,388 |
| | | | 3,430,000 | 3,230,000 | | 3,190,185 | 3,371,064 | 3,467,446 |
| % of Appeal for year | | | 98.0% | 97.9% | | 96.7% | 93.6% | 97.7% |

GUYSMERE DEVELOPMENT PANEL

1. The Covid-19 pandemic continued to disrupt the work of PCI bodies including the Guysmere Development Panel. In this vacuum, the Impetus Working Group continued to meet by Zoom in order to carry the work of the project forwards.

The project remit from the 2019 General Assembly states:

“that the proposed redevelopment of Guysmere, as outlined in the Feasibility Study, be permitted to proceed to the next stage, i.e. the capital project development (technical and funding), which allows the local promoting group sufficient time to work through all of the activities required to refine and define its preferred option, and to secure both planning consent and also the required capital funding to effectively deliver the project”.

2. The success of any capital build project led by a voluntary board will be directly related to:
 - The governance vehicle used to lead the project and provide protection for all stakeholders in it (the landowner, the funders, directors and service users)
 - The skills available to lead and manage the project
 - The track record and the associated credibility of the initial directors to lead any public or voluntary fundraising strategy.

Guysmere Trust has been incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee and has achieved Charities Commission approval.

The Board of Directors has the following range of qualifications, experience and expertise :-

- Several directors have lived on the north coast for many years and are passionate about its environment, community and people.
- Directors have had extensive community involvement over the years and have led community and cross-community projects in close liaison with Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.
- Directors have been involved in a wide range of outreach and mission events, including Guysmere Boys’ Camp.
- Directors have decades of experience in the construction industry, project management, quantity surveying / cost consultancy and loss assessment. This has been in both the private and public sectors across a range of disciplines including hospitality, leisure, retail, commercial, civic, health and waste projects.
- All of the directors are members of PCI and most serve in the leadership of their local congregation.

The current Directors understand that their role might be limited to the design, delivery and opening of the project and that it may be appropriate at that time to augment these skills with those of people with significant experience of managing such facilities.

The Directors have identified that the main funding model will be a philanthropic/giving model rather than targeting mainstream public funding. However, we shall apply for public funding when it does not compromise our vision.

Guysmere Trust will seek to ensure that the new Guysmere Centre is a part of the Castlerock community and is available for use by local residents and visitors to the area. Guysmere Trust will seek to build effective working relationships with local partners, especially around the areas of physical activity, utilising the area's significant landscape, heritage, and direct access to a Blue Flag beach and the ocean.

Given the decision to focus, primarily, on a philanthropic model to meet the majority of the capital cost requirements, it is clear that personnel will be required through the progression of the project, through a business case to defining and implementing the Capital Funding Plan.

3. A community consultation has been carried out.

- Potential user groups include:-
- Faith based groups
- Youth groups
- School groups
- Community groups
- Beach based activities (e.g. surfing, canoeing, water safety etc.)
- Study groups (e.g. the life and witness of C.S. Lewis)
- All-ability groups
- Walking groups

A number of existing projects with similarities to the proposals for the new centre at Guysmere, have been carefully researched. In the updated Feasibility Study (2022), these projects are outlined in terms of their development, identification of need, approach to fundraising and project implementation. These projects have been very informative and it is hoped to carry out best practice visits in due course (subject to Covid-19).

To date the following projects have been researched:

- Dromantine Centre nr. Newry, Co. Down
- The Courthouse, Kesh (promoted by Ardess Parish Trust), Co. Fermanagh
- South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF), Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh
- Tara Centre, Omagh, Co. Tyrone
- Ballyvaloo Retreat and Conference Centre, Co. Wexford
- Benburb Priory, Co. Tyrone
- Garvaghey Centre, Co. Tyrone
- Oslofjord Convention Centre, Norway
- Nicholaston House, Swansea
- The SPACE, Norwich
- Lee Valley, London

In some cases, the projects have been included to establish precedents which may be of significant importance to the development of the Guysmere Project. The consultation process is not yet complete and there are several other projects which we plan to examine.

4. The Vision Statement for the project was revised in the light of our ongoing work, and it is recognised that this may be further refined over the Project Development Pathway.

GUYSMERE – THE VISION

Looking to the future, we envision a centre where people from all sorts of backgrounds will have the opportunity to meet the Living God, to experience the power of His love and to discover life in all its fulness through Jesus Christ.

We aim to achieve this through

A world-class residential and conference centre

Our Desired Outcomes

- The Centre will promote spiritual, mental and physical wellbeing and the conservation of our God-given planet home. This will be achieved through Christian programmes, tailored to meet the needs of a wide variety of faith-based and secular groups, both local and global.
- The Centre will offer excellent facilities for people of all abilities and for carers.
- The Centre will be a shared space available to the local community and will foster strong links with Castlerock Presbyterian Church and other churches.
- The centre will model environmental excellence in design and management, and will be financially sustainable.

Potential Services/Activities

- Mission and ministry programmes of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Programmes which provide opportunities to contribute to a Christian response to current societal issues and challenges
- Providing opportunities to learn from the life and witness of CS Lewis
- Activities and programmes (physical activity, creativity) connected to the distinctive environmental, historical and cultural features of the surrounding area
- Offering excellent conference and meeting facilities for local and other groups
- Provision for reflection, restoration and reconciliation

Elements and Specification

The Centre will be of world-class, sustainable design appropriate to the international dimension of the project, the historical significance of the area and the setting of the facility on the north coast in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), with direct access to the adjacent Blue Flag beach and to an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).

Elements may include:

- Up to 60 bed spaces (mix of provision)
- Break out/training/programme space/flexible activity space
- Exhibition and conference space (may be a reworking of above)
- Kitchen and dining facilities
- Coffee dock/informal areas
- Space for study/mentoring/counselling
- All ability access to principal areas and activities including the beach

5. Capital Funding Strategy

We aim to generate capital funding for the following:-

- (a) The technical project development costs (undertaking feasibility, business case, business planning, project design, site assessments and securing RIBA 3 status i.e. in receipt of full planning permission) – budgeted at £300k.
- (b) The capital project development costs (construction, architect's fees for project management, fit out and fixtures and fittings).
- (c) Contribute to operational costs (either direct or indirect costs associated with project delivery or service provision). This would include programming/animation and service development.

We are very aware of the difficulties of securing funding for a faith-centred project. Many funders are specifically secular and exclude any faith-based projects. With this in mind we have focussed on:-

- (a) Engaging with precedent projects which are led by faith organisations and/or communities and have, as part of their vision, a faith-focused mission
- (b) Examining Trust and Philanthropic funding, which is not defined by Government or Departmental policy, and which has a track record of funding faith-focused projects

We have already made an application to the Reconciliation Fund of the Republic of Ireland Department of Foreign Affairs, which was not successful.

We have expressed an interest in:-

- (a) The Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) Peace Plus programme which plans to open for calls after the statutory consultation on the programme is completed.
- (b) The government Community Ownership Fund which aims to have a first call this Spring.
- (c) The government Dormant Accounts Fund.

We are also aware of the following philanthropic trusts who fund faith-focussed projects:-

- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The MacLellan Foundation
- Walter Watson
- Andrews Charitable Trust (ACT)
- World Charitable Foundation of Ireland
- Ardbarron Trust
- Thompson Trusts

We cannot resource applications to every potential funder. Most operate on a challenge fund basis and there can be no guarantee of success. On that basis significant time and effort could be expended on making applications where there is limited opportunity for success.

Therefore, at this point our plan is to focus on:

- Securing contributions towards the cost of the initial Capital Project Development phase
- Positioning the project for more significant capital investment

6. **Project Viability Assessment**

In the light of what we have learned through our engagement with precedent projects, we shall be basing our assessment of financial viability on the following considerations :-

- The operational structure of the proposed centre (aligned to the final project definition)
- Developing assumptions around the operational structure and associated costs
- Defining other operating cost centres
- Developing revenue assumptions based on engagement with the market (section 4) and learning captured from precedent projects
- Provision of five-year Profit and Loss, Cash Flow Projections complete with Sensitivity Analysis

Further work is needed in this area.

7. Other relevant matters

A number of pieces of work, relevant to the project, have also been completed.

- Initial Feasibility Study 2019
- Revised Feasibility Study 2021
- Concept Plans and architect's impressions 2019
- Promotional video
- A Proposed Programme for the Guysmere Project based on the RIBA stages
- A brief history of the surrounding district
- The Christian heritage of the north coast
- The history and legacy of Guysmere
- The formative influence of Castlerock on CS Lewis

A web site for the funding phase of the Guysmere Project is currently nearing completion.

8. Next steps

It is recognised that a number of tasks need to be undertaken in order to generate meaningful financial contributions for a faith-focused capital build project.

These include:

- Time must be invested in planning and managing the process
- A Task and Finish group has to be established to lead the capital funding drive which includes people who not only have a commitment to the project vision but also have a network/profile with potential donors (credibility, a commitment to the project, business background and geographical coverage)
- A dedicated person/officer is required to co-ordinate the overall process, whom we shall refer to as the 'Development Manager'
- High quality promotional materials are needed to support the engagement with potential donors (conventional and online promotional materials)
- The process must be planned and targeted rather than ad hoc

Based on this information, the Board of Directors believe that the most effective way to proceed would be to appoint a Development Manager to carry forward the tasks mentioned above.

Conclusion

Accordingly, the Guysmere Impetus Working Group currently seeks to access financial support, the provision of a suitable person, or a combination of both, in order to underpin the thrust to secure the financial commitment required to deliver the Guysmere project. The Impetus Group/Board of Directors has had 19 meetings in the course of the year.

JIM McCAUGHAN, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 3

MEMBERSHIP AND PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES TASK GROUP

1. Introduction

The Task Group was appointed with the following remit, emerging from the work of an earlier Task Group which drew up a resource in relation to credible profession of faith:

“...to address the issue of accepting special needs young people and adults into communicant membership, bringing a report to the 2023 General Assembly”.

2. Meetings

The Task Group met on four occasions: 13 December 2021; 24 January 2022; 21 February 2022; 28 March 2022, and is continuing.

3. Membership

Leslie Addis, David Bruce, Lindsay Conway, Peter Dickinson, Trevor Gribben, Jill Harshaw, Graham Hawthorne, Donna Jennings, Stephen Lowry, Gareth MacLean.

Several members of the Group are themselves parents of children, young people or adults with intellectual disabilities, and/or are involved professionally in Special Needs Education.

4. Process

- (a) Consideration of the remit.
 - (i) During the Group discussions, it became clear that the remit may require revision to assist in addressing the many intersecting areas of the Group’s enquiry. A resolution is appended.
 - (ii) Naming of the Group. “Intellectual Disability” is the general term which has been adopted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) since 2010, and the Group agreed that this would be the preferred descriptor, to be reflected throughout its work.
- (b) Previous work within PCI.
 - (i) The Group acquainted itself with work previously undertaken to revise the vows taken:
 1. by parents at the baptism of their infant children;

2. by believers at their baptism;
 3. by candidates on admission to communicant membership of the church.
- (c) Published resources.
- The Group was referred to specialist work in the field of intellectual disability and faith. Of particular note were the following:
- (i) John Swinton. 'Restoring the Image: Spirituality, Faith and Cognitive Disability'. *Journal of Religion and Health*. March 1997
 - (ii) Donna Jennings. 'Those who seem to be weak: The role of Disability within a Missional Framework.' OMF International, March 2019.
- (d) Other resources
- (i) Both Jill Harshaw and Donna Jennings are closely involved with the work of Tiö, 'Honouring the indispensable' – Tio Associates. This organisation highlights how God asks us to treat people who are often perceived as weaker and of lesser value. It works to see people with intellectual disabilities valued, honoured and supported in the church and in society.
 - (ii) At a later stage in the process to date, each member of the Group was invited to write a short paper from their own perspective and experience, and these were considered collectively. The latter part of this interim report is reflective of these inputs.

5. Emerging questions and affirmations

- (a) Is there a valid comparison between the processes the Church currently typically uses for the admission of people to communicant membership with any processes which might be proposed for the admission of a person with an intellectual disability? Typically, a kirk session will consider with a candidate for admission to communicant membership:
 - (i) their personal commitment to Christ
 - (ii) their understanding of the foundational doctrines of the faith
 - (iii) their desire to serve God in the context of Church life
 - (iv) some evidence of living faith, including lifestyle and priorities
 - (v) if they are already known and active within the congregation.
- (b) When a person with intellectual disabilities who may be non-verbal, and thus without the means to describe, define or communicate to a kirk session, the extension to them of this typical process of admission is clearly not meaningful. Parents, not just elders, may have no way of knowing or assessing how God has been at work in the life of their child or young person.

- (c) The Group further noted that there will be candidates for admission to communicant membership with intellectual disabilities, who are able to communicate, even if at a more basic level, and for whom a version of the processes a kirk session may use for admission would be helpful.
- (d) What has the congregation considered?
 - (i) The welcome, support, nurture and incorporation of all its members is a perpetual challenge to any congregation. This includes those who are within the covenant community through baptism as infants, those who adhere to the life of the church and whose faith is being formed and those who have arrived more recently.
 - (ii) The extension of this level of welcome, leading to the nurture of faith, discipleship and service ought, without distinction, to fully include people with intellectual disabilities, even if the expectations of membership might not fully apply to them.
 - (iii) The testimony of some within the Group was that this level of welcome was varied. Some had very positive experiences, while many carers and families feel disconnected, misunderstood and even marginalised by congregational culture.
- (e) The covenant community, and the challenge of welcome in Christ's name
 - (i) The covenant of grace is the door of welcome into the community of God's people.
 - (ii) Some people who have intellectual disabilities have no capacity to process language or to consider cognitive propositions. Admitting them to communicant membership therefore requires careful theological, pastoral and practical consideration for a local church leadership.
 1. On the basis of their baptism (if they are baptised as infants), they have already been admitted into the covenant community – and this is surely secure. They ought not to be subsequently excluded on the basis of their intellectual disability.
 2. There is a significant growing awareness of the needs of families who care for people with intellectual disability, and in particular their sense of exclusion in society generally. Many parents have had to add the tasks of campaigner and advocate to care-giver and family member.
 3. The Church may well (usually inadvertently) make this sense of alienation worse, when her calling must surely be to make it better.

6. A possible framework for the welcome of people with intellectual disabilities into communicant membership of the Church.

- (a) A person who has intellectual disabilities and who is able to understand and participate in the taking of vows, ought to be welcomed and fully included in any processes for admission to communicant membership, including baptism if they are not already baptised. Sensitive accommodation of the programme of preparation to their needs ought to be made by those facilitating it.
- (b) A baptised person who has intellectual disabilities and who is unable to understand or participate in the taking of vows, could be welcomed into communicant membership by the kirk session on the basis of an affirmation of the baptismal vows of their parent(s). A form of words based on the baptismal vows agreed by the General Assembly can be formulated. This could include a congregational affirmation and commitment of support for the new communicant and their family. Any necessary adjustments to the Code or the Book of Common Worship would follow.
- (c) A person who has intellectual disabilities and who is unable to understand or participate in the taking of vows, and has not been baptised, may be baptised and admitted to communicant membership on the basis of the vows of their believing parent(s).
- (d) Communicant membership ought not to be excluded for a person who has intellectual disabilities and who is unable to understand or participate in the taking of vows, and has not been baptised and does not have believing parents who may take vows on their behalf. The Group has not come to a clear mind regarding these situations, but would wish to explore further the possibility of a congregational commitment of welcome and affirmation for them.

7. Decisions made by the General Council

At its meeting on 13 April 2022, the General Council agreed the following:

- (a) Noted and agreed to the change of name of the Task Group to the ‘Membership and People with Intellectual Disabilities Task Group’.
- (b) Agreed that the remit of the Membership and People with Intellectual Disabilities Task Group be broadened as follows: To address the issue of accepting young people and adults with an intellectual disability into communicant membership, and the implications for such membership for them and their families, bringing a report to the 2023 General Assembly.

LINDSAY CONWAY, Convener

REPORT OF SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN CHALLENGING TIMES TASK GROUP

1. The Task Group – entitled “Supporting Families in Challenging Times” – consists of the Rev Richard Houston (Convener); Miss Karen Jardine (Secretary); the Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Rev Joanne Smith, Rev Peter Dickinson; Rev Stephen Lowry, Mr Tom Finnegan along with academics and health and social care professionals from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The professional expertise provided has been invaluable and the work of the Task Group has been significantly enriched by their contributions.
2. The stated purpose of the Task Group is to “review and develop our pastoral care for women and families affected by pregnancy crisis, pregnancy loss, the diagnosis of a life-limiting condition and other related circumstances and that this should include support for those caring for children and young people with disabilities”. The backdrop to this was the radically shifting legislative landscape relating to the provision of, and access to, abortion services across the island of Ireland. The context for pastoral care, alongside public engagement, has changed significantly. The Task Group was initially given two years in which to complete its work, but, given that this was interrupted due to the pandemic, was granted an extension of one year.
3. In reviewing pastoral care for women and families affected by pregnancy crisis, pregnancy loss and the diagnosis of a life-limiting condition, the Task Group identified three priority areas for consideration:
 - (a) training in ministry;
 - (b) resourcing for pastoral care; and
 - (c) awareness and education in congregations.
4. In its interim report to the General Council in June 2021, the Task Group sought permission to engage with relevant departments in Union Theological College to discuss the provision and development of education for students training for pastoral ministry in this new ethical and moral context.
5. Subsequently, representatives from the Task Group met with the Professor of Ministry and Director of Institute for Ministry (Rev Prof David Leach) and the Lecturer in Practical Theology (Dr Olwyn Mark) at Union Theological College on 10 December 2021. At this meeting, it was agreed that the inclusion of education for students who are training for pastoral ministry in a new ethical and moral context, as highlighted by the work and remit of the Task Group, would be substantially covered in the various courses offered at Union Theological College.
6. Members of the Task Group are also due to meet with representatives from other relevant PCI Councils to discuss ways in which a cohesive approach to resourcing and educating congregations in their ministry and witness to families who are experiencing pregnancy crisis, pregnancy loss, the diagnosis of a life-limiting condition and other related circumstances,

could be facilitated in the future. This meeting will take place before the General Assembly in June 2022.

7. The work of the Task Group was outlined in an article by the convener in the *Presbyterian Herald* in March 2020. Notably, the article prompted responses from people within the denomination who had experience of pregnancy loss, and/or a diagnosis of a life-limiting condition pre-birth, expressing appreciation that PCI was seriously considering these difficult, personal circumstances. These interactions demonstrate the importance of raising awareness of such sensitive pastoral and personal issues within local congregational settings, in order to allow people to feel seen and heard, and create spaces for sharing experiences.
8. The Task Group makes the following recommendations to the General Assembly:
 - (a) That the General Assembly welcomes and encourages the inclusion, in the various courses offered at Union Theological College for students who are training for pastoral ministry, of education in the context of a new ethical and moral landscape, as highlighted by the work and remit of the Task Group on Supporting Families in Challenging Times.
 - (b) That discussion be held with CARE to identify resources and/or training to assist congregations in their pastoral ministry to families who are experiencing pregnancy crisis, pregnancy loss, the pre-natal diagnosis of a life-limiting condition and other related circumstances; with the view to these resources and/or training being signposted to congregations by the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.

RICHARD HOUSTON, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 4

REPORT OF THE PANDEMIC RESPONSE (GOVERNANCE) TASK GROUP

INTRODUCTION

1. The Pandemic Response (Governance) Task Group has met on three occasions, 13 December 2021, 19 January and 9 March 2022.
2. The remit of the Task Group is: “To carry out a review of governance structures during the last period and the drawing up recommendations to enable the 2022 General Assembly to put in place agreed governance structures and mechanisms for any future such situation which might arise.”
3. This report is based upon the discussions held in the Task Group at its meetings and largely reflects a refinement (in the light of those discussions) of much of the detail agreed previously by the General Council. The report seeks to set out the way forward, in terms of governance, if in the future in-person meetings cannot be held in regard to five different areas within PCI, namely:
 - the General Assembly
 - General Assembly Councils and Commissions
 - Presbyteries
 - Kirk Sessions
 - Certain other matters relating to decisions by congregations.
4. The Task Group examined in detail the interim governance processes that were put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, looking at their strengths, weaknesses and areas where improvements could/should be made. Some key lessons were identified for the future, namely:
 - Greater use should be made of on-line meetings via MS Teams and Zoom, including for larger numbers than was envisaged as possible in the early days of the pandemic.
 - The General Council, using the powers granted to it by Code 272(3) and(4), should, where possible, be the main ultimate decision making body.
 - Small standing commissions should only be used when absolutely necessary and for as short a period as possible.
 - Good and timely communication of decisions taken by standing commissions is essential. This should include, as appropriate,

communication to the body whose work the standing commission is taking forward (and on occasions more generally) and should ideally facilitate feedback, though not in the sense of ratifying or altering decisions already taken by the standing commission.

- Interim measures brought in should have a ‘sunset clause’, requiring a re-examination of the measures at a fixed point in time and their extension only if necessary.
5. The Task Group held a very useful meeting with Presbytery Clerks on 9 March 2022 at which it shared its draft proposals. The feedback given on a variety of points enabled the report to be finalised for the General Council and, through it, to the General Assembly.
 6. Appendices A to E following, represent the considered view of the Task Group, as affirmed by Presbytery Clerks and the General Council, and are recommended for adoption to the 2022 General Assembly. Suitable overtures would be drafted to enact aspects of the procedures, once agreed by the General Assembly.

APPENDIX A

THE WAY FORWARD IF AN ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CANNOT BE HELD IN-PERSON

(a refinement of the decisions of the General Council in January 2021, which were taken following detailed consultation with Presbyteries in late 2020).

1. That, following a recommendation from the General Assembly Advisory Committee, the General Council be authorised to take one of the following steps, listed in order of priority:
 - (a) Resolve that the date of the General Assembly meeting be postponed to facilitate an in-person meeting of the full Assembly at a later date.
 - (b) Resolve that the General Assembly should meet on the original date, as an in-person ‘voting member only’ Assembly.
 - (c) Resolve that the date of the General Assembly meeting be postponed to facilitate an in-person meeting of a ‘voting member only’ Assembly.
 - (d) Resolve that a General Assembly Standing Commission be appointed to meet to conduct all necessary business of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, including any business needing to be conducted at the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly.
2. If a General Assembly Standing Commission needs to be appointed (as outlined in 1(d) above):

- (a) The General Assembly Standing Commission shall be constituted as follows (99 + 6):
- Moderator, Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Moderator Designate, or outgoing Moderator (4);
 - Four representatives from each Presbytery – Clerk, plus three members of Presbytery, the three including at least one Minister and one Ruling Elder (76);
 - Conveners of General Assembly Commissions and Councils (normally 9);
 - Up to 10 ministers or elders appointed by the General Council – see note below (10);
 - Council Secretaries, Financial Secretary and GA Solicitor to ‘sit and deliberate’ (6)

Note: In making the additional ten appointments the General Council, as well as seeking to ensure some key individuals are present (conveners, trustees rep etc), should also take cognisance of the make-up of the nominations of Presbyteries.

- (b) The General Assembly Standing Commission shall, if possible, meet physically in the Assembly Hall, and if not possible, then it should meet via video conferencing, facilitated if necessary by an external video conferencing company.
- (c) The General Assembly Standing Commission should, as far as possible, not decide upon very controversial decisions or decisions that have significant ongoing implications.
- (d) The business sessions of the General Assembly Standing Commission, apart from any private session should, as far as possible, be streamed.
- (e) To help inform Presbytery representatives and to facilitate wider debate generally, as far as possible, Presbyteries should be facilitated to discuss in advance the matters to be dealt with by the General Assembly Standing Commission. (Note: The ministers and elders appointed by Presbytery are not ‘delegates’ but are ‘representatives’. Therefore, while seeking to understand wider views, especially within the Presbytery, they will speak and vote in their own right, having read papers, listened to debate and sought to discern the Lord’s will on the various matters to be decided at the General Assembly Standing Commission.)

APPENDIX B

THE WAY FORWARD IF GENERAL ASSEMBLY COUNCILS AND COMMISSIONS CANNOT BE HELD IN-PERSON

*(a refinement of the decisions of the General Council in March 2020
and January 2021).*

1. That, following a recommendation from the General Assembly Advisory Committee, the General Council, using the powers granted to it by Code 272(3) and (4), shall take the following steps:
 - (a) Authorise all Commissions, Councils and Committees to hold on-line meetings to conduct necessary business.
 - (b) If necessary, appoint Standing Committees / Commissions for any or all of current Councils or Commissions of the General Assembly, as follows:
 - (i) Each Standing Committee / Commission appointed shall have delegated to it the full authority and power to conduct all business that the Council / Commission itself (and each of its Committees, Panels and Task Groups) has authority and power to conduct through powers given to the Council / Commission by any and all sections of the Code and by decisions of the General Assembly, subject to point (ii) below.
 - (ii) A General Council Standing Committee shall have authority and power to oversee and coordinate the work of all Council Standing Committees, as required.
 - (iii) A General Council Standing Committee shall have specific powers to take any necessary and exceptional decisions relating to finance and staffing, as it deems appropriate.

APPENDIX C

THE WAY FORWARD IF PRESBYTERY MEETINGS CANNOT BE HELD IN-PERSON

(a refinement of the advice given by the Clerk of Assembly, following consultation).

1. That, following a recommendation from the General Assembly Advisory Committee, the General Council, using the powers granted to it by Code 272(3), shall authorise Presbyteries to take one of the following steps, listed in order of priority:
 - (a) Move all Presbytery meetings on-line.
 - A Presbytery would need to be satisfied that the overwhelming majority of members would be able to access on-line meetings.
 - To attempt to help keep things more manageable, Presbytery should consider the option of ‘member only’ meetings being held and the length of the meeting being shorter than some normal Presbytery meetings.
 - (b) Appoint a Presbytery Standing Commission, with the full authority and power to conduct (through in-person meetings, on-line meetings or other appropriate means) all business that the Presbytery itself has full authority and power to conduct, through powers given to the Presbytery by any and all sections of the Code.
 - The Presbytery Standing Commission shall have power to conduct all urgent business, along with all non-controversial routine business, that the Presbytery Standing Commission itself deems necessary for the conduct of the business of the Presbytery, its Commissions and Committees, and of the Presbytery as a whole. Decisions taken shall have the standing of full and final decisions of the Presbytery itself, therefore the Standing Commission should, as far as possible, not decide upon very controversial decisions or decisions that have significant ongoing implications.
 - That the Presbytery Standing Commission shall be authorised to convene the next full meeting of the Presbytery, either in-person or on-line, at an appropriate date, and shall bring a full report to that meeting regarding the business it has transacted and any recommendations it might have.

APPENDIX D

THE WAY FORWARD IF KIRK SESSION MEETINGS CANNOT BE HELD IN-PERSON

(a refinement of the advice given by the Clerk of Assembly, following consultation).

1. That, following a recommendation from the General Assembly Advisory Committee, the General Council, using the powers granted to it by Code 272(3), shall authorise Kirk Sessions to take one of the following steps, listed in order of priority:
 - (a) Move all Kirk Session meetings on-line.
 - (i) A Kirk Session would need to be satisfied that the overwhelming majority of members would be able to access on-line meetings.
 - (ii) The length of the meeting being shorter than some normal Kirk Session meetings.
 - (b) Appoint a Kirk Session Standing Commission, with the full authority and power to conduct (through in-person meetings, on-line meetings or other appropriate means) all business that the Kirk Session itself has full authority and power to conduct, through powers given to the Kirk Session by any and all sections of the Code.
 - The Kirk Session Standing Commission shall have power to conduct all urgent business, along with all non-controversial routine business. Decisions taken shall have the standing of full and final decisions of the Kirk Session itself, therefore the Standing Commission should, as far as possible, not decide upon very controversial decisions or decisions that have significant ongoing implications.
 - That the Kirk Session Standing Commission shall be authorised to convene the next full meeting of the Kirk Session, either in-person or on-line, at an appropriate date, and shall bring a full report to that meeting regarding the business it has transacted and any recommendations it might have.
 - (c) The Kirk Session will have authority to take steps (a) and (b) in relation to the Congregational Committee, if deemed necessary.

APPENDIX E

THE WAY FORWARD WITH REGARD TO OTHER INTERIM MEASURES RELATING TO CONGREGATIONS

1. That, following a recommendation from the General Assembly Advisory Committee, the General Council, using the powers granted to it by Code 272(3), shall authorise the interim measures with regard to the election of elders (as outlined in Appendix E1), to come into effect.
2. With regard to elections of Congregational Committees:
 - (a) These can continue, using one of the two methods outlined in Pars 185 (2) or 185(3) of the Code i.e. election by one of the two ‘paper methods’.
 - (b) In doing so the relevant principles and interim measures contained in the ‘Interim measures relating to election of elders’ should be followed, e.g. in regard to ‘Necessary Precautions’ and ‘Drawing up a Voters’ list’.
 - (c) The two methods of election outlined in Pars 185(1) and 185(4), both of which require a congregational meeting, should not be used in this period.
3. With regard to other matters such as vacancy procedures and congregational meetings relating to property matters, specific advice will be issued by the General Council, using the powers granted to it by Code 272(3), on the recommendation of the General Assembly Advisory Committee as necessary.

APPENDIX E1

INTERIM PROCEDURES RELATING TO THE ELECTION OF ELDERS

*Effective from the notified date until withdrawn by the General Assembly
Advisory Committee*

BACKGROUND

1. During periods when in-person meetings are not possible, congregations and presbyteries cannot take forward the necessary steps for electing elders.
2. When in-person meetings are possible, but in a limited way with numbers necessarily restricted, the following interim procedures may be used.

THE WAY FORWARD

A. The basic position

1. All of the normal steps and stages in the process of electing elders should be followed (see Code Par 177 and following), with the exception of the interim measures outlined in sections B and C below, relating to the drawing up of a voters' list and the holding of the congregational meeting when the actual election takes place. The precautions outlined in section D should also be noted.
2. It is recognised that some congregations may be at an intermediate stage in the process of electing elders. Therefore, Presbytery Commissions should follow the interim measures appropriate to the stages still to be completed e.g. if a voters' list has already been drawn up in the normal way, it does not have to be drawn up again using the new interim procedure.

B. Drawing up a Voters' List and Selection of those proposed to be called

1. The Presbytery Vacancy Commission should ensure that the Kirk Session distributes the draft voters' list, either by post or by delivery, to all members i.e. it should not be displayed on the Church premises.
2. Members should be informed that any objections should be forwarded to the Minister in writing (by post, delivery or email) by a required date.
3. Objections should be dealt with and the voters' list should be finalised as normal.
4. Selection of those proposed to be called should then proceed using one or other of the methods outlined in Code Par 178.

C. Formal Congregational Meeting to elect the elders

1. A formal meeting of the congregation is necessary to elect formally those proposed to be called. This meeting should be held as normal (i.e. by a properly convened physical meeting on church premises) where there is capacity for voting members to attend and participate, with appropriate social distancing in place. This will follow the normal procedures.
2. It is recognised that in most congregations there will always be a small number of members who cannot attend, or choose not to attend, such a meeting. In certain prevailing circumstances this could be a larger number.
3. If, however, the Presbytery Commission deems that it would not be possible to hold a viable normal physical meeting of the congregation(s), because of the prevailing circumstances, the Commission could authorise the following alternative procedure to be used
 - (a) A communication is distributed to all voting members, either by post or by delivery, which explains the situation and includes a simple voting form with the names of the individual(s) listed along with ‘yes’ or ‘no’ boxes opposite each name, with the indication that one of these is to be ticked in each case. The voting form must be signed and returned to the Clerk of Session (or their deputy) or the Minister, to arrive by the specified date.
 - (b) Ideally, these votes will be counted together by the Minister and Clerk of Session (or deputy). Those who get the requisite majority of two thirds shall be declared elected.

D. Necessary Precautions

1. At every stage during the process, thought should be given to ensure that the appropriate health and safety precautions are followed. For example, if communications are being delivered to the homes of members (as opposed to posted).
2. When those ‘nominated’ for consideration as elders are being approached by the Minister (or Minister and Clerk of Session) this should follow any prevailing public health guidance. For instance, the ‘visit’ to the prospective elder may need to take place in a suitable church hall or even by video conferencing, depending on circumstances at the time.
3. On all appropriate occasions when people are physically present, such as a congregational meeting, or during the training or consultations sessions for the elders elect, again the appropriate health and safety precautions should be followed.

Please note: Only in exceptional circumstances should a Presbytery Commission (or the Clerk of Presbytery if a Commission is not in place) authorise the use of the alternative method, as outlined in point C(2) above. This should not be seen simply as a convenient alternative.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

PANDEMIC RESPONSE (THEOLOGICAL, MORAL AND SPIRITUAL) TASK GROUP

Introduction

1. The General Council, in its overall coordinating role, has the responsibility to bring to the General Assembly recommendations for new areas of work that could be necessary or beneficial to take forward over the coming years. Following recommendations on a number of areas which were brought to the 2021 General Assembly, a licensed amendment was passed asking the General Council “in light of the last period, to undertake a review of the Church’s response and to set out theological, moral and spiritual principles to guide the Church in any similar situation which could arise and report to the 2022 General Assembly.”
2. The General Council appointed a Task Group, convened by Miss Karen Jardine (Public Affairs Officer) and chaired by the Moderator, Right Rev Dr David Bruce. The Task Group first met on 7 December 2021, and has convened on a further five occasions. This interim report is offered to the General Assembly to provide some background and context to the work of the Task Group, share some initial learning, and outline its proposed direction of travel.
3. The work of this Task Group has been approached with the benefit of hindsight. Since March 2020, the situation regarding Covid-19 was constantly changing and developing, with a requirement to respond to decisions taken in two different jurisdictions, combined with little knowledge or awareness of how long the pandemic would continue. Along with the rest of society, PCI was confronted by an unparalleled situation, and responded in real time with the information available to hand.
4. The work of the Task Group commenced whilst still in the midst of the pandemic. While the time of strict lockdowns and restrictions may have concluded, the most consistent message from those with whom the Task Group has engaged to date has been “it’s not over yet”. Additionally, the Task Group has understood the requirement of its remit to draw out ‘theological, moral and spiritual principles’ as an encouragement to explore the issues thoroughly, rather than prescriptively.
5. Initially, the Task Group has sought to understand the context of PCI within which the pandemic has been experienced. The Group initially met with the proposer and seconder of the licensed amendment and continued its work by engaging with PCI Councils in order to gain a better understanding of the denomination’s actual response. Some of the views and perspectives from this engagement are summarised later in this report. Work with PCI Councils continues and further structured engagement, as deemed necessary to deliver the remit within the timeline and constraints of the workload, is planned with parish ministers and other relevant groups and individuals to further aid understanding of PCI’s response during the pandemic. Before bringing a final report to the 2023 General Assembly, this work will be evaluated through consideration of the theological, spiritual

and moral implications. It is anticipated that a final report from the Task Group will:

- (a) capture PCI's story of the Covid pandemic
- (b) identify key learning for the denomination
- (c) frame any proposals requiring decision by the courts of the church.

Defining terms

6. It is crucial that the response to the Covid-19 pandemic is built on strong theological foundations. Achieving this will require a careful exegesis of Scripture, learning from our forebears and listening to fellow Christians in other contexts.
7. In theory, there is no aspect of Christian theology that is finally irrelevant to this task. The Task Group has focussed on those aspects that have been significantly debated in the past number of years, and those which may have been contested or neglected. At least three broad areas commend themselves to us. Although not specifically used, the terms: theological, moral and spiritual are reflected in these.
 - (a) The nature and purposes of God and, in particular, his creative sovereignty, providence, justice and love. It is right to ask, 'What is God doing?' and 'What is God saying?' A clear-sighted understanding of God as the creator of the world, and the fallenness of that world, allow us to see the pandemic as a destructive incursion into a perfect creation. Further, God's providential ordering of history demands that we look for elements of judgement in all that happens but also to seek to identify echoes of his redeeming grace and even the 'kairos' moments of opportunity for the Church.
 - (b) The pandemic has necessitated making multiple difficult moral and ethical decisions. Such decisions have been made by governments, commercial corporations, health care providers and many more. Of particular interest to the Task Group are the decisions that have been made by churches (especially by PCI centrally, in Presbyteries and by Kirk Sessions). It is necessary to identify a firm set of theologically well-founded moral principles and virtues upon which to base such decisions. This is particularly true in a crisis situation within which decisions must be made quickly, without full information and with contradictory evidence. A robustly faith-based approach to decision making is therefore essential including, as a foundation for reflecting on individual freedom, individual and corporate responsibility and risk management.
 - (c) The impact of Covid-19 on the life, ministries and discipline of the local church, the denomination and the church universal. This will break into three areas.
 - (i) The Church is primarily a worshipping community. The Church must assess any novel patterns of worship against healthy criteria, not least in order to discern what might be retained and

what may be dispensed with when normal patterns of church are resumed.

- (ii) The Church is a community of fellowship. Activities such as mutual support, nurture and discipleship are central to its work. Both the novelty of new practices, or the reversion to old patterns, must be assessed using theologically accurate gauges.
 - (iii) The Church is a missional community. How the Church bears witness to Jesus Christ in word and action remains central at a time of disruption and crisis – possibly more so than in ‘normal’ times. This missional activity includes the Church’s actions with respect to social justice and its prophetic words spoken to power. Clearly, identification of what constitutes an opportunity for evangelism and solid principles on which such opportunities can be progressed, will be important.
8. As the work of the Task Group evolves, it is recognised that some specific theological matters that we now deem important may prove to be secondary and others may rise to command fuller attention.

Principles engaging with government

9. Throughout the New Testament, believers are encouraged to pray for those in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-3) and to be respectful of government (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17). Alongside this, we affirm the exhortation in PCI’s Rule of Faith: “...the Church holds that civil rulers must be obedient to Christ in their own area of authority, yet they not ought to attempt, in any way, to constrain any person’s religious beliefs or intrude upon their rights of conscience” (Code, Par. 13) and that “The Church alone has the right to interpret and explain her standards, under the guidance of the Spirit of God” (Code, Par. 14).
10. PCI, through its Council for Public Affairs, and predecessor arrangements, has a long history of engaging with governments in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. While the nature and character of such exchanges within the public square across the island of Ireland have changed significantly in recent years, reflecting the contested and complex cultural and moral landscape, the Church continues to play its part as a key participant in wider civic society.
11. As faithful followers of the Lord Jesus, we are called to graciously confident Gospel engagement in the public square, praying for the blessing and benefit of all in society. A wise Christian voice weighs up the practicalities of what can be achieved, acknowledges that it is not possible to get everything we would like, and aims for the best outcome in an imperfect set of circumstances. This approach draws upon Jesus’ description of the Church’s witness as being like salt and light – slowing, or even stopping, moral corruption while positively illuminating public discourse with Gospel values. Being such a presence in a contested public square combines intelligence, intuitive understanding, good sense, sympathetic understanding, a teachable spirit, caution (not indecision), and seasoned judgement.

12. At the forefront of these engagements and interactions is an understanding that when the Church speaks to power it should be mindful of acting with others who have no voice, and not solely for itself. Therefore, the posture and tone adopted in the public square matters greatly, especially as actions often speak louder than words.
13. PCI's Vision for Society Statement received by the General Assembly 2016 calls the Church to:
 - grace-filled relationships in the power of the Holy Spirit as ambassadors of Christ's kingdom in a broken and divided world;
 - promote the counterculture of Jesus in a society where cultures clash;
 - reassert the Church's calling to pursue a peaceful and just society in our day;
 - seek a more reconciled community... working together for the common good.
14. Consequently, the Church's posture in the public square, no matter the issue, is to be:
 - Bible-based and gospel-focused;
 - built on kingdom values including compassion, grace and hope;
 - collaborative within PCI and with other churches and organisations as appropriate;
 - looking for opportunities to be "upstream", influencing conversations in wider society;
 - respecting the dignity of all humanity.

Wider political context

What was the world like at the start of the pandemic?

15. Significant events and crises do not happen in a vacuum and, as a result, how the Church and wider society responds can be influenced and shaped by the dominant public and political narratives at the time. The pandemic began during a time of significant political change both North and South on the island of Ireland.
16. Northern Ireland
 - (a) The devolved legislature in Northern Ireland resumed on 11 January 2020, following a three-year suspension. The newly formed power-sharing Executive was therefore called to deal with a major global crisis and to provide collective and decisive leadership at a time when recently formed political relationships were in their infancy. The United Kingdom's recent departure from the European Union had also changed the shape of the political landscape, with questions over the Northern Ireland Protocol remaining a point of political tension.
 - (b) Due to the political instabilities and uncertainties in the months and years before the pandemic, Covid-19 brought huge pressure in particular to a health system in Northern Ireland that was already in significant need of reform. The lack of strategic planning and funding

into the health service, including the training and recruitment of staff, meant that the pandemic stretched an already struggling system. Political decisions around ‘lockdowns’ and restrictions were inevitably influenced by the ability of hospitals to cope with a rise in Covid-19 cases.

17. Republic of Ireland

- (a) In the Republic of Ireland, on 8 February 2020, a General Election had taken place before the Covid-19 outbreak had been declared a pandemic. During the preparations for the forming of a new government, interim Taoiseach Leo Varadkar on 17 March gave a speech that was the most watched television event in Irish history. It was not insignificant for the Christian church, that in an increasingly secular Ireland, Leo Varadkar on St Patrick’s Day, drew upon kingdom values of care for the vulnerable and marginalised and the importance of love for our neighbour as a framework for government action. It was in this context that he set out the measures the government believed were necessary in order to protect Irish citizens.
- (b) The health service in the Republic (HSE) pre-pandemic was facing similar struggles to the Northern service and was struggling to survive. The Republic had the added factor of a strong private health system in place. Before Covid-19, patients who attended the A&E departments of public hospitals, would often have to wait for days on trolleys before finding a bed in a ward. The fear, therefore, that the health service might collapse became a major element in determining public policy.

18. Political responses in both jurisdictions

Central to the work of the Task Group has been a continuing exploration of the interface between public policy and church decision-making.

- (a) The legal restrictions that were put in place early on in the pandemic in both jurisdictions, and the compliance that was required of the public, contrasted with the dominant Western liberal norms of personal autonomy and self-determination. Instead, a more communitarian recognition of responsibility to neighbour and collective cooperation was needed, and at different times, appeared. It could be argued that a ‘post-truth’ cultural climate before the pandemic had contributed to an erosion of trust and accountability in public and political authorities. There is an understandable desire at a time of emergency to seek out certainties, especially when little appears to be known for sure. The evident suspicion around “following the science” when the science was at best provisional in its findings, caused significant tension across society. The changing Government narratives (and the quite different narratives North and South of the Border) indicate that the basic theses underpinning policies in any given moment may not have been as well founded as society hoped or expected. For many, the advice offered by Government agencies appeared to be inconsistent or contradictory, and in the early phases of the pandemic, was embraced out of a combination of loyalty to health care workers,

and a lack of hard data upon which to consider alternatives. It is perhaps significant that the move to applaud the NHS in Northern Ireland did not last beyond the first lockdown.

- (b) The prominence of conspiracy theories before and during the pandemic also shaped a context in which many people became suspicious of the integrity of political decisions and decision-makers. Multiple channels of communication enabled easy access to updated information, but also contributed to the sharing of misinformation and a collective questioning of what and who could be trusted. In this context, it became more difficult to raise legitimate concerns and questions about perceptions of possible government overreach into many areas of our lives, including curtailing or even preventing gatherings for worship.

Practicalities of engaging with government during the pandemic

19. Much of PCI's engagement with governments, North and South, on matters relating to the pandemic was taken forward by the Clerk under the auspices of the General Council Standing Committee. Regular engagement with both governments, and relevant statutory authorities in both jurisdictions panned out as follows:

- (a) Northern Ireland – Direct contact with relevant government officials including the Chief Medical Officer, Chief Scientific Advisor, and NI Executive Ministers took place on a regular basis. Such engagement generally involved officials from the other major denominations while the Executive Office established an informal 'faith forum' which included representatives from smaller denominations and other faith groups. These engagements were invaluable, providing opportunities for consultation in advance of major decision-making, and evolved into partnership working, with churches and faith groups able, for the most part, to self-regulate through guidance and advice. As relationships developed, PCI, along with other churches, had opportunities to advocate on a range of issues including access to cemeteries and availability of PPE within social care settings.
- (b) Republic of Ireland – Engagement took place through the Department of the Taoiseach and was much more limited and formal in comparison to the experience in the Northern Ireland context. Meetings often took place after significant decisions had been made, with the basis for discussion focused on the impact of decisions that had already been made. This was compounded by a lack of understanding amongst government officials of how worship is conducted within a reformed, never mind uniquely Presbyterian, context, and the nature and merit of activities associated with such acts of worship. Statutory restrictions within the Irish context were much more detailed than in the North, and in place for a longer period of time, a cause of much frustration and weariness for some.

Principles regarding the ministry of the local church

20. The ministry of the local church is to love God, love others, and to make disciples (Mt. 22:36-40; 28:16-20). The outworking of these imperatives includes: worship, administering the sacraments, preaching, pastoral care, discipleship, prayer, evangelism, mercy ministries, and practically expressing love for the neighbour. For much of PCI's history, the form in which these things were done remained relatively the same. When the pandemic began, congregations had to find alternative ways to do these things, with many turning to digital forms of communication. PCI had become accustomed to exercising its life and witness through organised activities, but when those could not happen and the church buildings were closed, the Church moved into people's homes. Within a local church context, the situation presented local congregations with an opportunity to grasp that they are still the Church even when they are not in Sunday worship gatherings.
21. While congregations soon realised that 'on-line' could never be equivalent to 'in-person', it was a life-support during a crisis, and it did create some new ministry opportunities. However, this has raised significant questions about the nature and forms of church, which the Task Group will seek to examine more fully. These questions include the following, and the Task Group recognises that some of these issues are being addressed by other groups, including the Doctrine Committee and the Mission Councils:
- (a) It is clear that church is to be a gathering of people. But our experience over the last two years leads us to ask the question, "in what form can that gathering take place?" Must all aspects of a church's ministry be in person, or can some take place on line? If some aspects can be virtual, which are they?
 - (b) Regarding the mission and ministry of the Church, what is right and wrong, valid or invalid? Perhaps an overall question could be asked, "What is the very best and wisest ministry response we can make, in the set of circumstances we face?" For example, face-to-face evangelism is the norm and the best. But does this mean satellite TV broadcasts to 'closed' countries, which are seeing such a positive response, are in fact a method of evangelism we should reject as falling short of the necessary standard?
 - (c) The pandemic impacted our whole society. It has challenged the church regarding its expression of love for its neighbours.
 - (i) Did the Church respond to helping the increased needs of those outside the Church as quickly as it did to its own changing circumstances within?
 - (ii) In what ways did congregations show practical compassion to the poor, weak, marginalised, disenfranchised, bereaved, and defenceless during the pandemic?
 - (iii) Are there examples of how church members supported those whose education pathways had been disrupted, or were unable access adequate healthcare, including vaccines?

- (iv) If these expressions were lacking, what ministry gaps does it expose across the denomination?
 - (d) Attitudes of heart
 - (i) Do church members see church and church membership as solely some kind of behaviour pattern they adopt, and protest when it is restricted or interfered with?
 - (ii) Have church members grasped the heart of being a serving, witnessing community, and are they able to see every situation as a ministry opportunity?
22. When the tired and weary disciples were brought aside by Jesus for a rest, the crowds followed. ‘Send them away to get something to eat’ said the disciples. But Jesus, seeing their needs, and the opportunity to train the disciples, said ‘You give them something to eat.’ (Mk.6:37)

Views and perspectives from individuals and groups invited to meet with the Task Group to date

23. A flavour of the views and perspectives heard, and questions posed, to date is included below to give an indication of the emerging themes being addressed. As the Task Group continues its work, these will be added to and further refined in advance of the final report to the 2023 General Assembly.
- (a) Rev David Johnston and Rev Dr Graham Connor – proposer and seconder of the licensed amendment:
 - (i) In what ways was our Christian response different to the response of the rest of society?
 - (ii) Has PCI been too risk averse, and how might a developed “theology of risk” shape thinking and responses?
 - (iii) Did PCI use its voice to, and engagements with, government to speak up for those who did not have such access and were significantly adversely impacted by the effects of lockdowns?
 - (iv) As church buildings closed, was there sufficient emphasis on encouraging church members to be salt and light, engaging proactively with their neighbours and others in their local communities?
 - (b) Council for Global mission
 - (i) We have been in a global pandemic which has impacted our global mission partners as much, if not more, than ourselves here on the island of Ireland.
 - (ii) There is much to learn from our global partners, and their response to the pandemic and, if we are serious about partnership, we must be open to this learning.
 - (iii) Was PCI too focused on what was happening within the UK and Ireland, with less emphasis on challenging governments on what was happening in other parts of the world, e.g., reduction

in International Development aid flowing from the UK, or the global availability of vaccines?

- (iv) There are emerging principles relating to partnership, and enhanced community which are people focused.
- (c) Council for Social Witness
- (i) The situation has been constantly changing and developing and so it is important to remember that all of society has been hit with an unparalleled situation that we have been trying to address as best we could, with no awareness of the longevity of the pressing issues.
 - (ii) The holistic nature of care provided in PCI residential homes is unique, and the faith element has continued to be priority of care. In what ways can PCI continue to promote the spiritual as an element of holistic care?
 - (iii) The challenge of what seems like a simple request, e.g., to visit a loved one, can have hugely significant implications for staff and other residents if not managed appropriately. A pre-pandemic corollary might be when residential facilities sought to manage outbreaks of gastroenteritis and associated conditions.
 - (iv) Whilst maintaining connections between local congregations and residential homes within their community may have proven to be challenging to maintain in recent times, this continues to be a vital relationship and efforts to reinvigorate those links should be encouraged.
- (d) Council for Mission in Ireland
- (i) Recognising the significant impact of lockdown on key areas of work, including International Meeting Point and South Belfast Friendship House, is very important.
 - (ii) Echoing comments from CSW, within hospital chaplaincy there was encouragement to recognise that nourishing the spiritual is key to holistic care. PCI has a role to play in keeping this at the forefront of policy development in health and social care.
 - (iii) There was an encouragement to reflect on how the furlough scheme had been used throughout PCI, and specifically in the context of all areas of chaplaincy, and whether different decisions might have been made.
 - (iv) There was an encouragement to consider what learning opportunities might arise for new models of mission and engagement.
- (e) Council for Congregational Life and Witness
- (i) There was a different reaction to the first (March–June 2020) and second lockdowns (January–April 2021). The first was perceived as ‘refreshing’ in terms of novelty and a chance to step away from normal routines and pressures. The second was much more difficult with a greater degree of uncertainty,

an increase in mental health issues, burnout and ultimately disengagement.

- (ii) There was disparity in terms of:
 - experience between congregations in Northern Ireland and those in the Republic of Ireland;
 - Skills in digital ministry, with more pressure where these did not readily exist;
 - Capacity of kirk sessions to respond to ever-evolving situations.
- (iii) During the pandemic, many congregations were focused on reaching out to the local community in different ways. As some sense of normality returns, there is some temptation to become inwardly focused. Finding the balance between congregational “life” and “witness” continues to be a consideration, including confidence to articulate this.
- (iv) Those returning to church services can be roughly divided into three groups – a third committed attendees, a third regular or intermittent attendees, and the remaining, peripheral.

Future work

24. The Task Group intends to continue with its proactive engagement with PCI Councils, and will add to this by meeting with additional individuals and groups as deemed necessary to deliver its remit. This will include parish ministers from different contexts, people involved in education, and young adults within the denomination.

KAREN JARDINE, Convener

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY REVIEW TASK GROUP

Introduction

1. The Task Group was appointed with the following remit: The Communications and Strategy Task Group aims to bring a comprehensive report on a Communications Strategy for PCI (including how General Assembly decisions and policies are communicated) to the 2023 General Assembly.

Meetings

2. The Task Group met on three occasions: 15 December 2021; 18 January and 9 February 2022.

3. Process

- (a) During these meetings, the Task Group clarified its remit. This includes:
 - (i) Identifying the essential messages the Church needs to communicate
 - (ii) Identifying the various receivers or audiences for these messages
 - (iii) Understanding which of the various agencies within the Church initiates these communications, and how these agencies sit within the General Assembly structures
 - (iv) Exposing the positives and negatives in the current models and channels of communication
 - (v) Offering a strategy for the Church to follow into the future
 - (vi) Agreeing a pattern of meetings with representatives of stake holding groups within the central structures of the denomination, including Councils, Commissions and Departments.
- (b) On 18 January 2022, the Task Group met separately with representatives of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and the Creative Production Department. On 9 February 2022, the Task Group met with representatives of the Council for Public Affairs.
- (c) The purpose of these meetings has been to enquire:
 - (i) What is good about PCI's approach to communications?
 - (ii) What is bad about PCI's approach to communications?
 - (iii) How can we do better?
- (d) The following general questions were explored with representatives:
 - (i) Please summarize for the Task Group, the scope of your activities within PCI?
 - (ii) Who would you consider to be your prime audience(s)?
 - (iii) How do you rate your communications with these audiences?
 - (iv) How do you think that communication with these audiences could be improved?
 - (v) What will be the major communication challenges for you going forward?
 - (vi) Do you sense that there is a clear strategy for communications in your field of work?
 - (vii) Are the problems you identify to do with:
 - an underdeveloped mindset
 - lack of resources / infrastructure
 - the wrong resources
 - something else?
 - (viii) What key elements would you like to see in a PCI Communication Strategy?

- (ix) What should be the priorities in that Strategy?
- (x) A major re-write of the PCI website has been agreed in principle. Which specific issues would you would wish to see taken into account for this project?
- (xi) What messages would you like to leave with us as we continue to address our work?

4. Continuing work

- (a) Future engagements are planned with the Conveners and representatives of Support Services, the Mission Councils (CMI, CGM and CSW) and a representative group of parish ministers.
- (b) It has become clear on the basis of consultation undertaken to date, that some of the weaknesses in the current communications of the PCI have been related to:
 - (i) Structures emerging from the 2015 introduction of Councils
 - (ii) The lack of a functioning mechanism for determining denominational priorities
 - (iii) A diversity of plans and strategies deployed by Councils
 - (iv) Considerable pressure on limited resources
 - (v) The rapidly changing world of social media
 - (vi) The very broad scope of audiences PCI is seeking to reach, coupled with the complexities of accurate segmentation of these target groups.
- (c) It is recognised that the re-write of the PCI website during the incoming year will necessarily include the following steps:
 - (i) An agreed schedule of requirements which will define what PCI needs its website to deliver. Such a schedule of requirements will be closely connected to the emerging Communications Strategy.
 - (ii) Significant work to identify the sources of content, and the internal protocols to manage such content including the publishing/updating of material on the website.
 - (iii) Agreement of the technical requirements to deliver the content with the planned functionality in place, and to an agreed budget.
 - (iv) The commissioning of this work with suppliers, and the monitoring of delivery.
- (d) It is anticipated that this website project will be undertaken in parallel with the work of the Task Group during 2022, and that careful coordination of these two projects will be ensured.

DAVID BRUCE, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 5

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Nominations Committee has met on two occasions since the last General Assembly.
2. While members of the Committee have been able to interview conveners and identify nominations to fill the gaps, we would like to thank staff in the General Secretary's Department for the administration support that is provided.
3. The process of appointing people to fill gaps in councils and committees has returned to normal after the pause in 2021 due to Covid-19. Steps were taken to refresh the pool of people available for service on councils and committees. The Committee is grateful to those who offered service. In total, twenty-five people responded, ten of whom were ministers or their spouses. The Committee asks for a renewed emphasis throughout the Church on encouraging people to use the gifts the Lord has entrusted to them in the service of His Church.
4. During the year there have been a number of convenerships of councils and committees that needed to be replaced.
5. Nominations to convenerships are contained in an appended resolution, while nominations to membership of councils etc. will be contained in the Nominations Booklet.
6. At the time of writing this report, the work of approaching folk to fill the vacancies remaining is underway. It is hoped that those gaps will be filled by the time the Nominations Booklet is printed. It is helpful if those intending to resign from membership of a council or committee give notice in good time for a replacement to be found for nomination to the following General Assembly, that is, by the preceding January.

TOM GREER, Convener

THE RECONFIGURATION OF MINISTRY TASK GROUP

1. Introduction

The Task Group was appointed with the following remit: An examination of the key principles and practicalities that will underpin a radical reconfiguration of ministry in the light of changing demographics and ministry and mission opportunities.

2. The Task Group met on two occasions 16 December 2021 and 26 January 2022, and is continuing.
3. During these meetings the Task Group:
 - 3.1 Considered its remit, including:
 - that it has not been tasked with producing a reconfiguration of ministry, rather examining principles and practicalities that will underpin this
 - a census was due to be carried out in both jurisdictions in 2021, north and south of the border. The census took place as planned in Northern Ireland, with the results due to be published shortly. The census in the Republic of Ireland was delayed until 2022. These will provide up to date demographic information.
 - 3.2 Examined statistics for PCI congregations and presbyteries over a ten-year period. The Group noted some matters including:
 - that statistics, in and of themselves, give only a limited picture of congregations and presbyteries, as they cannot give insight into fruitfulness, vision, faithfulness, revitalisation etc., however, they are not completely without value
 - that the denomination is in numerical decline. Contributing families have declined by 20% across the denomination over the past ten-year period
 - that the decline is greatest in Belfast, Down and Antrim; and least in the Republic of Ireland and west of the Bann: North Belfast -41%; South Belfast -40%; Carrickfergus -30%; East Belfast -25%; Dublin and Munster 0%; Monaghan -5%; Derry and Donegal -6%; Armagh -10%; Omagh -11%; Tyrone -12%
 - that there have been significant reductions in contributing families in large towns, in most cases exceeding the presbytery average: Bangor 567 [-20%]; Newtownards 477 [-27%]; Portadown 73 [-11%]; Armagh 123 [-25%], Lisburn 594 [-29%]; Carrickfergus 441 [-35%]; Larne 489 [-36%]; Antrim 249 [-26%]; Ballymena 482 [-17%]; Coleraine 297 [-25%]
 - that the denomination is made up predominantly of small congregations: 43% of congregations have less than 75 people attending one communion; 34% of congregations have 75-149 people attending one communion; 21 % have 150 – 299 people; and 2% have over 300 people
 - that there has been very little reconfiguration of ministry over the past 10 years. During this period, the total number of congregations has declined by seven [-1.3%], with one church planted and two more in process, and eight lost due to amalgamations and closures
 - that the number of ordained ministers is declining. By 2026, there will be approximately 62 more vacancies than ministers to fill them, assuming there is no change in the number of charges. In denominational terms, one-sixth of charges will be vacant.

- 3.3 Received papers and engaged with office-bearers from the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, Council for Mission in Ireland, the Linkage Commission with matters noted including:
- the importance of the Church discerning where the Lord is leading, and obediently responding to what He is asking us to be and do
 - the importance of congregations being fruitful, regardless of size
 - the importance of godly leadership in congregations
 - the importance of the Church allowing space and sufficient flexibility in its practices and procedures for vision and innovation to flourish, while ensuring that everything is done in a correct and appropriate way. In recent years, where vision has led to innovative developments in ministry and mission, it has at times been due to the Lord prompting individuals or small groups of people who have pursued this, under God. What resulted has often been on the edge of, or beyond, previous practices and procedures – the Church must be able facilitate this while safeguarding that they are done in a correct and appropriate way
 - the need to consider how financial resources are used – the proportion of money that remains in congregations for use in ministry and mission; the proportion of denominational money [CMF, United Appeal money through CMI etc.] that is used to sustain existing patterns of ministry and mission, to enable additional work, and to support new ventures
 - the need to view re-configuration with a positive mindset, that it has the potential to enable us to do more and better ministry and mission.
4. Going forward, the Task Group plans to:
- meet with other denominations who are facing similar situations
 - analyse demographic data
 - consult with presbyteries
 - bring a final report to the 2023 Assembly.

DAVID ALLEN, Convener

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. The Committee held its inaugural meeting on Wednesday 6 April, 2022.
2. The Committee considered its remit and noted that some of its functions will be taken up fully after the 2022 General Assembly, although the functions of the former Moderator’s Advisory Committee begin immediately.

Appointment of Assessors

3. It is intended that the appointment of assessors will follow the same procedure as under the Moderator’s Advisory Committee.

Post-2022 Assembly Conferences

4. Consideration was given to potentially controversial reports being submitted to the General Assembly 2022. It was noted that while some reports due to be brought to the 2023 General Assembly may be controversial, many of these will be only interim reports at the 2022 General Assembly, and so are less likely to be controversial at that point.
5. The report of the Code Republishing Panel is one of major significance to the denomination. It is hoped that a draft Code will be available by June 2022, but not in time for distribution to members of the Assembly before it meets.
6. It is planned that this will be printed immediately after the 2022 Assembly, and will be sent to presbyteries for discussion, with responses being submitted by 31 December 2022. The Panel will make amendments in light of responses, with the amended document being presented to the 2023 Assembly. If this is adopted by the Assembly, it will be sent down to presbyteries under the Barrier Act, through which presbyteries can vote to accept or reject it.

General Assembly Recommendation 1: That the main item post-2022 Assembly conferences should focus on the Code Republishing Panel report and the draft document produced by it; and that these conferences should be held on a presbytery basis.

Pre-2023 Conferences

7. There are two options:
 - February conferences – where attendees will have input with the potential to shape the final report.
 - May conferences – where only Assembly members would be present, and are informed about an issue where the report has been finalised.

General Assembly Recommendation 2: That a series of February/early March pre-2023 Assembly conferences be held, focusing on the report of the Task Group regarding those with intellectual disabilities.

Lucan Centre – Request from Presbytery of Dublin and Munster

8. Until the General Assembly comes to a final mind regarding the site and buildings that make up the Lucan Centre, a ‘leasing arrangement’ has been entered into with the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster, enabling the use of the Centre for ministry and mission. The Presbytery have now requested to carry on this work in partnership with 24/7 Prayer Ireland. Under the terms of the leasing arrangement this would require the formal permission of PCI.
9. A draft ‘Contract for Services’ between the Presbytery and 24/7 has been drawn up and the premises will remain fully under the control of the Presbytery. The Clerk and General Council Convener met with representatives of the Presbytery to discuss the new proposed partnership and are supportive.

The General Council agreed: That in relation to the Lucan Centre, the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster be permitted to enter into a contract for services with 24/7 Prayer Ireland, and any other similar contracts for services deemed to be appropriate.

Trustees’ Discretionary Fund

10. The General Council, at its meeting on 19 March 2020, passed the following resolution:

That in the light of the clear legal advice provided by the General Assembly Solicitor, the Trustees, and the Trustees’ Standing Committee, should take instructions from the General Council (or the General Council Standing Committee), or from the General Assembly (or its duly authorised Commissions), regarding allocations from the Trustees’ Discretionary Fund or other unrestricted funds of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland which the Trustees hold.

11. There is a need to establish a process by which the General Council, or in certain cases the General Assembly itself, will make these decisions.

The General Council agreed: that the Clerk of Assembly, having consulted with the Financial Secretary and others as appropriate, should report to the General Assembly Advisory Committee regarding suggested allocations from the Trustees Discretionary Fund and, having considered these suggestions, the Committee should bring recommendations to the General Council for decision.

12. On 31 December 2021, there was approximately £1,242,000 in the Fund. Therefore, having received a report from the Clerk of Assembly, the Committee brought recommendation to the General Council meeting on 13 April 2022 regarding allocations, which were agreed:
 - That an allocation of €25,000 be granted from the Trustees’ Discretionary Fund to the Methodist Church in Ireland towards renovations to Limerick Manse.

- That an allocation of €75,000 be granted from the Trustees' Discretionary Fund to Galway Presbyterian Church towards necessary renovations.
- That an allocation of £100,000 be granted from the Trustees' Discretionary Fund to Union Theological College Management Committee towards the replacement of the College Security/Access System.
- That an allocation of £50,000 be granted from the Trustees' Discretionary Fund to the Support Services Committee towards the upgrading of the Security/Access System in Assembly Buildings.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

AD-HOC AREAS OF WORK UNDER THE GENERAL COUNCIL

REVIEW OF GENERAL COUNCIL STRUCTURES

1. The General Council has been reviewing its own structures, which have largely operated unchanged since the inception of the new councils in 2015.
2. The 2021 General Assembly agreed the establishment of a new General Assembly Advisory Committee, subsuming the functions of the previous Moderator's Advisory Committee and taking on additional responsibilities, mostly flowing from the recommendations of the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group. The new Committee has begun work and its first report is included in this year's General Assembly Reports.
3. During the past year, the Support Services Committee, with the encouragement of the General Council, has been considering its own modus operandi, and a number of changes have been agreed. These are aimed at enabling the Support Services Committee itself to have a more significant governance role, overseeing the work of the Finance, Personnel, IT, Creative Production and Property Departments within Assembly Buildings. This is especially important in the area of financial oversight, where the Support Services Committee needs to be the place where detailed recommendations are drawn up for approval by the General Council or General Assembly, as appropriate.
4. The General Council has agreed to review the areas of Church Relations and Priorities during the incoming year. To facilitate this, the 2022 General Assembly, is being asked to appoint two small focused Church Relations and Priorities Committees, to bring forward recommendations for future structures in these areas, while at the same time overseeing these areas of work during the incoming year.

CHURCH RELATIONS

5. During the past year, the General Council did not resume the work of the full Church Relations Committee, the necessary reporting being undertaken by the Clerk and the Church Relations Convener.

Within Ireland

6. Both the formal inter-church structures in which PCI is involved, as well as the informal contacts and co-operation that flow from these, have proved to be of great significance over the past number of years. The ability to co-ordinate approaches to government, both north and south, which came to the fore with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, has continued to be both important and effective.
7. The work of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and the Irish Inter-Church Committee (IICC) has continued, though in-person meetings have only resumed in more recent months.
8. The General Secretary, Dr Nicola Brady, has moved on to become General Secretary of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. Nicola's work for ICC and IICC has been outstanding and she is already greatly missed. At the time of writing, the post of ICC General Secretary has been advertised.
9. The ICC AGM was held on Thursday 31 March 2022, at which the Rev Dr Tony Davidson gave the key note address entitled, 'The Unfinished Work of Peace'. The Very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson, retired as President of the ICC and Co-Chair of the IICC, in March 2022, having served for two years in those offices. He has played a significant role in assisting the churches to work together, often chairing ad-hoc meetings to facilitate discussion and cooperation on a range of issues. The thanks of PCI are due to Ivan for representing our Church in this important role. The Rt Rev Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, is the new ICC President for the next two years.
10. During this past year, the Church Leaders Group (Ireland), on which the Moderator and Clerk both sit, has continued to provide an invaluable forum for discussion and joint action. The ability of the Moderator, the President of the Methodist Church, the ICC President, the Anglican Archbishop and Roman Catholic Archbishop, to speak together into the public square and to governments, has proved strategically very important. The Clerk and General Secretary of the Methodist Church continue to serve as joint Secretaries to the Group.

Further afield

11. The Clerk of Assembly continues to meet regularly with his opposite numbers in the Presbyterian Church in Wales, the Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church. The ability to share together, in this way has been beneficial.
12. The Clerk has participated in a number of meetings organised by the European Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), and will be attending its annual meeting later this year. He has

also kept contact with the WCRC generally and also with the Conference of European Churches (CEC). As in much of life, the ability to meet remotely on Teams and Zoom has, in fact, enabled more efficient contact between church leaders during the past year. The General Secretary of the WCRC, the Rev Dr Chris Ferguson, came to the end of his term of service last year and the remaining Executive Secretaries are sharing his responsibilities as a review of staff roles is undertaken.

MISSION PARTNERSHIP FORUM – THE ALTERNATING MINISTRY SCHEME

13. At the meeting of the General Council held on 13 April 2022, a report was received from the Mission Partnership Forum. The report had also been presented to the Methodist Church in Ireland’s Governance Board earlier that month, and stated as follows:

REPORT FOR MCI GOVERNANCE BOARD AND PCI GENERAL COUNCIL

A. INTRODUCTION

1. At separate meetings on 27 May 2021, the General Council of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) and the General Committee of the Methodist Church in Ireland (MCI), considered a detailed report from the Mission Partnership Forum (MPF).
2. The key conclusion in the MPF’s report was that, sadly, the only practical way forward was for the remaining Alternating Ministry Scheme congregations to revert to denominational ownership and governance of one or other of PCI or MCI, and that the Alternating Ministry Scheme draw to a close.
3. Acting with delegated authority on behalf of their denomination, each body noted and concurred with the MPF’s conclusions regarding the future of the Alternating Ministry Scheme and agreed “...that the MPF be authorised to take the process forward as outlined.” These decisions were subsequently reported to the General Assembly and Methodist Conference.
4. Over the period since, the MPF has been taking forward this process and representatives have held a number of meetings and consultations have been held with the Church Councils and office-bearers of the three congregations involved, namely Christ Church Limerick, United Church Galway and Christ Church Sandymount.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

5. The following recommendations have now been agreed by the MPF as the most appropriate way forward, and are presented to the PCI General Council and the MCI Governance Board for agreement, each acting with delegated authority, on behalf of their denomination:
- (a) **That the congregation of Christ Church, Limerick** will become a congregation of the Methodist Church in Ireland, under the care and oversight of the Southern District, from 1 May 2022, with all current members being deemed to be Members of the Methodist Church in Ireland unless they desire otherwise.
 - That the current Presbyterian Manse in Limerick will transfer to the ownership of the Methodist Church in Ireland as soon as practically possible after 1 May 2022, with a ‘leasing arrangement’ (at a minimum nominal rent) put in place in the interim. The Church and Halls complex are already in the ownership of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
 - (b) **That the congregation of the United Church, Galway** will become a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, under the care and oversight of the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster, from 1 May 2022, with all current members being deemed to be Members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland unless they desire otherwise.
 - That the current Church and Halls complex in Galway will transfer to the ownership of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as soon as practically possible after 1 May 2022, with a ‘leasing arrangement’ (at a minimum nominal rent) put in place in the interim. The Manse is already in the ownership of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
 - (c) **That the congregation of Christ Church, Sandymount** will become a congregation of the Methodist Church in Ireland, under the care and oversight of the Southern District, on 1 May 2022, with all current members being deemed to be Members of the Methodist Church in Ireland unless they desire otherwise.
 - Both the current Manse and Church and Halls complex are already in the ownership of the Methodist Church in Ireland.
 - (d) That the change of ownership outlined in points 5 (a) be deemed to equate to the change of ownership in point 5 (b), with no additional payments required. The legal documentation of both transfers should, however, include a clause indicating that if either property is sold within a ten-year period from 1 May 2022, then any amount obtained over and above €450,000 shall be divided equally between the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland.
 - (e) That in respect of Limerick Manse, and in recognition of pending necessary renovations/repairs for this domestic premises, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland will make a one-off payment of €25,000 to the Methodist Church in Ireland towards those anticipated costs.

- (f) That the General Secretaries of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland be authorised to take any other decisions necessary to implement these recommendations.
14. Following a period of questions and discussion, the General Council, acting with the delegated authority of the General Assembly, received the report of the Mission Partnership Forum and adopted its recommendations. (The MCI Governance Board at its April meeting agreed likewise.)

APPLICATION BY PCI TO THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY (NI) TO BECOME A REGIONAL VOLUNTARY YOUTH ORGANISATION

15. At the meeting of the General Council held on Thursday 28 March 2022, the Council received the following report from the Council for Congregational Life and Witness:

REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS

1. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness has been engaging with the Education Authority (NI) on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to explore the potential of attaining the status of a Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation (RVYO). The Council's Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee has been receiving reports of this work as it has progressed during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council Secretary explained the wider backstory and background preparatory work being carried on to this point as follows:
- (a) Following discussions between the Education Authority (NI) and the four main churches in 2019, the potential of exploring each denomination becoming a Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation (RVYO) was encouraged. This represents a significant change of policy in the statutory youth sector which previously would not directly fund the work of any denomination. In part, it is a welcome acknowledgment of the volume and quality of children's and youth ministry delivered by the church sector, as well as a desire to proactively support that work.
 - (b) The major advantage of PCI attaining RVYO status would be that both congregations and the denomination centrally would be able to apply for significant amounts of funding to support and develop ministry among children and young people more easily and directly. It should be noted that many PCI congregations already access grant funding from the Education Authority (NI) (e.g., through registration with other uniformed organisations), while others have no knowledge of the possibilities, or are dissuaded from doing so because of the challenges of negotiating the present application and evaluation processes.

- (c) In preparation for further consideration of an application to become an RVYO, a research project fully funded by Education Authority (NI) was commissioned to obtain an overview of the scale, scope and specific needs for support of children's and youth ministry delivered by congregations of PCI across Northern Ireland. This research will also actively explore ways in which future Education Authority (NI) funding application and evaluation processes can be streamlined and reconfigured to better fit the capacities and realities of those in the leadership of local churches who may wish to apply. This project is now underway.
 - (d) Throughout the period of the pandemic the Education Authority (NI) has also actively encouraged PCI to apply for funding to support children's and youth ministry on the ground and readily and generously responded to applications to provide free materials around the issue of children and young people's mental health written from a distinctively Christian perspective. This enabled the council to provide 5,000 copies of *Jesus and Emotions* (a resource for children and families), 5,000 copies of *Shaken* and 2,000 copies of *Steady* (resources for use directly by young people or through congregational youth ministry). Funding for 75 PCI Youth Apps free for use in congregations was also provided. All of this provision has been gratefully received by congregations.
 - (e) It should be noted that full funding for all of this valuable work and ministry has been provided by the Education Authority (NI) without any condition of the future requirement that PCI applies to become a RVYO.
 - (f) To access the funding round for the period 2023-2026, it is now necessary for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to decide whether or not to proceed with an application to become an RVYO.
 - (g) The Council for Congregational Life and Witness is now charged with making a recommendation to the General Council if this work is to move to the next stage of seeking necessary denominational permissions and approvals. From there, the permission of the General Assembly will also need to be sought.
2. Following a period of questions and debate, the following resolution was put to the CCLW meeting and agreed:

That the Council for Congregational Life and Witness support the Presbyterian Church in Ireland applying to the Education Authority (NI) to attain the status of a Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation, as a means of supporting the future development of ministry and mission among children and young people at congregational and denominational level, and encourage the General Council to progress the necessary steps to move towards formal denominational application.

3. Two particular issues emerged at the CCLW meeting and the Council Secretary was asked to note them in the report to the General Council, along with the Council's broad approval of pursuing application as indicated by the resolution of the Council.
 - (a) The first was the need to ensure that it did not create an unhelpful financial dependency on public funds by congregations for their future children's and youth work.
 - (b) The second was that any application to the Education Authority (NI) should be transparent about issues around the Church's position on LBQT+ and transgender issues to avoid any possible future breakdown and public embarrassment.

DAVID H THOMPSON, CCLW Secretary

16. Following a period of questions and discussion, the General Council received the report and passed the following resolution:

That the General Council, noting the report from the Council for Congregational Life and Witness (CCLW), recommend that the General Assembly grant permission for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to apply to the Education Authority (NI) to become a Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation (RVYO) in the terms outlined; and that the CCLW be authorised to take forward the process, consulting with the Clerk of Assembly as and when appropriate.

HOLDING TRUSTEE TASK GROUP

17. The General Council, at its meeting on 13 April 2022, received the following report from the Convener of the Holding Trustee Task Group, the Rev Robert Herron:
 - (a) Following the decision of the 2021 General Assembly (GA Reports pages 26 and 27) that Presbytery Education Boards should cease to act as holding trustees for congregational property, the General Assembly Solicitor has drafted Articles of Association for the incorporation of the Presbyterian Holding Trustee Company (Northern Ireland)
 - (b) Advice is being sought to set up a similar company for congregations in the Republic of Ireland.
 - (c) In line with the Articles of Association, **it is recommended that** the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Financial Secretary will be subscribers or members of the Company. They will be identified by their names, and not their office, but with a memorandum of understanding that on leaving office they would retire as members and be replaced by their successors.

- (d) A small number of Directors of the Company also have to be appointed and **it is recommended** that these be the Clerk of Assembly, Deputy Clerk of Assembly, Financial Secretary and the Property Support Manager. Again, they will be identified by their names, and not their office, but with a memorandum of understanding that on leaving office they would retire as members and be replaced by their successors.
 - (e) The Directors will appoint probably six persons in Assembly Buildings as authorised signatories (most likely the four of them plus two others) to have power to execute deeds on behalf of the Company. A deed will be validly executed if signed by two of the authorised signatories. With five or six authorised signatories, it is anticipated that there would always be a sufficient number present at any one time to execute any necessary deeds.
 - (f) Congregations whose property is held by Presbytery Education Boards will need to pass a resolution appointing the new body as Holding Trustee (alternately, they may pass a resolution appointing three or more named individuals as Holding Trustees). Congregations with named individuals as Holding Trustees will have the option of staying with named trustees or appointing the new body as Holding Trustee.
 - (g) Clerks of Presbytery will be briefed on the process and the actions required before congregations are invited to appoint the Presbyterian Holding Trustee Company (Northern Ireland) as holding trustees of congregational property. Draft step-by-step briefing documents have been drawn up for congregations.
18. The General Council received the report and adopted its recommendations. It also approved the Articles of Association of the Presbyterian Holding Trustees Company (Northern Ireland), which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

MINISTERS WITHOUT CHARGE AND MINISTERS EMERITUS

19. For some time now, Par 72(i) of the Code has stated:
72. *The Presbytery shall, in accordance with rules –*
.....
- (i) *annually review the position of each Minister Emeritus and following each review may release a retired minister from the responsibilities of full membership of Presbytery (and thereby also of the General Assembly), whom it shall then designate as Minister Emeritus (Released). A decision to so release is appropriate when there is: (i) a request from the Minister Emeritus; or (ii) a lack of capacity to fulfil the responsibilities of membership of Presbytery; or (iii) a failure to attend Presbytery for a period of twelve months without appropriate reason.*

20. The 2021 General Assembly decided that this annual review should be further refined, by requiring an ‘opt-in’ system rather than an ‘opt-out’ system:

That, from the 2022 General Assembly onwards, retired ministers will be required to opt to remain full members of the courts of the Church – with automatic retention as full members at the point of retirement, and then thereafter each retired minister be required to request annually to be retained.

(Recommendation 6 of the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group, 2021 Reports page 119)

21. There is therefore a need to put in place a process whereby this responsibility is carried out by Presbyteries and reported through an appropriate body to the General Assembly. There would need to be a degree of consistency across Presbyteries to the approach taken, especially with regard to the implementation of what will be a new process.
22. Currently, on an annual basis, Presbyteries are required to review the standing of all Ministers without Charge and Licentiates not in an assistantship who are under their care. It is probably wise to combine the new requirement regarding retired ministers with this annual task, though noting carefully that the requirements for retention are very different for retired ministers.
23. At present, reporting regarding ministers without charge etc. is forwarded by Presbyteries to the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee (under the Council for Training in Ministry) immediately after the February Presbytery. This, however, is perhaps not the best place for those matters to be dealt with, and certainly not the best body to be receiving reports regarding retired ministers. **Therefore, it is recommended that, from the 2022 General Assembly onwards, the General Assembly Advisory Committee (under the General Council) be given responsibility for receiving reports from Presbyteries in relation to both Ministers without Charge and Ministers Emeritus.**

DESIGNATION AS MINISTER EMERITUS AND MINISTER EMERITUS (RELEASED)

From the Presbytery of Carrickfergus

24. The Presbytery of Carrickfergus, at its meeting on Tuesday 1 March 2022, passed the following resolution:

“The Presbytery of Carrickfergus, noting the recommendation of its Business Commission in 25 January 2022 to secure the status of Minister Emeritus of Joymount for the Rev Terence Richard Graham, subsequently unanimously endorsed at full Presbytery in February

2022, and noting the Rev Graham's agreement and the support of the Kirk Session of Joymount, agree to propose to the General Assembly that, under Par 226(a) of the Code, the Rev Terence Richard Graham be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of Joymount, Carrickfergus."

25. An appropriate resolution is appended with the support of the General Council.

From the Presbytery of Dromore

26. The Presbytery of Dromore, at its meeting on Tuesday, 1 March 2022, passed the following resolutions, relating to the retirement of the Rev Dr Paul Swinn as a military chaplain:
- (a) That the Rev Dr Swinn be released from active duty on 13 May 2022 and that he be retained as a minister without charge under the care of the Dromore Presbytery.
 - (b) That Presbytery seek the permission of the General Assembly that he be recognised as Minister Emeritus (released).
27. The second of these resolutions is to facilitate Dr Swinn's service (in retirement in England) as a part-time Reserve Chaplain. The Forces Panel are supportive and an appropriate resolution is appended with the support of the General Council.

TREVOR D. GRIBBEN, Clerk of Assembly

REPORT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND FOR THE YEAR 2021

The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland reports that, throughout 2021, it has continued to promote the study of historic churches of the Presbyterian order in Ireland, and the contributions they have made to Irish Society and the wider world.

The year 2021 had continued to be difficult for the Society. The Covid pandemic and successive lockdowns have continued to mean that many of our 'usual' activities have had to be curtailed: for example, no field trips, no Allen Lecture! Nonetheless, we have tried to view the situation positively and learn lessons where we could. We are happy to report that while we remain closed to on-site visitors, much valuable work continues to be done with cataloguing the many books that have been donated to us and the many other administrative tasks needing to be done.

1. We have continued to operate in line with the requirements of the Charity Commission, both in how our accounts are presented and in meeting other requirements such as annual reporting. We have tried to do this prudently and we believe we have been able to operate as a responsible charity.
2. The annual grant from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland remains the main source of income for the Society, along with donations

from the other historic churches of the Presbyterian order and gifts from individuals. This is augmented with membership fees and a substantial grant this year from the Ulster-Scots Agency towards covid-related items.

3. Most of the expenditure items were of the same order as formerly, the major area being the cost of leasing and servicing the Society's premises. Expenditure continues to be carefully controlled and all areas are examined regularly for economies, so that the best value for money is obtained.
4. Once again this year, sales of our own publications were marginally down on the previous year, whereas the sale of second-hand books has been very good and so we have not suffered an undue loss from these sources.
5. We have had good success this year in attracting significant additional sources of funding and this will enable us to achieve a number of objectives hitherto beyond our reach. We are presently revisiting our Action Plan, drawn up a few years ago, in order to identify and prioritise a number of other objectives we have not yet been able to achieve.
6. After the initial shock of the pandemic and Lockdown, we have managed to be able to share some of our lectures online and making these together with a series of talks and other items of interest available on YouTube.
7. The Publication Committee has not met since January 2020 and we are happy to report that they will be meeting again via Zoom from January 2022. At the end of the year we launched Dr Donald Patton's major work on Dr William Campbell, which included the full text of his *Sketches of the History of the Presbyterians in Ireland 1803*. Until now, our Society owned the only copy of this valuable manuscript and we believe it will attract a good deal of attention as we make it available to the wider public. We have co-operated with the Council for Mission in Ireland to produce a booklet entitled, *Memorial to Chaplains in the Great War* and we have also published a short booklet entitled, *William McFadzean VC*, written by his great nephew, Nigel McFadzean. During the past year, a major work on Samuel Haliday has been published together with the *Bulletin*. Plans are in hand for several new publications and a further *Bulletin* in 2022.
8. The publication of the *Heritage* magazine took place, but distribution proved very difficult. We hope to examine afresh the appointment and training of Presbytery Agents once circumstances make this possible.
9. The Society welcomes the donations or bequests of books, pamphlets, congregational histories and suitable artefacts, minute books and old-style communion tokens. These may be deposited with the Society either as a gift or as an indefinite loan. We have been especially grateful this year to the Dublin Presbyterian Association for a very large donation of books and other materials and a generous cash

payment. We hold many Synod and Presbytery records and are delighted that an increasing number of congregational records are also being entrusted to our care.

10. The Society continues to share information with other organisations, agencies and blogs, which help to raise our profile and publicise our publications. We have over 800 followers on Facebook which can be accessed via the blog icon on the home page of our website. This keeps a wider public informed about new books and events of Presbyterian interest.

The Society's website continues to be one of our principle means of communicating with the general public and this is reflected by the numbers using it, and joining the Society as Associate Members. We work hard to improve the number and range of the articles on our history page and in the updating and presentation of *A History of Congregations*. Copies of the *Bulletin* up to 2016 can now be viewed on the website.

Once again, we record our warmest thanks to the Clerk of the General Assembly and to the Rev Dr David Allen, Deputy Clerk of Assembly, who have given so much time and thought to the Society's work. We also wish to thank our volunteers who, as and when it was possible for them, helped us out for a few hours each week, filing, indexing and transcribing records and preparing mailings. We will need more help than ever in the months ahead and the Librarian would be glad to hear from anyone who might be able to do this or assist in any way.

Now that our Council, Business Committee (formerly called the Officers' Meeting) and Publications meeting are able to meet by Zoom, and hopefully may soon be able to meet in person, we believe that better days will be possible and we thank all those who have helped to keep us going. At our next AGM, we will be appointing several new office bearers and we wish them well in the important work they have agreed to undertake. Under their leadership may the Society continue to prosper.

Most of all, we place on record our continued appreciation of Valerie Adams, our Librarian and Archivist, for all she does for the Society and not least for all her adaptability and resourcefulness throughout this most difficult year.

DONALD PATTON

PRESBYTERIAN CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

Mr Jason Nicholson (Executive Secretary) reports:

1. The Presbyterian Children's Society exists to support children in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. It works mainly through ministers to alleviate poverty and financial hardship for eligible families and their children. This is facilitated mostly through regular and exceptional grants. Some additional (limited) help, through special initiatives, is offered to congregations to support their work with children and young people.
2. During 2021, despite any practical difficulties associated with Covid-19, approximately 865 children from 439 families were formally enrolled in the Society for help, by way of regular quarterly grants, with an additional 27 children from 11 other families receiving interim grant payments.
3. Exceptional grants, which usually address emergency situations, were also in great demand during the year, with 111 exceptional grants (mainly for the maximum grant of £600) being provided to Presbyterian families in a variety of challenging circumstances. The financial pressures experienced by families as a result of redundancy, reduced working hours, and unexpected increases in fuel and electricity costs were evident in many applications.
4. A special summer grant of £80 per child was paid to families receiving the Society's regular quarterly grants, with an increased special grant of £100 paid per child to families in the winter.
5. To respond to the impact that the pandemic was having on the mental health and educational attainment of many Presbyterian children and young people, a Covid-19 Grant Scheme was developed, with approximately £6,000 in grants being issued to congregations to support the delivery of Digital Resilience Workshops (run in partnership with The Thrive Academy) and in paying for digital technology, equipment, books, and materials. This initiative was positively received by all those who participated.
6. Across all grant categories, the Society paid out almost £676,000 for the benefit of Presbyterian children and young people.
7. The backgrounds of families helped by the Society remains diverse. Presbyterian children from family backgrounds of unemployment or low income, separation, divorce, bereavement, single parenthood or where a parent is in long-term hospital care, prison or is disabled, are all aided by the Society. In every circumstance, the Society's focus is on helping children reach their full potential regardless of their background or financial limitations.
8. The Society was pleased to acknowledge the astonishing commitment of its congregational representatives, with the lengthy service of some stretching over many decades.

9. Whilst the Society is not under the control of the General Assembly, it does work collaboratively with the ministers of our Church and enjoys a close, positive working relationship with a number of General Assembly councils. This partnership is much appreciated and heartily encouraged.
10. A range of congregational resources to help illustrate the positive impact of the work of the Society is available from the Society's website: [www.presbyterianchildrensociety.org].
11. The Society's financial resources are independently supported by Presbyterian congregations and individuals, and the Society gives thanks to all those who support its work prayerfully, practically, and financially throughout the year. The Society welcomes enquiries about how it might assist children and families in need within any Presbyterian congregation, and commends its work for the continued prayerful and financial support of the Church.

REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev T.J. McConaghie is their Moderator; that the Rev J.M. Wade, Minister Emeritus of Portavogie, died on 7 July 2021; that the Rev A.J. Galbraith, Associate Minister of West Church, Bangor, resigned his charge on 9 September 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that the Rev G.J. Kennedy, Minister of Ballygrainey, resigned his charge on 20 January 2022 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that the Rev J.H. Flaherty was installed to the additional charge of First Donaghadee on 5 November 2021; that the Rev C.N. Lynn, presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was installed to the charge of First Newtownards on 10 December 2021; that the Rev D.M. Shaw presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal and was installed to the charge of Ballycrochan on 8 January 2022; that the Rev C.I. Dickson, global mission worker, resigned on 24 February 2022 and was inducted to the work of Associate Minister in West Church, Bangor on 25 February 2022; that Mr Ben Johnston, licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Revs C.D. Mawhinney, Lesley-Ann Wilson and M.R. Catney; as a Transferring Minister, Rev Enrique Tagle-Aguiar; as licentiates, Mr David Morrison and Dr S.A. Wright; as students, Mr Paul Bradley, Mr Andrew Frazer, Mrs Francine Magill and Mr Wallace Moore; that they held Consultations at Strean and Ballywalter; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev G.R. Mullan is their Moderator; that the Rev S.M. Hamilton, Minister of Cladmore and Tassagh, resigned his charge on 1 July 2021 and was inducted as Chaplain HM Forces (Navy) on 2 July 2021; that the Rev Dr Z.J. Cole, Lecturer in Biblical Studies at Union Theological College, resigned on 4 August 2021; that Mr J.T. Graham, a licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was ordained and inducted as Associate Minister in Hill Street, Lurgan, on 10 October 2021; that Mr J.M. Haugh was licensed on 26 November 2021; that the Rev Dr M.C. Cowan, Lecturer in Historical Theology, Union Theological College, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr P.B. Houston, licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal; that under their care are: as Minister without Charge, Rev Dr J.W.P. McConnell; as a Transferring Minister, Rev T.D. Kane; as transferring licentiate, Mr J.M. Haugh; as students, Mr Daniel Ballentyne, Mr Mark Hawthorne, Mr Jordan Jones and Mr Scott McMenemy; that they held a Consultation at First Lurgan; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev B.A. Smyth is their Moderator; that the Rev J.A. Beattie, Minister of Second Broughshane, retired on 30 June 2021; that the Rev J.J. Andrews, Minister of Ballee, retired on 28 February 2022; that the Rev J.D. McGaughey resigned his appointment as Associate Minister in Cuningham Memorial Cullybackey, on 27 August 2021 and became a Minister Without Charge under the care of Presbytery; that the Rev N.G. Mulholland, Minister of Glenwherry, resigned his charge on 23 September 2021 and was installed to the charge of Cuningham Memorial, Cullybackey, on 24 September 2021; that Mr R.A. Morrison presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route and was ordained and installed to the charge of Churchtown on 6 August 2021; that Mr M.J.K. Kelso was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 20 June 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr Billy Abwa was licensed as a Probationer for the Christian Ministry on 24 October 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Revs J.D. McGaughey and D.C. Millar; as a licentiate, Mr Chris Wilson; as Students for the Ministry, Messrs M.R.T. Rodgers, M.J. Delaney, M.W.H. Houston and Dr K. McIlroy; that no Consultations were held during the year; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev S.J. Lowry is their Moderator; that the Rev C.N. Lynn, Minister of Rathcoole, resigned his charge on 9 December 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev S.D. Currie presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was installed to the charge of Ballysillan on 12 December 2021; that Mr Gareth Keaveney presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was ordained and installed to the charge of New Mossley, on 7 January 2022; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Revs Dr L.E. Carroll, Samuel Newell, and W.A. Shaw; as a licentiate, Mr David McCarthy; as students, Mr Stephen Cairns, Mr Stephen Gaston and Mr Sam Scott; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev N.S. Harrison is their Moderator; that the Rev R.T. Anderson, Minister Emeritus of Richview & Berry Street, died on 7 August 2021; that the Rev J.A. Braithwaite, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 2 November 2021; that the Rev A.J. Galbraith presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed to the charge of Fisherwick, on 10 September 2021; that Mr Paul Lutton was licensed on 6 June 2021 and given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that under their care is: as a Minister without Charge, Rev Dr P.G. McDowell; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev A.C. Rankin is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr V.H. Ryan, Minister Emeritus (Released), of First Ballymacarrett, died on 28 January 2022; that the Rev J.R. Lambe, Minister of Mountpottinger, retired on 31 May 2021; that the Rev Prof Andrew Gibson, Professor of Practical Theology, Union Theological College, retired on 31 July 2021; that the Rev S.D. Currie, Associate Minister of Knock, resigned his charge on 11 December 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev N.D. Craig, Minister of Belmont, resigned his charge on 31 January 2022 and was retained as a Minister without Charge; that the Rev G.J. Kennedy presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed to the charge of Kirkpatrick Memorial on 21 January 2022; that Mr Paul Lutton presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was received as a licentiate; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Rev J.M. Casement, Rev N.D. Craig, Rev W.J. Harshaw (retired), Rev Dr D.J. Montgomery and Rev Dr M.J. Welsh; as licentiates, Mr Sam Bostock (formerly in an Assistantship), Mr Paul Lutton and Dr J.N. McCracken; as a Transferring Minister, Rev Mariann Gilicze; as students, Mr A. Ferguson and Mr N. Stewart; that they held Consultations at High Street, Holywood; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev D.J. Kelly is their Moderator; that the Rev R.I. Carton, Minister of Whitehead, resigned his charge on 1 October 2021; that the Rev T.R. Graham, Minister of Joymount, resigned on 31 December 2021 and became a Minister without Charge under the care of the Presbytery; that Mr Gareth Keaveney, licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that the Rev L.C. Orban, Transferring Minister, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that Mr C.B. Mulvenny, licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Rev T.N. Bingham and Rev T.R. Graham; as students, Mr Stephen McCleery and Mr Myles Tyrell; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **COLERAINE AND LIMAVADY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev P.A. Kerr is their Moderator; that the Rev Raymond Kelly, Minister of Main Street, Garvagh and Killaig, retired on 30 June 2021; that the Rev Stanley Stewart, Minister of Castlerock, retired on 31 December 2021; that the Rev S.A. Morrow, Minister of Moneydig, resigned his charge on 29 June 2021 and was installed to the charge of Portstewart on 30 June 2021; that the Rev D.S. Brownlow presented credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone and was installed to the charge of Derramore and Drumachose on 26 November 2021; that the Rev K.H. Hibbert presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry

and Donegal and was installed to the charge of First Dunboe on 14 January 2022; that under their care is: as a Minister without Charge, Rev Dr R.A. Kane; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **DERRY AND DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev T.J. Bruce is their Acting Moderator; that the Rev D.M. Shaw, Minister of Strabane & Sion Mills, resigned his charge on 7 January 2022 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that the Rev K.H. Hibbert, Minister of Cumber & Upper Cumber, resigned his charge on 13 January 2022 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady; that the Rev R.J. Edgar presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was installed to the charge of Kilfennan on 17 December 2021; that Mr PB Houston presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was ordained and installed to the charge of Ballykelly on 20 August 2021; that the Rev S.W.K. Glendinning, Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev N.R.A. Cooper is their Moderator; that the Rev T.I. Harte, Minister Emeritus of Trinity Boardmills, died on 16 November 2021; that the Rev J.J. Currie, Minister of First Saintfield, resigned his charge on 3 September 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster; that the Rev D.J. Hyndman, Minister of Spa and Magherahamlet, resigned his charge on 31 December 2021; that the Rev T.A. Conway presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was installed to the charge of Second Comber on 13 January 2022; that Mr D.S. Bingham presented credentials from the Presbytery of Tyrone and was ordained and installed to the charge of Clough and Seaforde on 21 January 2022; that under their care are: as a Minister Without Charge, Rev Dr B.C.G. Black; as students, Mr E.G.D. Hanna and Mr T.A.R. Moore; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed separately.

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Dr W.J.A. Sleith is their Moderator; that the Very Rev Dr Samuel Hutchinson, Clerk of the General Assembly Emeritus, died on 19 November 2021; that the Rev Dr R.J.G. Gray, Minister Emeritus (Released) of First Lisburn, died on 15 December 2021; that the Rev K.W.J. Hanna, Minister of Second Dromara, resigned his charge on 6 November 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; that the Rev LC Orban presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was installed to the charge of Anahilt and Drumlough on 26 November 2021; that the Rev Dr M.C. Cowan presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was received as Lecturer in Historical

Theology, Union Theological College; that Mr MJK Kelso presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was received as a licentiate; that under their care are: as a Minister without Charge, Rev WJ Todd; as licentiates, Mr P.A. Boyd, Mr M.J.K. Kelso and Mr N.J. O'Neill; as students, Mr T. Finnegan, Mr S. Kerr, Mr A. Martin, and Mr S. Woods; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Daniel Reyes Martin is their Moderator; that the Rev A.V. Martin, Minister Emeritus of Abbey, died on 21 March 2021; that the Rev S.D. Conkey, Minister of Enniscorthy and Wexford, resigned his charge on 8 October 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that the Rev C.W.P. Kennedy, Minister of Dun Laoghaire, resigned his charge on 30 September 2021; that the Rev J.J. Currie presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was installed to the charge of Kilkenny on 4 September 2021; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev C.G. Harris is their Moderator; that the Rev TT Boyd, Minister of First Rathfriland, resigned his charge on 31 May 2021 and was retained as a Minister without Charge; that the Rev R.J. Edgar, Minister of Ballyrone and Drumlee, resigned his charge on 16 December 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal; that the Rev T.A. Conway, Minister of Hilltown and Clonduff, resigned his charge on 12 January 2022 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev T.T. Boyd, Minister without Charge under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that the Rev S.D. Conkey presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster and was installed to the charge of Tullylish and Gilford on 9 October 2021; that under their care are: as a licentiate, Mr R.J.E. Hill; as a student, Mr S.P. McKimm; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev J.T.H. Porter is their Moderator; that the Rev Molly Deatherage, Minister of Ballina, Ballymote and Killala, retired on 30 April 2021; that the Rev C.G. Anderson, Minister of First Castleblaney, Frankford and Corvalley, resigned his charge on 11 March 2021; that under their care is: as a Minister without Charge, Rev D.J.M. Boyle; that no Consultations were held; and that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev WDS McCullagh is their Moderator; that the Rev Joseph Nixon, Minister Emeritus (Released) of Fourtowns and Poyntzpass, died on 30 June 2021; that the Rev B.D. Colvin was installed to the additional charge of Ryans on 25 April 2021; that the Rev KWJ Hanna presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was inducted to the work of Rural Chaplain on 7 November 2021; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Revs A.D. Mullan and B.A.H. Wilson; as students, Mr R.W.R. Higgins and Mr J.D. McKee; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev C.H. Deering is their Moderator; that the Rev J.T. Williamson, Minister Emeritus of Sion Mills and Urney, died on 25 July 2021; that the Rev N.R. McCormick, Minister Emeritus (Released) of Ballygawley and Ballyreagh, died on 7 November 2021; that under their care are: as students, Mr Jeff Gawn and Mr Graeme Read; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** reports that the Rev R.M. Murray is their Moderator; that the Rev Noel McClean, Minister of First Kilraughts, retired on 31 October 2021; that the Rev J.T. Magowan, Minister Emeritus, became Minister Emeritus (Released) on 1 June 2021; that Mr C.B. Mulvenny presented credentials from the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and was ordained and installed to the charge of Dervock on 9 March 2021; that Mr R.A. Morrison, licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Rev Peter Turton and Rev Peter Douglas; that they held Consultations at Bushmills; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed separately.

The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev S.J. Lockington is their Moderator; that the Rev P.E. Dickinson, Minister of Muckamore, retired on 30 June 2021; that the Rev W.J. Murdock, Minister of Killead and Loanends, retired on 4 July 2021; that the Rev P.E. Dickinson, Minister Emeritus, became Minister Emeritus (Released) on 2 November 2021; that Mr Ben Johnston, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the charge of Second Donegore on 9 March 2021; that Mr Billy Abwa presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was received as licentiate; that Mr J.A. Porter, licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Revs J.A. Gordon and J.L. Tosh; as licentiates, Messrs Billy Abwa and R.W. McFaul; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev T.W.A. Greer is their Moderator; that the Rev J.D. Montgomery, Minister of First and Second Moneymore, resigned his charge on 21 March 2021 and was retained as a Minister without Charge; that the Rev D.W. Leach, Minister of Lecumpher and Union Road, Magherafelt, resigned his charge on 31 July 2021 and was installed as Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry, on 1 August 2021; that the Rev G.J. Jordan, Minister of Bellaghy and Knockloughrim, resigned his charge on 24 September 2021 and was retained as a Minister without Charge; that Rev D.S. Brownlow, Minister of Carland and Newmills, resigned his charge on 25 November 2021 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady; that Mr D.S. Bingham, licentiate under the care of Presbytery, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that the Rev T.T. Boyd presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was installed to the charge of Tobermore and Draperstown (part-time) on 1 September 2021; that Mr J.A. Porter presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick, and was ordained to the office of Christian Ministry and installed to the charge of Orritor and Claggan on 3 September 2021; that the Rev S.W.K. Glendinning presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal and was installed to the charge of Coagh, Ballygoney and Saltersland on 3 December 2021; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Revs W.I. Ferris, G.J. Jordan and J.D. Montgomery; that no Consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

Convener: Rev N.J. McCULLOUGH

Secretary: Rev T.D. ALLEN

The Council's work has continued through its committees and panels.

MINISTERIAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Fifteen students commenced ministerial training this autumn, giving a total of 31 students currently in training.

Ministry Applications and Pathways

2. Five candidates for ordained ministry were interviewed by panels consisting of Revs Eddie Chestnutt, Alastair McNeely, Joanne Smith, Robin Aicken, Gordon Best, Michael Davidson, Gary Glasgow, Stephen Lowry, Miss Anne Taylor, Mr Trevor Long.
3. Whilst the planned residential events had to be cancelled this year, the committee is grateful that the majority of the process has been able to be more 'normal' this year than last.
4. Having completed this process four are being nominated to the General Assembly.
5. There are currently six students on 'flexible pathways'. The committee is encouraged by what this offers both student and Council, and continues to see how the scheme can be best implemented and enhanced, balancing the desire to recognise the previous experience and learning of individuals with the need to ensure all are given adequate training to equip for ministry in the coming years.
6. The committee is very thankful for applicants during the very unsettling times of the global pandemic but would want to emphasise the importance of local ministers and congregational leaders in identifying gifts and encouraging people from their congregations to consider applying for ordained ministry. It is almost universally the experience of student ministers that the gentle exhortation of people known to them is the vital starting point on the road to application. In light of the retirements forecast in the years ahead, much prayer is needed if the Church is to be equipped with leaders for the coming generations.
7. A ministry taster day was held on 26 March which sought to help people in thinking through the process of application and the possibilities that lie beyond that. The committee is grateful for those who brought people along to this day and those who encouraged others to come.

8. A decision has been made to delay licensing for the current third year students until the autumn of this year. This is due to them missing the opportunity of a summer assistantship at the end of year 1 because of the Covid crisis. Steps have also been taken to make sure that no student loses out financially.
9. The committee is grateful for the supervising ministers who work so hard to mentor students when on placements. To further equip them, a number of meetings are planned and resources made available to them.

Licentiatees

10. Alongside the committee, the Professor of Ministry, David Leach, is conducting a review of licentiate training. It is hoped that the good work being done in licentiate training can be built on and a programme of continuing development for these assistants continued before they are eligible for a call.
11. Three licentiatees become eligible in Autumn 2022.

Post-ordination Conferences

12. Marcus Honeysett, Mel Lacey and a team from Living Leadership took the conference this year after his booking for 2020 had to be cancelled. Gary Millar is the main speaker at next year's conference on the topic of preaching.

Pre-retirement Conferences

13. Two conferences were held in 2021 due to the cancellation of the 2020 event.
14. A query regarding the entitlement of those retiring early to attend the conference was considered by the committee. The scheme, as agreed by the General Assembly, states that invitations are given to those in work in their 63rd year and no change to this position is proposed.

ANDREW FAULKNER, Convener

Students' Bursary Fund

Rev. Adrian Moffett, Students' Bursary Fund agent writes:

15. The Students' Bursary Fund exists to make financial provision for students for the ordained ministry and their families during their time of study.
16. In the academic year beginning September 2021, 32 students are in receipt of grants, all of whom are studying at Union Theological College, Belfast. The cost to the fund of the grants, fees and other expenses for this academic year is in the region of £590,000.
17. The Students' Bursary Fund receives its income from offerings at services of licensing of probationers, of ordination and installation of ministers and other special services, and through personal and

congregational donations as well as congregational assessment. The support of the Church in these ways is gratefully acknowledged. Those who have responsibility for planning a service of licensing, ordination and installation, etc. are asked to ensure full use is made of the Students' Bursary Fund literature, especially the Gift Aid envelope. (Experience suggests that where literature is made available at an earlier time, such as on the Sunday before the special service, those attending are more likely to make use of the Gift Aid scheme.) The literature is available from Assembly Buildings.

Deaconesses

18. In September 2021, Heather Healy and Cathy Smith commenced their Deaconess Training Programme under the revised course with its greater emphasis upon work within congregations. Heather is serving her Year 1 placement in Wellington congregation with Eleanor Drysdale and Cathy in Whiteabbey with Rachel Cubitt.

ROBIN BROWN, Convener

Union Theological College

19. The College has continued to deliver high-quality teaching to its in-person and online students despite the challenges that Covid has brought. The committee wishes to commend the faculty and staff of the College for the excellent work they have done this academic year.
20. The College welcomed three new academic colleagues during the past year - Dr Robbie Booth, Dr Olwyn Mark and Dr Stephen Moore. In addition, the Rev David Leach was appointed as Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry. Alice Eustace and Jonny Davidson were welcomed to the administrative team. The committee is grateful for the strong academic and administrative team that is being formed in the College and for the enthusiasm and expertise that they bring.
21. In 2020, the Assembly agreed to work towards the reintroduction of an undergraduate degree in Theology to be validated and awarded by St Mary's University, Twickenham. The committee is very encouraged by the way this project has developed. Good working relationships have been built and there is a mutual commitment to autonomy for the College in delivering the curriculum, external scrutiny and high academic standards. The new BA in Theology is due to commence with its first intake of students in September 2022. The committee is encouraged by the interest shown and the applications received and believe this provision will be an important part of Union College's future work in the service of the local community and beyond.
22. The College Teaching and Learning Strategy 2020-25 includes as a core principle that "we will work in engaged partnership with students, external experts, collaborative partners and stakeholders" in pursuit of strategic aims – an approach characteristic of higher education

generally. The Faculty are pleased to have secured a new collaboration with The Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology in Cambridge (www.kirbylaingcentre.co.uk). This expansion of doctoral provision will enable UTC and KLC staff to work together on a wide range of research projects, with all postgraduate research students involved studying towards a PTFI PhD award and under College regulations. Further collaborations are also being explored. The committee welcomes such arrangements, recognising how they further the College's strategic aims and consolidate its research culture, as well as bringing mutual benefits to all partners.

23. The administrative work in the college, in support of all the training offered, continues to develop, ensuring compliance with best practice in the sector. All aspects of work in the College are governed by formal policies which are available on the College website.
24. The opportunities presented by the location and resources of Union College are many but the challenges of maintaining an old building are considerable. Major renovation work has been completed to the Gamble Library ceiling after cracks appeared and some plaster became detached. The contractor was commended for the efficiency of the work and for keeping within budget. The College heating system was more than 20 years old and had begun to fail. A decision was taken to renovate the system and install two new boilers and new flues. The College security and access system is in urgent need of updating and steps are being taken to allow this work to proceed. A building survey is being commissioned to gain an understanding of the future maintenance and development needs of the building. It is hoped this will allow for longer term budget planning.

IVAN PATTERSON, Convener

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES

Transferring Ministers

25. Tagle Aguiar (Cuba) is serving assistantship in St Andrew's, Bangor and, having satisfactorily completed his transferring assistantship, became eligible for call on 1 April 2022.
26. Mariann Gilicze (Hungary) commenced assistantship in Gilnahirk on 1 December 2020 with a view to eligibility for a call in December 2022.
27. Trevor Kane (Scotland) commenced assistantship in First Portadown on 1 July 2020 with a view to eligibility for a call in July 2022.
28. Mark Haugh (Church of Ireland and Presbyterian Church in America) was received in December 2020 and commenced his assistantship in Vinecash on 1 February 2021 with some additional preaching in Richhill. He was licensed on 26 November 2021 by Armagh Presbytery.

He is working towards eligibility for a call in February 2023.

29. Elsy McCroskery (Indonesia via Northern Ireland) was received as a Transferring Minister on 18 January 2022. An assistantship is currently being arranged for her.

Applicants and Enquirers from other denominations

30. A number of enquires have come about the possibility of transferring to PCI and one exploratory week took place but there have been no formal applications to date.

Permissions to Preach/Minister

31. There have been no requests this year from Ministers outside PCI wishing to preach in vacant congregations.

Applications from Presbyteries to retain Ministers Without Charge

32. Requests have been processed and the recommendations of the committee appear in Appendix 2.

General Matters re. Potential Transferers

33. The Committee will shortly be reviewing both the application process and the transferring pathway through to eligibility for a call, to determine whether any revisions might prove helpful.

ALBERT BAXTER, Convener

Recognised Ministries

Rev Dr WJP Bailie, Mission Africa, writes:

34. Mission Africa (The Qua Iboe Fellowship) is in its 135th year of operation.

The mission concentrates on three areas of ministry: 1) evangelism and Church planting, generally in difficult places and circumstances; 2) the strengthening of the African Church through theological education; 3) medical and compassionate ministry, especially to vulnerable women, children and the elderly.

As Chief Executive, I have responsibility for strategic planning; pastoral care of Missionaries; supervision of personnel and finance at home and overseas; and partner relations with a variety of Churches and agencies. I am particularly involved in promoting theological education and police and military chaplaincy.

I am also grateful to report that my status as a Minister in Recognised Service permits me to play an active role within my Presbytery (Ards) and the Council for Training in Ministry and the subsidiary committees of the CTM (RMLC and APS/AMS). I am particularly glad to serve the Church through adjunct lecturing in Old Testament at Union

Theological College, and ACF chaplaincy. I am currently vacancy convener for Second Ards and have recently been appointed Deputy Clerk of Ards Presbytery.

Rev Dr Ruth Patterson, Restoration Ministries, writes:

35. Over the last year we have continued with our focus on spiritual direction, listening ministry and retreat giving. This work has been partly online but, increasingly, face to face. We cannot respond to all the requests for retreats, but it is encouraging to recognise the growing demand from all parts of Ireland for such spiritual input.
36. Another book *A Traveller Passing Through (Reflections from the Holy Land)* is currently going through the publishing process and will be available in June 2022.

PASTORAL CARE OF MINISTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

37. The Council for Training in Ministry has a responsibility for encouraging and resourcing Presbyteries in their provision of pastoral care for ministers and their families. Following on from the 2021 Refresh Initiative, the Council had opportunity to collaborate with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness in Refresh II, which was held in February 2022. A total of 105 ministers from across the Church registered for an online morning of encouragement, reflection, and group discussion, led by the Moderator, with additional input from Bishop Ken Clarke and a panel facilitated by Dr Olwyn Mark.

NIALL LOCKHART, Convener

ACCREDITED PREACHERS AND AUXILIARY MINISTERS

Auxiliary Ministry Scheme

38. The 2020 course, interrupted because of Covid, has now been completed. Nine candidates successfully finished the course and received their certificates at a service of accreditation held in Elmwood Presbyterian Church, Lisburn on 19 September 2021.

In the absence of further Auxiliary Ministry posts being created, the panel is engaged in ongoing discussion about the future of the scheme. At this point there are no plans for any further course.

Accredited Preacher Course

39. The 2019 and 2020 Accredited Preacher courses were combined because of Covid. Twenty candidates successfully completed their course of training.
40. The 2021-22 course has also been completed and a service of accreditation has been arranged in First Antrim Presbyterian Church on 15 May 2022. At that service the twelve successful candidates will receive their certificates of accreditation.
41. The 2022-23 course is underway. Council interviews have taken place and twenty people have been accepted on to the course which will commence with an intensive week of classroom teaching from 4-8 July 2022 in Union College.

Panel Review of Courses

42. The panel hopes to conduct a review of the work of the Accredited Preacher Scheme, the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme, and the Handling the Word course over the next year.

OSSIE McAULEY, Convener

Conciliation

43. As Covid-19 restrictions have eased, the Conciliation Service has been involved in a number of cases, and in-person training has also resumed. Training for licentiates and new deaconesses has been provided in Spring 2022, and a new course for ministers, 'Facilitating Difficult Conversations' has also been developed and delivered. In addition, the Service continues to respond to individual requests for training, these being most often for Kirk Sessions. This training covers themes such as 'Understanding Conflict and Handling Conflict in the Church', 'Healthy Decision Making', 'Managing Change Effectively' and 'Living with Differences'.

Conciliators continue to participate in update training twice a year, to support and equip them for carrying out their role, and to ensure that they offer the best service possible. It is hoped that training for new conciliators, and for those interested in developing conciliation skills for their own role within the Church, will be offered in 2022 – 2023.

The Conciliation Panel has an ongoing concern that where there are conflicts or difficulties in relationships within congregations, often help is sought through the Conciliation Service Co-ordinator at a very late stage or not at all. The Panel continues to work to promote the Service's offer of confidential support across the Church and is currently engaged in review and discussions to ensure that its work within Presbyteries is as helpful as possible for all of those involved.

MARY POTTER, Convener

APPENDIX 1**SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS**

| | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------|
| ARDS | Paul Bradley | Union |
| | Andrew Frazer | Union |
| | Francine Magill | Union |
| | Wallace Moore | Union |
| ARMAGH | Daniel Ballantyne | Union |
| | Mark Hawthorne | Union |
| | Jordan Jones | Union |
| | Scott McMenemy | Union |
| BALLYMENA | Martin Delaney | Union |
| | Matthew Houston | Union |
| | Keith McIlroy | Union |
| | Mark Rodgers | Union |
| NORTH BELFAST | Stephen Cairns | Union |
| | Stephen Gaston | Union |
| | Jamie McMillan | ... |
| | Samuel Scott | Union |
| EAST BELFAST | Andrew Ferguson | Union |
| | Neil Stewart | Union |
| CARRICKFERGUS | Stephen McCleery | Union |
| | Myles Tyrell | Union |
| COLERAINE AND LIMAVADY | Jonathan Boyd | Union |
| DOWN | Ellis Hanna | Union |
| | Thomas Moore | Union |
| DROMORE | Tom Finnegan | Union |
| | Stephen Kerr | Union |
| | Andrew Martin | Union |
| | Steven Woods | Union |

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| DUBLIN AND MUNSTER | Josh McCance | Union |
| IVEAGH | Stuart McKimm | Union |
| NEWRY | Ryan Higgins John McKee | Union Union |
| OMAGH | Jeff Gawn Graeme Read | Union Union |

APPENDIX 2

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING MINISTERS WITHOUT CHARGE AND LICENTIATES NOT SERVING AN ASSISTANTSHIP UNDER CODE PAR 219A

Presbyteries have sought authorisation for the retention of the following as recognised licentiates or ministers without charge under Code Par 219(3)(c) (i), and the Council for Training in Ministry makes recommendation as detailed.

Ards

Rev Mark Catney, to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev Craig Mawhinney, to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev Lesley-Ann Wilson, to be retained as minister without charge.

Armagh

Rev Dr Philip McConnell, to be retained as minister without charge.

Ballymena

Rev David McCaughey, to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev Colin Millar, to be retained as minister without charge.

Belfast East

Mr Samuel Bostock, to be retained as licentiate.

Rev Moore Casement, to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev William Harshaw, to be retained as minister without charge (retired).

Rev Dr David Montgomery, to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev Dr Mark Welsh, to be retained as minister without charge.

Belfast North

Rev Dr Lesley Carroll, to be retained as minister without charge.

Mr David McCarthy, to be retained as licentiate without charge.

Rev Samuel Newell, to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev Bill Shaw, to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev Martin Smyth, to be retained as minister without charge (retired).

Belfast South

Rev Dr Peter McDowell, to be retained as minister without charge.

Carrickfergus

Rev Neil Bingham, to be retained as minister without charge.

Coleraine and Limavady

Rev Dr Robert Kane, to be retained as minister without charge.

Down

Rev Dr Brian Black, to be retained as minister without charge.

Monaghan

Rev Damien Boyle, to be retained as minister without charge.

Newry

Rev Andrew Mullan, to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev Brian Wilson, to be retained as minister without charge.

Route

Rev Peter Douglas, to be retained as minister without charge.

Templepatrick

Rev Alastair Gordon, to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev James Tosh, to be retained as minister without charge.

Tyrone

Rev Ivan Ferris, to be retained as minister without charge.

THE TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Chairman: Rev Dr D. WATTS

Secretary: Mr CLIVE KNOX

1. The following is an extract from the Minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, at their Annual General Meeting held on 15 March 2022.
2. In accordance with the Trustees' Bye-Laws it was moved by Rev T.D. Gribben, seconded by Mr D. Crowe, and agreed that Rev Dr D. Watts be appointed Chairman until the 2023 Annual General Meeting of the Trustees.
3. The Statements of Account of the following for the year ended 31 December 2021 having been approved were laid before the Trustees:
 - The General Investment Fund
 - The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
(Incorporating The Commutation Fund, The Non-Participating Trusts Fund, The Magee Fund, The Tops Wilson Trust Fund, The Fire Insurance Trust Fund, The Fortune Mission Bequest, The Lindsay Memorial Fund, The McClure Trust Fund, The Local Bible Fund, The John Getty Will Trust and various other Trust Funds).
4. Moved by Mr S. Johnston, seconded by Mrs M. Guiler and unanimously agreed that the Report and the Statements of Account in accordance with the Trustees' Bye-Laws be lodged with the Clerk of Assembly to be laid before the General Assembly in June 2022.

Trust Funds

5. A summary account of the various Trust Funds the Trustees manage is included in the Book of Accounts 2021. The following Trust Funds are distributed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Trustees. As in 2021, the Trustees have agreed to recommend to the 2022 General Assembly that, where the terms of Trust permit, these should be distributed via the United Appeal rather than directly to various agencies.

Mrs A.M. Davidson Trust: The total income for 2021 available for distribution is £6,627.40. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal

£6,627.40

Sir Wm. V. McCleery Estate: The total income for 2021 available for distribution is £34,601.84. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Central Ministry Fund | 80% |
| Retired Ministers' Fund | 10% |
| Widows of Ministers' Fund | 10% |

Estate of Miss Irene Scott: The total income for 2021 available for distribution is £7,169.24. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| United Appeal | £7,169.24 |
|---------------|-----------|

Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown: The total income for 2021 available for distribution is £4,600.96. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| United Appeal | £4,600.98 |
|---------------|-----------|

Estate of Mr Victor Morrow: The total income for 2021 available for distribution is £1,499.68. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| United Appeal | £1,499.68 |
|---------------|-----------|

John Getty Will Trust

- In accordance with the scheme approved by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland dated 19 March 2021 and as reported to the General Assembly in October 2021. The John Getty Will Trust has been incorporated into the accounts of the Trustees for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the year ended 31 December 2021.
- The allocation of grants out of the income of the Trust for the year ending 31 December, 2021 was as follows:

| | | |
|----------------------|------|--------|
| Global Missions | 30% | £2,875 |
| 1996 Review Fund | 10% | £950 |
| Mission in Ireland | 30% | £2,875 |
| Belfast City Mission | 30% | £2,875 |
| TOTAL | 100% | £9,575 |

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INVESTMENT FUND (commonly known as The General Investment Fund)

- The General Investment Fund was originally established under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 1964. It is a Common Investment Fund in which any charity connected with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland can invest.

9. Investments in the Fund or shareholdings tend to arise from trust funds, bequests or donations which often have particular terms or restrictions attached regarding the application of the capital and income.
10. Further details about the General Investment Fund, the investment performance and investment holdings, are available in a booklet available from the Financial Secretary's Department.
11. The Trustees have prepared the accounts of the General Investment Fund for the year ended 31 December 2021 in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Financial Statement of Authorised Funds (May 2014) as amended in June 2017. These are included in the Book of Accounts presented to the General Assembly. These accounts provide detailed information regarding the Fund and in particular its performance, investment allocation, level of income and distributions during the year.
12. **Declaration of Dividend**
- | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| | 30.03.21 | 30.09.21 |
| Number of shares qualifying | 6,140,838 | 6,162,152 |
| Income from investment for distribution and Tax recoverable less Administrative Charge and Investment Advisers' Fees | £614,084 | £985,944 |
| Dividend per share | 10.00p | 16.0p |
13. During 2021, £35,366 was transferred to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve, which is in accordance with the Scheme Rules, and the balance on the Reserve at 31 December 2021 is £735,316.
14. The combined annual Dividend of 26.00p per share for 2021 is to be compared with 23.00p for 2020, 27.50p for 2019, 27.00p for 2018, 27.00p for 2017, 26.00p for 2016, 26.00p for 2015, 26.00p for 2014, 26.00p for 2013, 26.00p for 2012, 25.00p for 2011, 26.00p for 2010.
- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Valuation | 31.03.22 | 31.03.21 |
| | £ | £ |
| Valuation of Investments | 78,866,429 | 74,268,483 |
| Cash Balance / on Deposit | (292,292) | (366,707) |
| Dividend Equalisation Reserve | 735,316 | 684,118 |
| | <u>£79,309,453</u> | <u>£74,585,894</u> |
- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|
| No of Shares Issued | 6,164,502 | 6,157,419 |
| Share Value | £12.8655 | £12.1132 |
- The shares in the Fund have from 28 February 2017 been valued on a monthly basis and the monthly share prices are included in the audited accounts. The share value at the end of the last financial year, 31 December 2021, was £13.3155 per share (2020, £11.7972).
15. The Trustees meet with Investment Managers, Newton Investment Management Limited, three times a year to review investment performance. During 2021, there was a return of 15.87% compared to a benchmark return of 13.36%. Newton Investment Management

Limited was appointed Investment Adviser to the Trustees Funds in June 2006 and from then to 31 December 2021, the General Investment Fund has returned 7.79% per annum compared to the benchmark of 6.79%.

Registration with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

16. In March 2022, the Trustees were invited by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland to apply to have the Presbyterian Church Investment Fund (also known as the General Investment Fund) registered as a charity in Northern Ireland. The application was submitted on 28 March 2022 and the Trustees await the Commission's decision. Having taken advice from the General Assembly Solicitor, and while recognising that the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are incorporated under a Royal Charter in 1871, they were advised that the individual trustees (of which there are 16) need to be registered as the Charity Trustees of the Fund. In order that only those who are appointed as Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland can act as the charity trustees of the Fund, the Assembly Solicitor has advised that an alteration should be made to the Trustees' Bye-Laws. The proposed alteration is set out in Appendix 1 to this report. Under the Irish Presbyterian Church Act 1871, any change to the Trustees' Bye-Laws must be approved by the General Assembly (clause 30).

Change to the Withdrawal

17. A change to the scheme withdrawal rules, which reduces the period of notice, was approved by the General Assembly in October 2021. In accordance with the rules of the Scheme, the approval of the Department for Communities was also required and this was granted on 10 March 2022.

Trustees' Discretionary Fund

18. On occasions, the Trustees are notified of bequests where the terms may state they are for the "benefit of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland" or the "Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland". The policy to date has been to allocate these to the Trustees' Discretionary Fund which is invested in the General Investment Fund unless an immediate use is identified. The Trustees received bequests of £67,238 during 2021. A grant of £30,000 was distributed to Union Theological College as part of agreed transitional funding arrangements and a grant of £389 to the Stranahan Trust to support the grants awarded by that Fund to certain widows.

In accordance with advice received from the General Assembly Solicitor, and as previously reported to the General Assembly, the Trustees "*take instructions from the General Council (or the General Council Standing Committee), or from the General Assembly (or its duly authorised Commissions), regarding allocations from the Trustees Discretionary Fund*".

Crescent Church Loan Fund

19. The Crescent Loan Fund was established following the sale of the Crescent Church premises in 1975 and provides low interest loans to congregations having short term financial problems.

The interest charged on new loans is at half the total of bank base rate plus 2%, presently 1.05%, and this is charged on the average balance outstanding over the term of the loan.

The maximum loan normally provided by the Fund is £50,000 and this has to be repaid normally within 3 years, although loans over 5 years can be provided in certain circumstances. Further information about loans from the Fund is available from the Financial Secretary's Department.

During 2021, the Trustees provided a loan of £50,000 to one congregation and the loans outstanding at 31 December 2021 were £228,630. At that time the fund had £153,835 available to meet loan request.

Bequests

20. The Trustees received a report of all bequests notified to the Church during 2021 and wish to record their deep gratitude for those who have decided to support the Church in this way.

Ethical Investment Policy – Investments in Fossil Fuels

21. At the 2021 General Assembly, a resolution was passed which directed “the Trustees to employ a ‘divest and engage’ strategy in relation to companies producing or using fossil fuels, thereby divesting from those that derive more than 10% of their turnover from oil and gas extraction (the coal, oil and gas majors), and engaging with companies that derive more than 10% of their turnover from the use of fossil fuels, encouraging them to make clear commitments to the targets for global heating and carbon emission reduction as set out in the COP 21 Paris Agreement; reporting back to the 2022 General Assembly.”
22. The Trustees subsequently advised Newton Investment Management Limited, the investment advisers to the General Investment Fund, and they divested from those companies that derive more than 10% of their turnover from oil and gas extraction (the coal, oil and gas majors).
23. At a meeting of the Trustees on 18 January 2022, the Trustees received a presentation from Newton Investment Management Limited on ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) matters and on their approach to responsible investment. The report demonstrated that Newton have a long history in ESG, disclosed their approach to a number of outside organisations and currently have a strong ESG rating. They have a team of around 20 people working in the area of responsible investment and undertake an ESG quality review for every investment they make. They also reported that they have recognised that the structuring of ESG data is becoming increasingly important in order to undertake a

comprehensive ESG review and that they consider ESG issues under five headings – Environment, Social Capital, Human Capital, Business Model and Innovation and Leadership and Governance. Newton use a range of ESG integration tools including a materiality index, for each stock sector as the issues are different between sectors, a Company level ESG Report and an ESG Dashboard. They reported that climate change is likely to be a key focus over the next 30 years or so, that emissions are projected to rise by 15% over the next number of years and that the current pace of change is not at the necessary rate to make an impact. Newton have signed up to a Net Zero Asset Managers Initiative and have to disclose their approach in this area. They are committed to transparency in this area and issue a Climate-related Financial Disclosures report which is available to the Trustees.

24. The Trustees found the presentation extremely helpful and have agreed to keep ESG matters under review and engage further with Newton on a regular basis.
25. The Trustees have incorporated into their annual accounts the following statement, “The Trustees adopt a policy of Socially Responsible Investment and are therefore committed to ensuring that any investment decisions are made responsibly and with integrity, having due regard to ethical, social, environmental and governance issues. The Trustees policy has been developed to pursue an ethical approach while minimising any negative impact on investment returns. Investment decisions are informed by socially responsible and ethical considerations and also the Charity Commission’s position that trustees have a duty to maximise returns on investment for charitable benefit.”

Investment Manager to the General Investment Fund

26. Newton Investment Managers were originally appointed investment managers to the General Investment Fund in 2006, and as reported elsewhere in this report, the Fund has shown above benchmark performance since then. The Trustees’ assessment is that Newton have provided a high quality service.
27. The Trustees did undertake an internal review several years ago and agreed to retain Newton as investment managers but now believe as part of good governance arrangements that they should put the provision of investment management services out to tender. The Trustees also agreed that they should appoint a firm of consultants to assist them with this process. The process of selecting consultants to assist them was itself put out to tender in January 2022 and the Trustees have appointed “bfinance” who are based in London and have considerable experience and expertise in this area and especially in assisting charities with the selection process. Over the coming months, the Trustees will be working with “bfinance” to undertake a tendering process.

Trustees

28. At the 2022 General Assembly, Sir B. Robinson, Mrs M. Guiler, Mr D. Crowe and Mr N. Bennett will all have completed their second terms as Trustees, having been appointed in 2012. At the Annual General Meeting of the Trustees in March 2022, concern was expressed as to the impact of so many trustees retiring at the same time. It was noted that no Trustees are due to complete their second term in 2023. At that meeting, the Trustees agreed that the impact of a transition in membership could be eased if two of the aforementioned Trustees were to remain in office for one further year. A resolution to allow Mrs Marjorie Guiler and Mr Norman Bennett to remain as Trustees for one further year is appended to this report.

Sir B. Robinson and Mr D. Crowe were originally appointed to the former Board of Trustees in 2012. The Trustees wish to record their deep appreciation to both for their committed service and valuable contribution to the work of the Trustees.

The General Council previously decided that all nominees for appointment by the General Assembly, should come to the Assembly through its Nominations Committee. With regard to the Trustees, the Nominations Committee is to take this forward by:

“...nominating Trustees to the General Assembly for appointment, following advice from the Clerk of Assembly and the Secretary of the Trustees.”

Resolutions to appoint new Trustees will therefore be taken as part of the report of the Nominations Committee.

APPENDIX 1

ALTERATIONS TO ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES’ BYE-LAWS

New Bye-Law 19

An individual Trustee appointed to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in accordance with the provisions of The Code Para 122(2) and during their period in such office shall also act as a charity trustee of the Presbyterian Church Investment Fund. An individual Trustee will cease to act as a charity trustee of the Presbyterian Church Investment Fund when their term of appointment to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland terminates for whatever reason.

Bye-Law 19 is to be re-numbered as Bye-Law 20.

COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION

Convener: Rev Dr S.E. HUGHES

Secretary: Rev W.S. MARRS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The work of the Council for Global Mission could be summed up in the strapline, '*global disciples sharing God's heart for the world, declaring good news and demonstrating God's love*'. As such, it reflects both the Great Commission and the Great Command, and recognises the call to authentic fellowship with sisters and brothers in Christ all around the world. The Council is tasked with enabling the co-ordination and delivery of global mission as determined by the General Assembly (Code Par 115), and especially where it is beyond the ability of the local congregation and not falling under the remit of other mission councils, partners or agencies. This entails the development of a strategy on mission overseas, including partnership with overseas churches and sending global mission workers; promoting world development issues, including providing for an annual appeal; leading thinking on issues of global concern such as the environment, race relations, international relations (Code Par 278.3).
2. This report sets out the work of the Council for Global Mission from October 2021. In slowly emerging from a Covid-19 pandemic, operating with a new council structure, the Council for Global Mission was able to meet face to face on 1 December 2021 and 28 March 2022 and reports as follows:
 - (a) Global Mission Committee (Pars 3 to 14).
 - (b) Global Development Committee (Pars 15 to 27).
 - (c) Business and Finance Panel (Pars 28 to 31).

GLOBAL MISSION COMMITTEE

Global Mission Workers

3. The Council thanks God for the 27 global mission workers of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who, as his witnesses, serve in 11 countries around the world and for those who have resigned and been commissioned for service in the past year. Details of roles, locations, and global mission partners for those currently serving with the Council are found in **Appendix A**.

4. It was anticipated that on 8 May 2022, under the Integrate Programme of service, Rev Nigel Craig would be inducted, and together with his wife, Antónia, commissioned by the Presbytery of East Belfast for service in Hungary with the Tiszántúli District of the Hungarian Reformed Church.
5. A memorial minute was recorded in respect of the following former missionary who passed away: Mr Horace Love who served in Malawi 1964–1968 died on 4 February 2022.
6. Covid-19: During the latter half of 2021, those global mission workers who had temporarily transferred their work-base to Ireland due to the Covid pandemic, were able to return overseas following the easing of international travel protocols.
7. Deputation: While face to face ‘deputation’ speaking engagement has continued to prove challenging to organise due to Covid restrictions, alternative means of communication have continued, not least the ‘Digital Dispatches’ series of videos available on the PCI website which provide regular updates on the work of global mission workers. Global mission worker prayer bulletins are available monthly, along with Mission Connect updates in the *Herald*.

Global Mission Partnerships

8. A list of Global Mission Partnerships is provided in **Appendix B**. The adversity of Covid has resulted in more than six million people dying globally, with all PCI’s partners impacted by the pandemic to some degree. For some it is one of a range of crises being faced, including most recently the war in Ukraine and its growing impact on the global economy.
9. Covid-19 restrictions have meant that only a small number of overseas visits have been made on behalf of the Council in the past year, with the following undertaken to meet with partners, attend conferences, visit projects and share in the pastoral support and encouragement of global mission workers:
 - Rev Stephen McCracken to visit with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Synod of Zambia from 22 April – 4 May 2022.
 - Rt Rev Dr David Bruce to visit Comunidade Pedras Vivas, PCI’s church planting initiative in partnership with the Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal from 29 April to 2 May 2022.
 - Rev David McCullagh and Paul Bowman to Christ the Saviour Presbyterian Church, Poland from 10 to 13 June 2022.
10. This year, for the first time since 2019, partner church delegates are being invited to attend in-person the General Assembly.

Grants and Emergency Funding

11. Additional 2021 grant funding of £37,000 was allocated for the support of five projects in four countries. The Council also approved a schedule of 2022 grants totalling £58,500 for the support of fourteen partner projects covering ten countries. The funding for these grants comes from the United Appeal, the World Development Appeal and designated donations.
12. **Misean Cara:** The Council for Global Mission received funding totalling £80,256 during 2021 through partnering with Misean Cara, an international and Irish faith-based missionary movement, working with marginalised and vulnerable communities. This funding is supporting the work of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Samburu Awareness and Action Project in Tuum for activities improving access to education particularly for girls, building community leadership and providing more opportunities for developing livelihoods. The United Mission to Nepal has benefited from Misean Cara funding, specifically an education project in the Bahjang area of Western Nepal involved in training teachers, improving school water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, facilitating improvement of school management and governance systems and creating ‘child-friendly’ classrooms. Another Nepali organisation, Minority Focus, received funding for their Covid-19 emergency response.

Global Leadership Training

13. In 2021, the Council approved a schedule of scholarships for 2022 totalling £29,707 in support of Leaders in Training from nine partner churches in six countries. Dr. Zoltán Kustár, Professor and Head of the Faculty for Old Testament Studies at the Reformed Theological University in Debrecen, arrived in Belfast on Thursday, 3 March commencing a five-month sabbatical at Union Theological College.

Church Planting and Evangelism

14. Further to the Church Planting and Evangelism Report being received by the General Assembly Standing Commission in January 2021, the Committee is seeking to implement its findings during 2022, working in consultation with the global mission workers currently engaged in church planting and evangelism in Europe.
 - (a) **Strategy 2023-2025:** In slowly emerging from the pandemic, the Global Mission Committee will be bringing options to the Council over the next year in relation to a strategy for sharing in the declaration of the Good News overseas, especially considering distinctives in partnering and outcomes in sending global mission workers. As an initial step in this process, the underlying values or guiding principles have been reviewed. See **Appendix C**. Under consideration in 2022 is the ‘where’ (places), ‘who’ (partners) and ‘how’ (people) of global mission, seeking to discern next steps in fulfilling God’s calling. In this regard, initial thinking has been

recorded and passed on to the Committee's panels, each being given specific pieces of work to take forward over the next year. As the Committee examines the strategy for sending, the Global Mission Workers' Panel has commenced reviewing the costs of sending global mission workers and plans to consider models of co-funding in consultation with the United Appeal Committee. It has begun to explore the benefits and costs of Regional Liaison Workers and is reviewing the role of "Mission Mobilisers". As the Committee examines the strategy for partnering, the Global Mission Partnership Panel has embarked upon a piece of work to determine PCI's "Partnership Distinctives" and to review the best way to assess partnership potential. The Global Leadership Panel will be exploring, in consultation with the United Appeal Committee, the possibility of advertising for PCI congregations to co-fund Leaders in Training.

HEATHER CLEMENTS, Convener

GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

15. The Global Development Committee is tasked with leading thinking on a number of key global issues, including stewardship of creation, relationship with people from other cultural backgrounds, understanding world faiths and international issues, particularly in the Middle East. In addition, the Committee facilitates an annual World Development Appeal. Agents have been appointed to coordinate the work in each of these five areas.
16. A key aspect of leading thinking is listening; listening to the expertise and experience of local and international partners; listening to the questions and requirements of PCI congregations; listening to and complementing the work of other councils and committees of the General Assembly. It is also imperative that PCI genuinely listens to the voices of those on the margins and who are impacted most, whether that be in the global village or nearer to home, in congregations or wider society. However, most importantly, there is a need to listen to God's voice, and the Holy Spirit's guidance, as PCI seeks to engage with these issues and provide a clear Christian voice.
17. To this end a strategy day was held on Wednesday 3 November 2021. This helped to refine thinking and prioritise the direction of the work of the Committee. This continues to be a work in progress, but several key foci for the next three years have emerged. These included (a) Climate Justice, (b) Persecution of the church and other minorities, (c) Migration and, (d) Racism and Colonialism.
18. A number of overarching observations have emerged, including the need for each of the agents to continue to keep a watching brief in their respective area, a need for greater capacity than an individual agent can provide, and a degree of flexibility to respond to emerging issues, while

having a clear plan of work mapped out. While the agent for the World Development Appeal convenes and works with a rolling Task Group, other task groups will be set up as the need arises.

19. The following is the outline of a plan of work for the next three years:
20. The key work of Stewardship of Creation will be to build on existing work, including COP26, the resolution on divestment from Fossil Fuels at the 2021 General Assembly, and networking with key Christian environmental networks, locally and globally. The specific pieces of work, leading to a substantive report for the General Assembly in 2023, are envisaged as follows:
 - (a) Promote a **Creation Sunday**, where there is a particular focus on the care of creation as an outworking of Christian discipleship. This could tie in with harvest thanksgiving services or be a separate Sunday.
 - (b) Engage in a **consultation** with the wider denomination, and ensure dialogue with those parties most adversely affected by efforts to address climate change.
 - (c) Consider a **conference**, either centrally or regionally, to enable people to engage with the issues around creation care and climate change.

Inter-Cultural Relations

21. Inter-Cultural Relations encompasses migration, the refugee situation, integration of ethnic minorities and the challenging issues of racism and colonialism. The vision is to create a culture within PCI where people from other backgrounds, nationalities and cultures are welcomed and flourish, physically, socially, mentally and spiritually in the life and leadership of the Church. To this end a number of initiatives are to be promoted including:
 - (a) Directly responding to the issues raised by the Irish Inter-Church Meeting report entitled “**Exploring Race and the Churches in Ireland**”, and specifically those responses from members of PCI. A task group will be set up with an emphasis on hearing the first-hand experiences of black and minority ethnic people in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. A report of these findings will be presented at the 2023 General Assembly.
 - (b) Proposing and resourcing a regular **Sunday Focus** on racism and inclusion in the Church.
 - (c) Ensuring an **on-going brief** on the refugee situation in both jurisdictions, including legislation, direct provision (ROI) and the social housing shortage.
 - (d) **Networking** and building relationships with key partners, both locally and internationally, as well as collaboration with relevant councils and committees within PCI.

22. International Relations has focused geographically and politically on the Middle East, and is grappling with the question “*how best can PCI show solidarity with, provide support to, and learn from Christian communities in the Middle East?*” To address this question:
 - (a) A Task Group will be established to explore and report to the General Assembly in 2024.
 - (b) Further, and to facilitate understanding, there will be a commitment to building relationships with churches, institutions, agencies and individuals within the region. The potential for a conference to share findings from the study will be explored.
23. World Faiths will continue to keep a watching brief on developments in world faiths and religious persecution. The agent will undertake to do a case-study on Hinduism and the persecution of Christians, using the expertise and experience of PCI’s partner church, the Church of North India, Gujarat Diocese. This should lead to a report to the General Assembly in 2025.
24. The World Development Appeal 2021 “Weathering the Storm” with the theme of climate justice and profiling projects in Ethiopia and Haiti has raised the fantastic sum of £380,000 as of 25 March 2022. To date, PCI’s development partners Christian Aid and Tearfund have received £150,000 each, with £30,000 to be allocated to development projects of PCI’s overseas partner churches.
25. In early March, a Moderator’s Appeal for the Ukraine Crisis was launched in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent exodus of over three million people from the country. £60,000 was released immediately, being shared equally between PCI’s relief and development partners, Christian Aid Ireland and Tearfund, and Hungarian Reformed Church Aid, the relief wing of the Reformed Church in Hungary.
26. The theme for the World Development Appeal 2022 will be the very topical issue of “migration”. Christian Aid and Tearfund are working on suitable project proposals on this theme with partners in Lebanon and South Sudan respectively. This also provides an opportunity to highlight and provide resources on wider issues related to migration.
27. The far-reaching and strategic nature of the matters being considered by the Global Development Committee illustrates the importance of engaging with these as an outworking of Christian discipleship. Jesus’ relationship with creation and people of many backgrounds, provides the model and inspiration for the committee’s engagement. Ultimately, the committee seeks to reflect his grace and truth and his love and compassion for the world.

RICHARD KERR, Convener

BUSINESS AND FINANCE PANEL

Finance

28. The Council records its deep appreciation for the United Appeal funding received each year that makes possible so much of its work, together with the whole-hearted support and generous grant received annually from Presbyterian Women. Council for Global Mission accounts for the year 2021 indicate a net surplus of £143,892 on the Income and Expenditure Account. A United Appeal grant of £1,000,000 has been approved for 2022, with the Council requesting a grant of £900,000 in its budget for 2023. In the course of the year restricted donations of £390,761 were received, including Irish Aid funding through Mísean Cara of £80,256 for partner church projects.

Property

29. The Council continues to own three properties as follows: Two three-bedroomed apartments at 5 Osborne Mews, Osborne Park and 12 Oakdene, 16 Annadale Avenue. They are regularly maintained and well used mainly by global mission workers, interspersed by some short-term rentals. A semi-detached house at 214 Grasmere Avenue, Wembley continues to be rented out on a tenancy agreement that extends to 31 January 2023.

Staffing

30. Over the past year a smaller Mission Department Staff Team has served with adaptability, dedication and resilience, whether working from a home or office base. It is planned that staffing capacity will be reviewed before the end of 2022 in seeking to respond to the challenges and opportunities that arise in slowly emerging from the Covid pandemic.

Convenerships

31. The Council welcomed Rev Richard Kerr to the role of Global Development Committee Convener. Rev Dr Liz Hughes' work as Council Convener reaches a conclusion at this Assembly, having been extended to more than seven years due to the Council's structures review and the Covid pandemic.

LIZ HUGHES, Convener

APPENDIX A

GLOBAL MISSION WORKERS

Global mission workers: the names, spheres and category of service are listed below:

INTEGRATE PROGRAMME – service of two or more years

Brazil

| | | |
|-------------|------|---|
| Naomi Keefe | 2004 | Outreach programme, The Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), Recife |
|-------------|------|---|

Central and Southern Africa

| | | |
|----------------------------------|------|---|
| Volker and JinHyeog Glissmann | 2010 | Consultant to Theological Education by Extension in TEEC – South Africa Music Teacher in Phoenix International Primary School in Blantyre – Malawi |
|----------------------------------|------|---|

Great Britain

| | | |
|------------------------|------|---|
| Edwin and Anne Kibathi | 2009 | Ministry among East Africans in East London |
|------------------------|------|---|

Hungary

| | | |
|-------------------------|------|---|
| Nigel and Antónia Craig | 2022 | International church planting and pastor in Debrecen University Tiszántúli Church District of the Hungarian Reformed Church |
|-------------------------|------|---|

Kenya

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Stephen and Angelina Cowan | 1985 1989 | Outreach and development work, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Tuum |
| Naomi Leremore | 1991 | Development of Theological Education by Extension materials, PCEA, Nairobi |
| Gary and Mary Reid | 2000 | Outreach and development work, PCEA, Olkinyiei |

Nepal

| | | |
|----------------------------|------|--|
| Peter and Jayne Fleming | 2017 | Integral Development Advisor UMN, Kathmandu Teacher, Kathmandu International Study Centre |
|----------------------------|------|--|

Portugal

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------|--|
| James and Heather Cochrane | 2008 | Church planting – Comunidade Pedras Vivas Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal (ICPP) in Senhora de Hora, Porto (since 2013) |
| Chris and Rachel Humphries | 2019 | Church planting – Comunidade Pedras Vivas Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal (ICCP) in Senhora de Hora, Porto |

Romania

| | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--|
| Csaba and Ilona Veres | 2001 1993 | Co-ordinator – SERVANT Mission of Diakonia, Cluj Mera children’s project |
| Steve and Rosie Kennedy | 2020 | Outreach ministry with Cluj Christian Fellowship of the Tóvidéki congregation of the Hungarian Reformed Church (Transylvania District) |

Russia

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------|-----------------------|
| Two global mission workers | 2019 | Theological education |
|-------------------------------|------|-----------------------|

Spain

| | | |
|-----------------------|------|---|
| Derek and Jane French | 2000 | Student outreach with Grupos Biblicos Unidos (GBU), Bilbao |
|-----------------------|------|---|

Zambia

| | | |
|--------------|------|--|
| Diane Cusick | 1995 | Early Childhood Development Officer, Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Zambia Synod (since 2016). |
|--------------|------|--|

APPENDIX B

GLOBAL MISSION PARTNERSHIPS

PCI is currently engaged in global mission partnership with the following churches, institutions and agencies:

Europe

- The Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal
- The Evangelical Reformed Church of Latvia (including the Baltic Reformed Theological Seminary)
- Faculté Jean Calvin, France
- Grupos Biblicos Unidos, Spain
- The Hungarian Reformed Church, in Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine
- St Petersburg Christian University, Russia

Africa

- The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre, Livingstonia, and Nkhoma Synods, Malawi
- Scripture Union, Malawi
- Theological Education by Extension Malawi
- The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Zambia Synod
- The Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Kenya
- The Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and Sudan (including the Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency, Nile Theological College, and Giffen Institute of Theology)

Middle East

- Jordan Evangelical Theological Seminary
- The National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon (including the Near East School of Theology)

Asia

- The Christian Church of Sumba, Indonesia
- The Evangelical Christian Church of Halmahera, Indonesia
- The Protestant Christian Church of Timor, Indonesia
- The Church of North India
- The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (including Gujranwala Theological Seminary)

- United Bible Training Centre, Pakistan
- United Mission to Nepal
- Association for Theological Education, Nepal
- Minority Focus, Nepal
- The Presbyterian Church of Myanmar

Caribbean and Latin America

- The Presbyterian Church of Brazil

APPENDIX C

GLOBAL MISSION COMMITTEE

Review of Values/Guiding Principles in Global Mission 2022

In thinking of those distinctive ways that govern PCI's global engagement in mission, the Global Mission Committee have been focusing on its 'values' or 'guiding principles', seeking to answer the question "How?", dealing not so much with outcomes or activities but with methods.

We humbly recognise that the mission we participate in is God's mission, and not 'ours', and that we should engage in global mission solely in response to, and as a result of, God's grace and leading.

We recognise further that 'God's mission' is exemplified for us in the sending of his Son. We affirm the importance of a Christological pattern for mission: incarnational, self-giving, and costly. In all that we are and do, we acknowledge our dependence on his Spirit, who inspires us, guides us, encourages us, empowers us and compels us into mission.

Our first priorities in mission, therefore, are worship and prayer. In accordance with the Westminster Confession of Faith, we seek at all times to submit to the authority of Scripture as mediated through the Spirit. In everything, we seek to be God-glorifying, Christ-centred and Spirit-led.

People-Focused

If the Greatest Commandment is to love God, the second is like it: to love our neighbours as ourselves. Jesus called on individuals everywhere to "Come, follow me". His last commission to His friends was "Go and make disciples of all nations". The mission of God in which we share is a mission focused on people.

Our desire is that all people should know of the redeeming love of God lavished upon us through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus, and have an opportunity to respond to that love in repentance and faith. Recognising that the mission of Jesus was to seek and save the lost, we affirm the importance of evangelism as the one mission activity which the Church alone has the right and ability to do. In a world of competing truth-claims, we uphold Jesus Christ as the only Lord and Saviour. Recognising that the saving work of Christ is an ongoing process in the life of the believer, we emphasise the importance of teaching and discipleship and costly commitment.

We recognise further that a people-focused mission entails serving the whole person – physical, emotional, intellectual as well as spiritual needs. We also recognise that individuals live within communities and environments which need the transforming power of the Gospel.

Following the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, we therefore affirm the importance of integral mission. All that we are and all that we do reflects our love of Christ and humankind and our desire to bear witness to Him, that others may be led to love and serve him.

From the example of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, it is also our conviction that God reaches people (mostly) through people. We consider direct, personal missional encounter to be crucial, and prioritise the development of personal contacts, friendships and partnerships across cultures. We seek to encourage people to become disciples of Jesus and so the question about the importance of making disciples comes into focus when selecting and sending global mission workers and supporting leaders in training from PCI's partners.

We also seek to provide the highest standards of training, support and care for all in mission. We affirm that God has placed the treasure of His Gospel in clay jars and acknowledge the risks and limitations of human vulnerability as well as the potential for spiritual transformation.

Partner-based

Mission is not just one 'task' among many that the Church does, but part of the Church's very nature. We affirm that global mission is the calling and responsibility of the whole Church, and that the local church is the primary unit for the Church's mission in that place.

We remember also that the PCI is one small part of the universal Church, with gifts to give and receive within the global Body of Christ. In a rapidly changing world, we need to join together to discern opportunities and pool resources. We recognise that partnership is in itself an effective witness to a fragmented world. We therefore commit ourselves to building up mission partnerships for mutual encouragement, challenge, witness and ministry. We particularly acknowledge the mission needs of our own land and the need to learn from others, especially from the churches of the Southern Hemisphere which now play a strategic role in world mission. We consider receiving and learning in this way to be as important to us as sending.

We therefore seek to share the vision, skills and resources to enable the wider church to participate in mission at all levels. In line with PCI's historical practice, we place a special emphasis on establishing and encouraging church-to-church partnerships.

We recognise also that many members of PCI serve with other mission agencies and societies, and seek to affirm their service and expertise. We are already in partnership with Tearfund and Christian Aid Ireland in development work, and we are committed to creative conversations with other agencies and societies which also seek to serve the local

church in mission, and to the development of creative new partnerships especially for new areas of mission. At home, we aim to see every member of PCI enlightened, enthused and enabled to fulfil the role in global mission which is appropriate to their circumstances, calling and gifting.

Ground-breaking

Recognising that God takes the initiative in his mission, we also acknowledge our own responsibility for proactive planning. We recognise that new growth may require ground breaking initiatives. We seek the leading of the Spirit to recognise and creatively respond to new God-given opportunities, developing, as necessary, new spheres and methods of service.

Pioneering work, especially in Europe and creative access countries, may not necessarily mean partnering with another established denomination but rather networking in a locality, discerning opportunities to work with like-minded congregations or strategically located individual Christians.

Conscious of the contextual nature of mission, we seek in every situation to proclaim and demonstrate the good news in a relevant and transforming manner.

Storytelling

In Acts 14:27, it speaks of Paul and Barnabus's arrival in Antioch, "On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." Again, in Acts 11:4, it states, "Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened."

PCI have always placed a value on deputation speaking, prayer letters, magazine articles and more recently on 'Digital Dispatches' and the use of social media. By whatever means, it is important that storytelling by PCI Global Mission Workers, partner church visitors, and those who travel overseas on behalf of the Council, is undertaken creatively and effectively. Those who share, should do so as objectively as possible, also touching on experiences, emotional responses, the good and the bad, and lessons learned, in a way that encourages a Kingdom response from those listening. A well thought out joint approach to storytelling across the Councils of the Church will lead to a wider audience being informed more effectively about Global Mission.

Whilst under God these values of being people-focused, partnership-based, ground-breaking and storytelling should be held firmly, all our engagement as a Mission Council must also be soaked in prayer. On every occasion of coming together, whether as a council, committees, panels, task groups or in partnership gatherings, each one should be covered in prayer.

LINKAGE COMMISSION

Convener: T.J. LIVINGSTONE

Secretary: Rev R.K. GRAHAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report summarises the work of the Linkage Commission from June 2021-March 2022. Matters dealt with include the terms of leaves to call granted to charges, reviews of the financial terms in various leaves to call, and reports on the work of the internal panels of the Commission. Since June of 2021 the Linkage Commission has again been able to hold all of its meetings “in-person”. The Commission is required, amongst other responsibilities, to determine conditions under which congregations shall be linked, vacant pastorates filled or supplied. When delegations from congregations attend meetings of the Commission seeking Leave to Call, the Commission must consider a range of factors, taking into particular account the use of resources both in terms of finance and of personnel. As previous reports have indicated, the Commission continues to believe that the number of congregations within PCI is too high to sustain the decreasing number of people attending our services. This, taking into account a projected “deficit” in the numbers of ministers available to receive a call, has created a situation where the Commission must prayerfully consider alongside our Presbyteries, the pressing need to realign ministry in a number of congregations. This sometimes creates tension between the desire to retain meetinghouses and the reality of the decreasing financial sustainability of some congregations. We believe that these issues which have been prevalent in previous years have been exacerbated by the impact of Covid-19 on our congregations. However, this should not be seen as a desire for retraction but the potential to free up resources to establish innovative ministries sometimes in parts of our island which hitherto may not have had a Presbyterian and reformed witness.

In addition to our regular meetings, a significant number of other meetings have been held with Presbyteries through their Mission Strategy Groups as together we seek to grasp the impact of changing demographics on our denomination. The Commission would again encourage those Presbyteries who have as yet not established a Mission Strategy Committee to consider doing so, as those who have them, have found them a useful asset as they seek to grapple with change.

Vacancies

2. The Commission notes that a number of ministers who are approaching retirement age are taking steps to prepare their kirk sessions and congregations for the impending vacancy. This not only assists the

work of incoming vacancy conveners but can also reduce concerns and timescales in filing the vacancy. This practice is to be encouraged. It is of note that, as a result of this increased preparedness, the time between vacancies occurring and the granting of Leave to Call has significantly reduced.

3. As stated above, the Commission is aware that we are entering a period when, for a few years, there will be a reduction in the number of available licensed assistants. We have reflected on this for a number of years and its impact is beginning to be noticeable. This will inevitably increase the length of some vacancies.

Tenure Review Concept

4. The Commission has been conscious that where Leave to Call is granted using Reviewable Tenure, which was approved as a Scheme by the 1998 General Assembly, some presbyteries and congregations have been expressing concern as to how such reviews should be carried out. To address these concerns, the Commission updated its Reviewable Tenure Guidelines during 2018. As was reported to the 2021 General Assembly, a Task Group was established to carry out a further Review in 2021 and bring forward revised Guidelines to the Commission by December 2021. Following this Review, significant changes were made not only to the Guidelines themselves but the method by which these were circulated and support offered to congregations whose Leave to Call was granted under Reviewable Tenure. Copies of the revised guidelines are now issued to vacancy conveners when Leave to Call is granted and to the incoming Minister following their ordination/installation. The Commission's Reviews, Allowances and Fees Panel has made itself available to congregations to discuss how aims, objectives and goals may be formulated during the first full year of a new ministry.

Dissolutions and Amalgamations

5. The Commission has been dealing with the issue of dissolutions and amalgamations and related implications arising out of charitable status. Due to the manner in which the legislation was drafted setting up the Charity Commission and the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive, it has been necessary to seek approval through the Northern Ireland Courts for 'cy pres' schemes. The General Assembly Solicitor has done invaluable work on this, so that one of the agreed dissolutions has taken place and work is ongoing with respect to other dissolutions and/or amalgamations.

It is anticipated that the Commission will have to continue to address the sad reality of the need for more of such dissolutions and amalgamations.

However, it is important to recognise that the need for a dissolution and/or amalgamation is not to be taken as an admission of failure on the part of the local congregation. Often this is a reflection of changing

local demography and an acceptance that to continue “as is” in the absence of the necessary local leadership is no longer sustainable. We need to learn how to “finish well” in order that we celebrate what has happened in the past and look forward to new, more sustainable, and potentially, fruitful expressions of local ministry in the future. It may also be the case that we need to find better words other than “dissolution” and “amalgamation” to reflect the process, as these may carry with them regrettably negative connotations.

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE AND MANSES PANEL

6. The Panel continues to address issues where congregations whose property is listed wish to carry out adaptations to their property. In line with our Partnering Agreement with the Department for Communities, which was drawn up to assist in securing our ongoing Ecclesiastical Exemption, the Panel has to balance the building’s listing with missional requirements. On occasions, this has required the panel to seek substantial modifications to initial proposed schemes. However, where the missional case outweighs the listing, then the Panel will make the necessary recommendations.

The Panel is also dealing with more requests for the rental of vacant manses during periods of sometimes lengthy vacancies. Congregations are reminded that on all such occasions the approval of the local Presbytery and the Linkage commission is necessary and the drawing up of appropriate legal agreements is also essential. The Panel Convener is available to provide guidance on this matter.

BRIAN KNOX, Convener

ADDITIONAL PASTORAL PERSONNEL AND AUXILIARY MINISTRY PANEL

7. In the past year the Linkage Commission approved the creation of 25 new Additional Pastoral Personnel (APP) posts and the extension or amendment of 7 existing posts. There were no requests for Auxiliary Ministry posts.

‘Guidelines for Congregations and Presbyteries Regarding the Employment of Additional Pastoral Personnel’ incorporating ‘Guidelines for Kirk Sessions on General Employment Issues’ are available from the panel convener and the PCI website. The APP guidelines outline the necessary steps Kirk Sessions should take when considering the creation of an APP post. The approval of the HR support provider, presbytery and the Linkage Commission is required before any new APP post can be advertised.

Congregations are reminded that the approval of the HR support provider, presbytery and the Linkage Commission is required to extend or amend an existing APP post. Kirk Sessions are asked to note carefully when an existing fixed-term contract concludes so that requests to extend an existing post are not made late.

With regard to job titles for APP posts, Kirk Sessions should note that the Linkage Commission allows flexibility in choosing a suitable job title for an APP post and “most titles will be considered by the commission. However, the commission will not give permission for the use of ‘Officer’ or ‘Pastor’ as a job title. Furthermore, the titles ‘Director’, ‘Associate’ and ‘Assistant’ will only be considered if the Kirk Session can justify that the job description strongly warrants the use of the title.” (Linkage Commission May 2018)

APP Salary Scales for 2022 were agreed by the Linkage Commission at its meeting in November 2021 and increases are in line with the agreed increase on the ministerial minimum. They are available from the panel convener and Kirk Sessions are required to use the Salary Scales when creating a new APP post.

Guidelines for creating Congregational Auxiliary Ministry posts are available from the Convener of the APPAM Panel. Proposals to create such posts should normally come to the Linkage Commission through the presbytery. Auxiliary Ministers are commissioned to work, normally on a part time basis, under the supervision of a Minister of Word and Sacrament. While it is primarily a Ministry of the Word, some pastoral duties may be associated with such posts.

Before employing an organist (or similar), Kirk Sessions should draw up a statement of main terms and conditions, job description, personnel specification and advertisement. The approval of presbytery is required before creating such a post. Guidelines and templates are available from the panel convener. The HR support provider should always be consulted.

Ministers are reminded to seek approval from presbytery and the Linkage Commission before undertaking paid public appointments (‘Extra-Parochial Work’). This kind of work has been defined as ‘Remunerated work outside of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland undertaken by a parish minister that amounts to more than six hours in any week.’ A return form, available from the panel convener, should normally be returned before the appointment begins and then annually by 15 September.

BRIAN McMANUS, Convener

PARISH BOUNDS PANEL

Rev Jim Stothers, Panel Convener, reported:

8. Parish Bounds Panel

- (a) The Panel reported in 2020: “After consultation, the Belfast Conference has made a recommendation concerning the boundary between the North and South Belfast Presbyteries. Recent decades have seen a significant number of amalgamations in those presbyteries, which have not been reflected in the adjustment of parish bounds. Accordingly, the next major work of the Panel will be to revise the parish bounds of all the relevant congregations.” (GAR p194). That work has been done, and extended to cover the East Belfast Presbytery and the result is shown as Appendix 1.
- (b) In line with advisory comment from the Belfast Conference, and with the agreement of the two presbyteries concerned, three Presbytery Mission areas have been defined which are not within the bounds of any congregations. There are two in west Belfast (in North and South Belfast Presbyteries), and one in central Belfast (South Belfast Presbytery).
- (c) It should be noted that:
 - (i) new bounds were agreed at the 2011 General Assembly for the congregations of Mersey Street, Mountpottinger, Ravenhill, and Westbourne;
 - (ii) while it is certain that there have, historically, been parish bounds for Knock, none were currently recorded in the General Secretary’s Department;
 - (iii) the Panel, and the presbyteries, are aware that there is a fluidity about some situations, but it was felt to be best to make these changes now, as there will never come a time when there is no fluidity.
 - (iv) the area described for West Kirk currently held by Townsend Street, will not transfer to West Kirk until Townsend Street is either dissolved or amalgamated.
- (d) New parish bounds were approved in 2020 for the Monaghan Presbytery (GAR pages 202-210). It has since been realised that what was reported contained a small number of errors or instances of lack of clarity. Corrected and clarified parish bounds are set out in Appendix 2.
- (e) The following congregations have recently been amalgamated or dissolved:
 - (i) First & Second Killyleagh
 - (ii) Kilcooley
 - (iii) Mountmellick

The Panel will draw up bounds for the amalgamated Killyleagh congregation that are a simple combination of the previous bounds of First & Second Killyleagh.

The Panel will draw up bounds for Bangor West to include the previous bounds of Kilcooley congregation.

Consideration of the previous bounds of Mountmellick will be left until a further revision of other parts of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery.

Leave to Call a Minister

9. This is only a summary – there may well be conditions to the Leave to Call which are not recorded here. These might include Part-time, Reviewable Tenure, Restricted List, additional income for Minister etc. When a figure is set, the year denotes when Leave to Call was granted. This figure will increase automatically under the annual Stipend Review. The same is the case in respect to Ministerial Allowances.

| Congregation | Stipend | Allowances |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Clough Co Down | 75% AMM (2021) | £4,162 (2021) |
| Seaforde | 25% AMM (2021) | £2,080 (2021) |
| Ballysillan | AMM (2021) | £6,242 (2021) |
| Shore Street, Donaghadee | £40,000 (2021) | £6,242 (2021) |
| Hill Street, Lurgan (Associate) | AMM (2021) | £5,786 (2021) |
| Cooke Centenary | £33,500 (2021) | £6,242 (2021) |
| Donemana | £31,500 (2021) | £6,242 (2021) |
| Leckpatrick | £20,000 (2021) | £3,551.70 (2021) |
| Donagheady | £15,000 (2021) | £2690.30 (2021) |
| First Donaghadee | 50% of £37,000 (2021) | £3,121 (2021) |
| Hamilton Road, Bangor (Associate) | AMM (2021) | £5,786 (2021) |
| Killyleagh | £38,000 (2021) | £6,242 (2021) |
| Second Broughshane | £38,000 (2021) | £6,242 (2021) |
| West Church, Bangor (Associate) | AMM (2021) | £5,786 (2021) |
| Main Street, Garvagh | £24,500 (2021) | £4,681.50 (2021) |
| Killaig | £10,500 (2021) | £1,560.50 (2021) |
| First Castleblayney | 53% of 60% of €BMM (2021) | €3,075.38 (2021) |
| Frankford | 27% of 60% of €BMM (2021) | €1,566.71 (2021) |
| Corvally | 20% of 60% of €BMM (2021) | €1,160.52 (2021) |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| West Kirk, Belfast (Associate) | AMM | £5,786 (2021) |
| Muckamore | £40,000 (2022) | £6,382 (2022) |
| First Moneymore | 57% AMM (2022) | £3,638 (2022) |
| Second Moneymore | 43% AMM (2022) | £2,744 (2022) |
| Mountpottinger | AMM (2022) | £6,382 (2022) |
| Knock, Belfast (Associate) | AMM plus £5,000 (2022) | £5,952 (2022) |
| Glenwherry | £32,234.37 (2022) | £6,382 (2022) |
| Greystone Road, Antrim | £37,500 (2022) | £6,382 (2022) |
| Union Road, Magherafelt | £22,200 (2022) | £3,829.20 (2022) |
| Lecumpher | £14,800 (2022) | £2,552.80 (2022) |
| Killead | £18,000 (2022) | £3,191 (2022) |
| Loanends | £18,000 (2022) | £3,191 (2022) |
| Carrigart | 50% of 50% of €AMM (2022) | €2,442 (2022) |
| Dunfanaghy | 50% of 50% of €AMM (2022) | €2,442 (2022) |

Reviewable Tenure Ministries

10. Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Tullycarnet was terminated.

Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Craigavon was extended for a further seven years from 26 October 2022 or until there is a realignment of ministry in the area.

Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Howth and Malahide was extended for a further seven years from 25 January 2022 or until there is a realignment of ministry in the area.

Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Naas was extended for a further twelve months from 26 October 2021 to allow for a strategy/plan to be produced, at which point a decision on the extension of the tenure will be taken.

Reviewable Tenure Ministry in Millisle & Ballycopeland and First Donaghadee: the congregations were released from tenure restriction, subject to the new linkage coming into being and the new financial arrangement being put in place.

Stated Supply Arrangements

11. During the past year, the Commission has renewed a number of previous nominations for a further period in co-operation with the appropriate Presbytery. New Stated Supply arrangements in Grange

with Craigmore; Newtownstewart & Gortin; Newtoncrommelin, Carnlough & Cushendall were effected.

During the past year, the Commission drew up a set of Guidelines on the Role of Vacancy Conveners in Congregations where short-term Stated Supply Ministry has been granted. These are included at Appendix 3.

Dissolutions of Linkages

13. There were no dissolutions of any linkages.

Congregations Linked

14. One new Linkage was agreed.

TERMS OF LINKAGE: First Donaghadee and Millisle & Ballycopeland

- (a) That on 30 September 2021 or other suitable date the congregations of First Donaghadee and Millisle & Ballycopeland be linked.
- (b) That each congregation shall maintain its separate identity with its own Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and Finances.
- (c) That each congregation shall have the right to appoint representatives to the Superior Courts of the Church.
- (d) That in the choice of a Minister the two congregations shall act as one congregation and the two Kirk Sessions as one Kirk Session.
- (e) That the stated services each Sunday are: (a) First Donaghadee: 11.45am; (b) Millisle & Ballycopeland: 10.15 am; or at other such times as shall be agreed by the two Kirk Sessions.
- (f) That the Stipends be (a) First Donaghadee: 50% of £37,000 [2021] (b) Millisle & Ballycopeland: 50% of £37,000 [2021] and Initial Ministerial Allowances per annum (a) First Donaghadee: £3,121[2021] (b) Millisle & Ballycopeland: £3,121 [2021] plus 15p per mile for Business Mileage
- (g) That Rent, Rates, Taxes and Maintenance of Millisle & Ballycopeland Manse be borne in the proportions (a) First Donaghadee: 50% (b) Millisle & Ballycopeland: 50%.
- (h) That the current minister shall reside in Millisle & Ballycopeland Manse. A final decision on which Manse the Minister of the Linkage will reside in will be taken before Leave to Call is given at the next Vacancy.

Millisle & Ballycopeland Congregation currently has Reviewable Tenure. Once the new Linkage is created this restriction will be removed.

Congregations Amalgamated/Dissolved

15. The 2022 General Assembly resolved as follows “That the congregation of Mountmellick be dissolved on 31 December 2019, or other suitable date, on terms set by the Linkage Commission”.

Terms of Dissolution

- (a) That the congregation of Mountmellick be dissolved on 31 December 2021 (or other suitable date).
- (b) That the members of Kirk Session become members of Tullamore, (hereafter Tullamore) Kirk Session.
- (c) That the members of the Congregational Committee become members of Tullamore Congregational Committee, until new elections are held.
- (d) That the members of the congregation become members of Tullamore.
- (e) That all existing assets of the Congregation be transferred to Tullamore.
- (f) That the charitable purpose of Tullamore will include the mission of the Presbyterian Church in Mountmellick and district.
- (g) That the costs and expenses relating to the assets of the Mountmellick Congregation shall become the responsibility of Tullamore congregation.
- (h) That the Stipend of Tullamore continue at the existing level.
- (i) That assets, if any, held in any way for the benefit of the minister, shall, subject to trust, be administered according to the law and guidelines of the Church.

REVIEWS, ALLOWANCES AND FEES PANEL

Reviews

16. The Commission had decided that in the light of current circumstances, stipends due to be reviewed in March 2021 be postponed for 12 months and this was reported to the 2021 General Assembly. These are scheduled to be carried out in April 2022.

Supply Fee

17. The level of Supply Fee is determined by the Code, Par. 238, and for 2022 this is £112 (€162) or £75 (€108) where only a single service is supplied in one Congregation.
18. Expenses should be paid in accordance with the rate set for attendance at Assembly Councils, currently 15p per mile (14 cents per kilometre).

KENNETH BELSHAW, Convener

ADDITIONAL REPORT REGARDING AMALGAMATIONS / DISSOLUTIONS

19. Towards the start of the Linkage Commission Report (paragraph 5 above) in regards to amalgamations and dissolutions, the Commission Convener writes, “...work is ongoing with respect to other dissolutions and/or amalgamations.” Since the Report was submitted for printing, two of those situations have progressed, and this additional update has been able to be inserted at ‘proofing stage’ in the name of the Clerk of Assembly.

The Clerk of the General Assembly writes:

TOWNSEND STREET CONGREGATION

20. Over the last number of years, the leadership of Townsend Street Congregation has been in discussions with the Presbytery of South Belfast and representatives of the General Assembly, seeking to discern the most appropriate way for that congregation to move towards the conclusion of its life and witness as an active congregation. Those conversations, delayed significantly because of the Covid-19 pandemic, have progressed well and have been greatly assisted by the advice of the General Assembly Solicitor in regard to a range of complex legal matters.
21. The point has now been reached, that to enable the next necessary legal steps to proceed, regarding the transfer of assets etc., a formal decision is required by the General Assembly that the congregation of Townsend Street be dissolved. A resolution to this effect (Linkage Commission Resolution 2) is therefore presented to the 2022 General Assembly for decision. It should be stressed that this resolution is to facilitate a range of necessary steps which must be taken before the congregation legally ceases to exist, but which cannot be taken until after the decision in principle is made. All of this is facilitating the clear decisions and wishes of the leadership of Townsend Street.

DROMORE (ROUTE) CONGREGATION

22. The congregation of Dromore in the Route Presbytery, having been in a long-term linkage with the congregation of Drumreagh, has now decided that it would be best to merge with Drumreagh, and cease to exist as a separate entity.
23. At present, the Code uses two terms to describe the options which congregations at the end of their life cycle face - ‘dissolution’, and ‘amalgamation’, and the Charities Act uses the terms ‘dissolution’ and ‘merger.’ Overtures will be presented to the 2022 General Assembly to enable the term ‘merge’ to be in the Code, which in practice is what PCI means by amalgamation, and which will greatly simplify the necessary legal steps in such situations.

24. A resolution is therefore presented to the General Assembly (Linkage Commission Resolution 3) to facilitate the merger of Dromore congregation with Drumreagh congregation, the term 'merge' being applicable in the Code at the time this merger takes effect.

MR JAMES LIVINGSTONE

25. Again, since the Linkage Commission Report was submitted for printing, the Convener of the Commission, Mr James Livingstone, has submitted his resignation, having been appointed as the new Clerk of the Templepatrick Presbytery. A formal resolution of thanks will be taken under the report of the Nominations Committee, on Saturday afternoon, and the Moderator will speak to that. However, it would be remiss if the thanks of the Commission were not recorded in this written report.
26. James has served the Commission as its Convener since 2018, having previously also served as Secretary to the Commission. He has brought to these tasks a wealth of experience, both from his professional life, as a public servant, and from his church life, as a ruling elder. He has carried a significant work-load, often unseen and known to only a few, and has literally gone the extra mile, travelling throughout our Church to meet with Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions 'on the ground'. He has listened, informed, discussed, assisted and at times has even found himself having to graciously cajole, all for the good and wellbeing of our Church in its mission and ministry. In all of this, James has been a hard-working and dedicated servant of our Church and of his Lord and Saviour, and the Commission wishes him well as he takes up his new role within Templepatrick Presbytery.

APPENDIX 1

Parish Bounds within the North, South and East Belfast Presbyteries

NORTH BELFAST

ABBOT'S CROSS 2022

Doagh Road entrance to Rathcoole Estate at J 3473 8172, by Green End (including Houses on both sides) and East Way to Foyle Hill (J 3432 8209), Inniscarn Drive (J 3430 8216), Knockreagh Gardens (J 3421 8213), Glenbane Avenue (3423 8222) to bend in Glanroy Crescent at J 3425 8231, by line to O'Neill Road at Knockenagh Avenue (J 3417 8238), along O'Neill Road to eastern point of cemetery at J 3365 8208, then north by line to pillar on Carnmoney Hill at J 3322 8305, and, including Fernlea Park, to junction of Doagh Road and Monkstown Avenue (J 3438 8320) to Cloughfern Avenue (J 3472 8343) thence by line to point on railway opposite Glenview Avenue at J 3527 8305, but excluding housing with roads accessed via Glenville Road, to point on railway opposite end of Woodland Place (J 3517 8189), then then, skirting Woodland Drive, Place and Close, Bracken Drive, Beechwood Avenue, and taking in Bracken Way and Drive and Willow Park, to Doagh Road at J 3478 8161, to Doagh Road entrance to Rathcoole Estate at J 3473 8172.

ALEXANDRA 2022

From point on M2 motorway opposite St. Vincent Street (J 3439 7704) by St. Vincent Street, Northwood Parade (J 3395 7704), then around Jellicoe Drive by line to Fortwilliam Parade (J 3364 7712) (but excluding Premier Grove), thence to Somerton Road (J 3352 7711), to Alexandra Gardens (J 3343 7741) to Antrim Road (J 3321 7728), to Limestone Road (J 3320 7644), to Castleton Gardens (J 3325 7642), along Castleton Gardens to Milewater River (J 3329 7652) down Milewater River to North Queen Street (J 3400 7609), to Brougham Street (J 3397 7563), to York Street (J 3419 7547), to Whitla Street (J 3421 7560) to M2 Motorway at J 3433 7560, then north along M2 Motorway to point opposite St Vincent Street (J 3439 7704).

BALLYGOMARTIN 2022

From northernmost point on Springfield Road at J 3142 7458, by line to roundabout on Millennium Way at J 3117 7395, by line to Brittons Parade (J 3107 7352), to Whiterock Road (J 3095 7322), to Springfield Road (J 3008 7364), then by line to television transmitter (J 2868 7507) by line to top of Forth River Road, (J 3015 7672) and, including

houses, by Forthriver Road (including housing off Forthriver Road) to Ballygomartin Road (J 31079 7532) and by line to northernmost point on Springfield Road at J 3142 7458.

BALLYHENRY (ARMSTRONG MEMORIAL) 2022

From junction of Antrim Road and Ballycraigy Road South at J 2883 8397 northwards along Ballycraigy Road South, and Ballycraigy Road North to Springwell Road (J 2872 8612), to Ballyclare Road (J 2909 8636), to roundabout at Corr's Corner (J 3089 8459), along A8(M) Motorway to point between Foxtan Green and Elmwood Cottages (J 3081 8437), to Ballyclare Road at J 3117 8421, skirting the rear of the housing on the north side of Ballycraigy Road with direct access onto it, then south along Ballyclare Road to Glencairn Drive (J 3163 8255), to Glencairn Park (J 3145 8258), to Antrim Road (J 3142 8251), along Antrim Road to Burney's Mews (J 3112 8270), along Burney's Mews and Burney's Lane to M2 Motorway at point opposite Burney's Lane at J 3102 8216, to Sandyknowes Roundabout (J 3040 8305), then northeast along Antrim Road to junction of Antrim Road and Ballycraigy Road South at J 2883 8397.

BALLYSILLAN 2022

From Flax Street junction with Crumlin Road (J 3203 7561) along Flax Street to Ardoyne Avenue (J 3204 7598), to Oldpark Road (J 3239 7609), via Torrens Avenue to Alliance Avenue (J 3214 7671) to Ballysillan Road (J 3137 7731) and then to Silverstream Gardens (J 3127 7718) by line between Benview Estate and Braehill Estate to A52 at J 3089 7761 and outwards along Horse Shoe Road to Flush Road at J 2938 7840, then by line southwest to Divis Mountain (J 2807 7547) by line southeast to television transmitter (J 2868 7507) by line to top of Forth River Road, (J 3015 7672) behind houses on Forthriver Road and Forthriver Way to lower junction of Forthriver Road and Way at J 3095 7555, then by line to Crumlin Road (including Somerdale Park and Ingledale Park) at J 3134 7601), to Flax Street (J 3203 7561).

CARNMONEY 2022

From roundabout at junction of O'Neill Road and Prince Charles Way (J 3320 8194) east along O'Neill Road to point opposite eastern end of cemetery at J 3365 8208, then north by line to pillar on Carnmoney Hill at J 3322 8305, and then northwards to the junction of Ballyduff Road and Fernlea Lane (J 3323 8389), along Ballyduff Road to junction of Forthill Drive (J 3330 8391) by Forthill Drive, and Forthill Park to Fairview Road (J 3333 8421) along Fairview Road to Forthill Grove (J 3317 8431) and along Forthill Grove into and Knockview Road (3325 8450) to Doagh Road at J 3333 8474, by line to railway at Auld's Bridge (J 3337 8489), westwards along railway to Mossley Bridge (J 3220 8509), southwards via The Villas and Carnmoney Road North to the roundabout on Manse Road (J 3221 8431), westwards

along Manse Road to roundabout on Ballyclare Road (J 3130 8376), and by Ballyclare Road to line between Sally Gardens and Queens Park (J 3155 8284) and between Coolehill Crescent and Park and Inniscoole Park to Carnmoney Road (J 3196 8286), then along Coole Park to Ashgrove Road (J 32190 8278), and by line between houses to Prince Charles Way at J 3247 8274, to O'Neill Road at Roundabout (J 3320 8194).

EGLINTON 2022

From point on Cliftonville Road between Linden Gardens and Cliftonville Street (J 3262 7633) then along rear of housing on Linden Gardens, Brookvale Street and Antrim Road to Cavehill Road (J 3320 7644) to Sunningdale Park (J 3264 7782), to Sunningdale Park North (J 3246 7774), to Brianville Park (J 3229 7808) and by line to Duncoole Park (J 3214 7816) thence by line to point on Hightown Hill at J 3169 7891, and then to Upper Hightown Road at quarry entrance (J 3101 7934), to Horse Shoe Corner at J 3108 7820, by A52 to point on line between Benview Estate and Braehill Estate at J 3089 7761, by line to Silverstream Gardens and Ballysillan Road (3127 7718) to Oldpark Road (J 3137 7731) to point on Cliftonville Road between Linden Gardens and Cliftonville Street (J 3262 7633).

GLENGORMLEY 2022

From junction of O'Neill Road and Antrim Road (J 3235 8158) south along Antrim Road to footpath (J 3250 8140) to Whitewell Road (J 3263 8132), Hazelwood Park (J 3312 8095), Antrim Road (J 3295 8082) and along Antrim Road to point at J 3321 8043, then east behind Old Throne Park to Whitewell Road at J 3356 8044, thence to Serpentine Road (J 3404 7985), to Van Dyke Drive (J 3380 7985), and by line to northern boundary of Fortwilliam Golf Club at end of Glenhurst Parade (J 3368 7968), but excluding the houses in Van Dyke Gardens, along northern boundary of golf course to Antrim Road at (J 3335 7966), and then by line to McArt's Fort (J 3250 7959), but excluding Roman Catholic Church, by line to point on Hightown Hill at J 3169 7891, and then to Upper Hightown Road at quarry entrance (J 3101 7934), along Upper Hightown Road to Hightown Terrace (J 3021 8131), along Hightown Road to point in M2 Motorway at J 3141 8202), along M2 Motorway to point opposite Burney's Lane at J 3102 8216, along Burney's Lane and Burney's Mews to Antrim Road at J 3112 8270, along Antrim Road to Glencairn Park (J 3142 8251), Glencairn Drive (J 3145 8258), Ballyclare Road (3163 8255) and by Ballyclare Road to line between Sally Gardens and Queens Park (J 3155 8284) and between Coolehill Crescent and Park and Inniscoole Park to Carnmoney Road (J 3196 8286), then along Coole Park to Ashgrove Road (J 32190 8278), and by line between houses to Prince Charles Way at J 3247 8274, to O'Neill Road at Roundabout (J 3320 8194) and by O'Neill Road to Antrim Road (J 3235 8158).

IMMANUEL 2022

From Carlisle Circus (J 3335 7520) to A12 Westlink (J 3346 7510), southwest along A12 Westlink to Peter's Hill (J 3327 7473), west along Peter's Hill and Shankill Road to Crimea Street (J 3255 7479), to Upper Meenan Street (J 3262 7505), to Snugville Street (J 3250 7506), to Matchett Street (J 3250 7505), to Silvio Street (J 3239 7506), to Crumlin Road (J 3248 7547), to Rosewood Street (J 3245 7548), then round boundary of commercial sites via J 3247 7560, J 3242 7561, J 3242 7565, and J 3260 7565 to include all of Rosewood Street and Court, Yarrow Street and Court, Fairfax Drive and Hillview Court. Then north along Oldpark Road to Oldpark Avenue (J 3243 7604) to Cliftonville Road (J 3260 7634) to Antrim Road (J 3335 7589) to Carlisle Circus (J 3335 7520).

ABBAY MONKSTOWN 2022

From bridge over railway line on Jordanstown Road (J 3494 8443), south along railway line to point opposite southernmost part of Ards Drive at J 3532 8373, then by line to end of Monkstown Avenue at J 3481 8352, along Monkstown Avenue, crossing Doagh Road (J 3438 8320), and excluding Fernlea Park, following a line westwards to pillar on Carnmoney Hill at J 3322 8305, and then northwards to the junction of Ballyduff Road and Fernlea Lane (J 3323 8389), along Ballyduff Road to junction of Forthill Drive (J 3330 8391) by Forthill Drive, and Forthill Park to Fairview Road (J 3333 8421) along Fairview Road to Forthill Grove (J 3317 8431) and along Forthill Grove into and Knockview Road (3325 8450) to Doagh Road at J 3333 8474, by line to railway at Auld's Bridge (J 3337 8489), then west along railway line to Cully's Burn at J 3298 8489, north along Cully's Burn to Cullyburn Road (J 3310 8589), east along Cullyburn Road to Knockagh Road (J 3371 8620), east along Knockagh Road to Pound Burn at J 3462 8652, then downstream across Old Carrick Road (J 3459 8512), then south between Brambles and Oakland to disused railway at J 3467 8480, west along disused railway to railway at J 3436 8475, and southwest along railway Line to bridge over railway line on Jordanstown Road (J 3494 8442).

NEW MOSSLEY 2022

From point on A8(M) Motorway between Foxton Green and Elmwood Cottages (J 3081 8437) to Corr's Corner roundabout (J 3089 8459), northwest along Ballyclare Road to Kingsmoss Road (J 2909 8636), to Doagh Road (J 3016 8634), southeast along Doagh Road to roundabout on Ballynure Road at J 3096 8597, north along Ballynure Road to Ashley Road (J 3102 8667), along Ashley Road to Ballyearl Road (J 3129 8633), then Rea Hill Road, to Cullyburn Road (J 3242 8616), along Cullyburn Road to Cully's Burn at J 3310 8589, then south along Cully's Burn to railway line at J 3298 8489, then west along railway to Mossley Bridge (J 3220 8509), southwards via

The Villas and Carnmoney Road North to the roundabout on Manse Road (J 3221 8431), westwards along Manse Road to roundabout on Ballyclare Road (J 3130 8376), then along Ballyclare Road to Cedar Lodge (J 3114 8424), and including Cedar Lodge and Elmwood Grove to point on A8(M) Motorway between Foxton Green and Elmwood Cottages (J 3081 8437).

NEWINGTON 2022

From junction Brougham Street and North Queen Street (J 3397 7563) along North Queen Street to A12 Westlink at J3374 7521, Clifton Street (J 3346 7510) to Carlisle Circus (J 3335 7520), along Antrim Road to Cliftonville Road (J3335 7589), to point on Cliftonville Road between Linden Gardens and Cliftonville Street (J 3262 7633) then along rear of housing on Linden Gardens, Brookvale Street and Brookvale Avenue to Antrim Road at J 3322 7625, to Limestone Road (J 3320 7644), to Castleton Gardens (J 3325 7642), along Castleton Gardens to Milewater River (J 3329 7652) down Milewater River to North Queen Street (J 3400 7609), to junction of Brougham Street and North Queen Street (J 3397 7563).

RATHCOOLE 2022

From roundabout at junction of O'Neill Road and Church Road (J 3320 8193) along Church Road to point where river (Glas na Braden) is carried by culvert under road (J 3391 8105) thence downstream to point where river approaches most nearly to Rathcoole Diamond (J 3436 8114), thence to roundabout at Rathcoole Diamond (J 3443 8147) and by line across Rathcoole Playing Fields to Doagh Road Entrance of Rathcoole Estate (3473 8147) thence by Green End (excluding houses on both sides), East Way to Foyle Hill (J 3432 8209), Inniscarn Drive J 3430 8216), Knockreagh Gardens (J 3421 8213), Glenbane Avenue (3423 8222) to bend in Glanroy Crescent at J 3425 8231, by line to O'Neill Road at Knockenagh Avenue (J 3417 8238, and by O'Neill Road to Roundabout at junction with Church Road (J 3320 8193).

ROSEMARY 2022

From point on northern boundary of Fortwilliam Golf Club at end of Glenhurst Parade (J 3368 7968), along Golf Club Boundary to Antrim Road (J 3335 7966), taking in Roman Catholic Church, by line to McArt's Fort (J 3250 7959), thence by line to point on Hightown Hill at J 3169 7891, return via line to Duncoole Park (J 3189 7842) and by line to Brianville Park (J 3222 7807) and to Sunningdale Park North (J 3230 7797), to Sunningdale Park (J 3246 7774), to Cavehill Road (J 3264 7782), to Antrim Road (J 3320 7644), to Fortwilliam Park (J 3320 7735), along Fortwilliam Park to Lansdowne Road (J 3390 7772), along Lansdowne Road to point between Ashley Gardens and Taunton Avenue at J3354 7810, then between Ashley Gardens and Taunton Avenue and continuing between Castle Gardens and Drive and Fairhill

Gardens, Park and Walk to Donegall Park Avenue at J 3372 7862, then along Donegall Park Avenue to point between Downview Drive and Downview Gardens at J 3384 7862, then between Downview Drive and Downview Gardens, to boundary of Fortwilliam Golf Club at J 3383 7893, and by line across golf course to point on northern boundary at end of Glenhurst Parade (J 3368 7968).

SEAVIEW 2022

From M2 Motorway opposite Donegall Park Avenue at J 3439 7850, by Donegall Park Avenue to point between Fairhill Gardens and Castle Gardens (J 3372 7862), then between Fairhill Gardens, Park and Walk, and Castle Gardens and Drive and continuing between Taunton Avenue and Ashley Gardens to Lansdowne Road at J 3354 7810, along Lansdowne Road to Fortwilliam Park (J 3390 7772), to Somerton Road (J 3340 7749), to Fortwilliam Parade (J 3352 7711) along Fortwilliam Parade to meet Premier Drive at J 3364 7712, then avoiding Premier Gove and Jellicoe Drive by line to Northwood Parade (J 3395 7704), along Northwood Parade and St. Vincent Street to M2 Motorway opposite St Vincent Street at J 3439 7701, then along M2 Motorway to point Parade to point opposite Donegall Park Avenue at J 3439 7850.

SINCLAIR SEAMENS 2022

From River Lagan at Queens Square (J 3444 7453) by Queens Square to Victoria Street (J 3416 7446) Waring Street (J 3413 7457), Donegall Street (J 3396 7447) Royal Avenue (J 3379 7475), North Street (J 3370 7460), the via North Street and Peter's Hill to A12 Westlink (J 3327 7473), along A12 to North Queen Street (J 3374 7521) to Brougham Street (J 3397 7563), York Street (J 3419 7547), Whitla Street (J 3421 7560) to M2 Motorway at J 3433 7560, then north along M2 Motorway to point at J 3457 7915, and following shoreline to mid-point of river channel at J 3729 7872 then up River Lagan to Queen's Square (J 3444 7453).

WEST KIRK 2022

From junction of Shankill Road and Cambrai Street (J 3184 7499) along Cambrai Street to Crumlin Road (J 3206 7560) to Flax Street (J 3203 7561) to Ardoyne Avenue (J 3204 7598) to Oldpark Road (J 3239 7609) and along Oldpark Road to J 3260 7565. Then round boundary of commercial sites via J 3242 7565, J 3242 7561, and J 3247 7560 to Crumlin Road (J 3245 7548), to Silvio Street (J 3248 7547), to Matchett Street (J 3239 7506), to Snugville Street (J 3250 7505), to Upper Meenan Street J (3255 7480) to Crimea Street (J 3262 7505), to Shankill Road (J 3255 7479) to A12 Westlink at Peter's Hill (J 3327 7473), then south along A12 Westlink to Divis Street at J 3319 7435, then by line to southern end of Lanark Way (J 3173 7444), to Shankill Road (J 3200 7487) to Cambrai Street (J 3184 7499).

WHITEABBEY 2022

From point on shore of Belfast Lough at Greenisland known as the “Gut” (J 3763 8449) northwest to railway line at J 3671 8523, and including Shorelands west along railway line to the Silver Stream (J 3634 8484) thence north along stream to disused railway line (J 3612 8512) and west along disused railway to railway to point near Mountpleasant Road at J 3526 8487, then by line between Mountpleasant/Rosemount and Brambles to bridge over railway line on Jordanstown Road (J 3494 8443), south along railway line to point opposite southernmost part of Ards Drive at J 3532 8373, then by line to end of Monkstown Avenue at J 3481 8352, along Monkstown Avenue to point opposite Cloughfern Avenue (J 3472 8343) thence by line to point on railway opposite Glenview Avenue at J 3527 8305, and including housing with roads accessed via to Glenville Road, to point on railway opposite end of Woodland Place (J 3517 8189), by line to point on Shore Road at J 3531 8184, south along Shore Road to stream at J 3525 8165, then along stream to shore at Abbeydene (J 3548 8154), and then north along shore to the “Gut” (J 3763 8449)

WHITEHOUSE 2022

From M2 Motorway opposite Donegall Park Avenue at J 3439 7850 along M2 then M5 Motorways to underbridge at J 3534 8098, then along shore to mouth of stream at Abbeydene (J 3548 8154) by line to Shore Road at J 3525 8165, north along Shore Road to point at J 3531 8184, then, taking in Woodland Drive, Place and Close, Bracken Drive, Beechwood Avenue, to Doagh Road at J 3478 8161, to entrance to Rathcoole Estate at J 3473 8172, by line across Rathcoole Playing Fields to roundabout at Rathcoole Diamond (J 3443 8147) then by line to Dunanney Avenue and along Dunanney Avenue to nearest point of stream which here borders the Estate (J 3436 8114), upstream to Church Road (J 3391 8105) along Church Road to roundabout (J 3320 8194) and along O’Neill Road to Antrim Road (J 3235 8158), south along Antrim Road to footpath (J 3250 8140) to Whitewell Road (J 3263 8132), Hazelwood Park (J 3312 8095), Antrim Road (J 3295 8082) and along Antrim Road to point at J 3321 8043, then east behind Old Throne Park to Whitewell Road at J 3356 8044, thence to Serpentine Road (J 3404 7985), to Van Dyke Drive (J 3380 7985), and, taking in all the Houses in Van Dyke Drive, by line to northern boundary of Fortwilliam Golf Club at end of Glenhurst Parade (J 3368 7968), but excluding the houses in Glenhurst Parade, by line to boundary of golf course at J 3383 7893, then between Downview Gardens and Downview Drive to point on Donegall Park Avenue at J 3384 7862, and along Donegall Avenue to point on M2 Motorway opposite Donegall Avenue at J 3439 7850.

WOODVALE 2022

From Ballygomartin Road at J 3108 7532 behind houses on Forth River Road to Forthriver Way (J 3095 7555) then by line to Crumlin Road (including Mountainview) at J 3134 7601 and then to Cambrai Street (J 3206 7560) and to Shankill Road (J 3184 7499) and to Lanark Way (J 3200 7487) to Springfield Road (J 3173 7444) to northernmost point on Springfield Road at J 3142 7458 and by line to Ballygomartin Road at J 3108 7532.

NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY MISSION AREA WEST BELFAST 2022

From A12 Westlink at Divis Street (J 3319 7435) then by line to southern end of Lanark Way (J 3173 7444), to northernmost point on Springfield Road at J 3142 7458 and by line to roundabout on Millennium Way at J 3117 7395, by line to Brittons Parade (J 3107 7352), to Whiterock Road (J 3095 7322), to northern corner of Belfast City Cemetery at J 3033 7345, along western and southern edges of cemetery to Falls Road at J 3102 7269, along Milltown Row to Bog Meadows at J 3119 7262, along southern edge of Bog Meadows to M1 Motorway at J 3134 7199, north along M1 Motorway then A12 Westlink to Divis Street (J 3319 7435).

SOUTH BELFAST**DUNMURRY 2022**

From junction of Upper Malone Road and Dunmurry Lane (J 3090 6815) by Dunmurry Lane to M1 Motorway (J 2966 6880) along Motorway to Bridge over Black's Road (J 2972 6954) along Black's Road to A512 Old Golf Course Road at J 2963 6965, along A512 to become Creighton Road then McKinstry Road to Derriaghy Road at J 2753 6786, then by line southeast to Mosside Road and along Mosside Road to Queensway (J 2783 6723) northeast along Queensway then Kingsway to Derriaghy river (J 2877 6831), along Derriaghy River to River Lagan (J 2958 6766) along River Lagan to Upper Malone Road (J 3058 6706), then Upper Malone Road to Dunmurry Lane (J 3090 6815).

FISHERWICK 2022

From junction of University Road and University Square (J 3347 7276) along University Square to Botanic Avenue (J 3371 7273) and College Park footpath to Botanic Gardens (J 3369 7258) along boundary to River Lagan (J 3409 7228) up the river to a point where a line extended from the end of the Bladon Drive would meet it (J 3409 7038) and thence by Bladon Drive to Malone Road (J 3268 7075), north along Malone Road to Malone Avenue (J 3328 7210), to Eglantine Place (J

3296 7223) and via Eglantine Avenue and Wellington Park Avenue to point between houses Wellington Park and Wellesley Avenue at (J 3308 7245), then between houses to Lisburn Road at J 3294 7252, northeast along City Hospital boundary at Dunluce Avenue (J 3308 7271), then housing on both sides of Lisburn Road (but excluding City hospital) to Bradbury Place over railway (J 3350 7303), along University Road to University Square (J 3347 7276).

FITZROY 2022

From Shaftsbury Square (J 3357 7320) along Donegall Pass (both sides) to Maryville Street (J 3377 7324), along Maryville Street (both sides) to Bankmore Street (J 3384 7353), along Bankmore Street and straight line continuation to Ormeau Road at (J 3411 7346), south along Ormeau Road to Railway (J 3421 7311), east along railway to underpass off Cromac Place at J 3441 7335, to nearest point on River Lagan, south along river to point opposite Botanic Gardens at J 3409 7228 and along Botanic Gardens boundary to College Park footpath (J 3369 7258) to University Square (J 3371 7273) and University Road (J 3347 7276) then via Bradbury Place to Shaftsbury Square (J 3357 7320).

GREAT VICTORIA STREET 2022

From Bradbury Place at J 3350 7303 west along railway line to follow railway line to nearest point to Westlink A12 at J 3291 7346, north along Westlink A12 to Grosvenor Road (J 3302 7385), to Great Victoria Street (J 3352 7390), along Great Victoria Street to Bruce Street (J 3356 7360), along Bruce Street, then Bankmore Street to Maryville Street (J 3384 7353), along Maryville Street (excluding buildings) to Donegall Pass (J 3377 7324), along Donegall Pass (excluding buildings) to Shaftsbury Square (J 3357 7320), then to railway line at Bradbury Place at J 3350 7303.

KILLMAKEE / SEYMOUR HILL 2022

From point on the Belfast – Lisburn Road A1 (Queensway) near Killeaton Place (J 2777 6710) by line to junction of River Road with Ballyskeagh Road (J 2831 6671), east along Ballyskeagh Road, then Upper Malone Road to River Lagan at J 3058 6706, then along River Lagan to Derrigahy River (J 2958 6766) to Kingsway at (J 2877 6831), then southeast along Kingsway then Queensway (A1) to point near Killeaton Place (J 2777 6710).

LOWE MEMORIAL, FINAGHY 2022

From junction of Upper Lisburn Road and Priory Park (J 3085 7034), south, including housing in Priory Park, to junction of Priory Park and Sicily Park (J 3100 6986), south through Sicily Park, but excluding housing, and by line to Upper Malone Road at a point between Upper Malone Gardens and Greystown Avenue (J 3135 6922), and thence to

Dunmurry Lane (J 3090 6815), by Dunmurry Lane to M1 motorway (J 2966 6880), north along M1 Motorway to bridge over Black's Road (J 2972 6954), along Black's Road to M1 onslip at J 2964 6965, north along M1 to J 3017 7087, by line to Beechmount Park (J 3085 7043) along Beechmount Park to Lisburn Road (J 3089 7038) to Priory Park (J 3085 7034).

MALONE 2022

From point on Lisburn Road between Cranmore Avenue and Cranmore Park (J 3215 7147) by line to Boucher Road (J 3170 7171) and excluding Boucher Crescent to M1 Motorway J 3127 7188, then south along M1 Motorway to J 3034 7101, along M1 Motorway to J 3017 7087, by line to Beechmount Park (J 3085 7043) along Beechmount Park to Lisburn Road (J 3089 7038) to Priory Park (J 3085 7034), south, excluding hosing in Priory Park, then east along golf club boundary to Harberton Park (J 3175 6995) along Drummond Park and line extending to Shrewsbury Park to Balmoral Avenue (J 3218 7044) to Malone Road (J 3251 7026) down Malone Road to Cranmore Park (J 3279 7109) to Lisburn Road (J 3218 7150) to point between Cranmore Avenue and Cranmore Park (J 3215 7147).

McCRACKEN MEMORIAL 2022

From River Lagan at a point where a line extended from the end of Bladon Drive would meet it (J 3409 7038) by line to Bladon Drive to Malone Road (3268 7075) by Malone Road to Balmoral Avenue (J 3251 7026) to Shrewsbury Park (3218 7044), from end of Shrewsbury Park by line to Drummond Park and then Harberton Park (J 3178 6991) south along Harberton Park to Upper Malone Road (J 3192 6963), by Upper Malone Road to bridge over River Lagan at (J 3058 6706), and then back along River Lagan to a point where a line extended from the end of Bladon Drive would meet it (J 3409 7038).

RICHVIEW 2022

From Bradbury Place over railway line at J 3350 7303 along west side of Lisburn Road to rear of housing, but including City Hospital to City Hospital boundary to rear of housing in Dunluce Avenue (J 3308 7271) thence along City Hospital boundary to railway line (J 3253 7289) and along railway line to point opposite south-east corner of football stadium (J 3235 7227), along boundary of football stadium and playing fields to Boucher Road (J 3189 7244), to roundabout at Tate's Avenue and Glenmachan Place J 3199 7274) by line to M1 Motorway (J 3183 7279) and along M1 Motorway and Westlink A12 to nearest point to railway line at J 3291 7346, east along railway line to Bradbury Place at J 3350 7303.

TAUGHMONAGH 2022

From junction of Sicily Park and Priory Park (J 3100 6986), east along golf club boundary to Harberton Park (J 3175 6995), south along Harberton Park to Upper Malone Road (J 3192 6963), west along Upper Malone Road to point between Upper Malone Gardens and Gerystown Avenue (J 3135 6922), then by line to junction of Sicily Park and Priory Park at J 3100 6986, and including all of Sicily Park up to that point.

WINDSOR 2022

From point on Lisburn Road between Cranmore Avenue and Cranmore Park (J 3215 7147) by line to Boucher Road (J 3170 7171) and taking in Boucher Crescent and Boucher Way along M1 Motorway to point opposite Glenmachan Place at (J 3183 7279), to roundabout at Tate's Avenue and Boucher Road (J 3199 72740), south along Boucher Road to southern boundary of playing fields at J3189 7244, to railway at south-east corner of football stadium ((J 3235 7227), north along railway to City Hospital boundary at J 3253 7289, along City Hospital boundary, and including housing on Dunluce Avenue, to Lisburn Road (J 3308 7271), south along Lisburn Road to point between Wellesley Avenue and Wellington Park (J 3294 7252), then between housing on Wellesley Avenue and Wellington Park to point opposite Wellington Park Avenue (J 3308 7245), then via Wellington Park Avenue, Eglantine Avenue and Eglantine Place to Malone Avenue (J 3296 7223), to Malone Road (J 3328 7210), to Cranmore Park (J 3279 7109) to Lisburn Road (J 3218 7150) to point between Cranmore Avenue and Cranmore Park (J 3215 7147).

**SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY MISSION AREA CENTRAL
BELFAST 2022**

From junction of Westlink A12 with Grosvenor Road (J 3302 7385) to Great Victoria Street (J 3352 7390), along Great Victoria Street to Bruce Street (J 3356 7360), along Bruce Street, then Bankmore Street to line extension of Bankmore Street on Ormeau Road at J 3411 7346, south along Ormeau Road to railway line at J 3421 7311, and along railway line to underpass off Cromac Place at J 3441 7335, to nearest point on River Lagan, north along centre of river to point opposite Queens Square at J 3444 7453, by Queens Square to Victoria Street (J 3416 7446) Waring Street (J 3413 7457), Donegall Street (J 3396 7447) Royal Avenue (J 3379 7475), North Street (J 3370 7460), the via North Street and Peter's Hill to A12 Westlink (J 3327 7473), then south along A12 to junction with Grosvenor Road (J 3302 7385).

SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY MISSION AREA WEST BELFAST 2022

From M1 Motorway at point on southern edge of Bog Meadows Nature Reserve (J 3134 7199) to Milltown Row at J 3119 7262, to Falls Road (J 3102 7269), then along southern and western edges of Belfast City Cemetery to Whiterock Road (J 3033 7345) to Springfield Road (J 3008 7364) then by line to television transmitter (J 2868 7507), and by line southwest to junction of Mullaghglass Road and Barnfield Road (J 2550 6950), and along Barnfield Road to Milltown Road (J 2688 6782), then east along Derriaghy Road to A512 McKinstry Road (J 2753 6786), along A512 becoming Creighton Road, then Old Golf Course Road, to Black's Road at J 2963 6965, along M1 onslip to M1 and north along M1 to point on southern edge of Bog Meadows Nature Reserve (J 3134 7199).

EAST BELFAST

BELMONT 2022

From junction of Holywood Road with Dundela Avenue (J 3691 7443) by Holywood Road to junction with north end of Circular Road (J 3799 7578) along Circular Road to point opposite Wilshere Drive, by line east to A55 dual carriageway at J 3859 7539, south to Cairnburn Road (J 3863 7519), across Old Holywood Road to Glenmachan Road (J 3915 7538), south to Belmont Road (J 3919 7524), down Belmont Road to (J 3890 7498) along north boundary of Campbell College Grounds to Castle Hill Road (J 3935 7459) along Castle Hill Road to the south corner of Campbell College Grounds (J 3930 7421) (not Cabin Hill) thence by the south boundary of the College grounds to a point on Hawthornden Way opposite a continuation of the line of Hawthornden Park (J 3868 7453) from this point to Wandsworth Road (J 3848 7424) and taking in Wandsworth Parade and Crescent (both sides) to Belmont Church Road (J 3809 7413) to Kincora Avenue (J 3806 7419) to Earlswood Road (J 3775 7410) then by straight line to Strandtown School grounds (J 3737 7422) then along North Road and Dundela Avenue to Holywood Road (J 3691 7443).

DUNDONALD 2022

From Graham's Bridge on Comber Road (4229 7312), along Comber Road to East Link Road (4168 7371), thence along East Link Road to Comber Greenway (4141 7345), thence along Greenway by East Wall of Dundonald Cemetery (4110 7348), to Newtownards Road (4097 7397), thence eastwards along Newtownards Road to Stoney Road (4066 7394), thence along Stoney Road to boundary of Stormont Estate (4061 7458), thence along boundary of Stormont Estate to Ballymiscaw Road (2996 7543), thence along Ballymiscaw Road to

Whinney Hill (4362 7707), thence south east along Whinney Hill and Hollywood Road to where the Craigtantlet townland boundary intersects (4461 7602), thence south east in a straight line to the junction by Greengraves Road and the dual carriageway (4539 7396), thence along Greengraves Road to Millmount Road (4312 7306), thence to junction of Millmount Road and Beaully Drive (4292 7320), thence by straight line to the junction of Craigleith Drive and the Upper Newtownards Road, thence by the Upper Newtownards Road to Robbs Road, thence along Robbs Road to Church Road (4216 7319), thence along Church Road to its junction with Rank Road (4235 7358), thence along Graham's Bridge Road to Graham's Bridge on the Comber Road.

DUNDONALD, CHRIST CHURCH 2022

From Graham's Bridge along Graham's Bridge Road to the junction with Rank Road (4235 7358), thence by Church Road to junction with Robbs Road (4216 7319), by Robbs Road to Upper Newtownards Road, to junction with Craigleith Drive, thence by straight line to the junction of Beaully Drive and Millmount Road, thence by Millmount Road to Comber Road (4268 7320) and thence by straight line to Hill Crest House on the Gransha Road (4183 7226), from Hill Crest by straight line to junction of Old Dundonald Road and Ballyhanwood Road (4141 7318), thence by Old Dundonald Road to its junction with East Link Road (4131 7320), thence by East Link Road to Comber Road (4168 7371), thence by Comber Road to Graham's Bridge (4229 7312).

GARNERVILLE 2022

From point where Airport Road crosses Musgrave Channel at J 3653 7569 by line to footbridge over A2 Sydenham Bypass at J 3712 7549, along Sydenham Bypass to point opposite Inverary Avenue, along Inverary Avenue (excluding sides) to Hollywood Road, and along Hollywood Road to north end of Circular Road (J 3799 7578), along Circular Road to point opposite Wilshere Drive, by line east to A55 dual carriageway at J 3859 7539, south to Cairnburn Road (J 3863 7519), across Old Hollywood Road to Glenmachan Road (J 3915 7538), south to Belmont Road (J 3919 7524), along B170 to Moss Road (J 4019 7575), along Moss Road to fork at J 4054 7685 near southern edge of Church Road reservoir, then by line to junction of Old Hollywood Road and Jackson's Road, along Jackson's Road (excluding housing) to Belfast Road to Hollywood Bypass at J 3899 7792, by line to shore at J 3850 7829, west along shore to point on Belfast Lough J 3719 7854, southwest to J 3636 7733 to point in Musgrave Channel along centre of Musgrave Channel to point where Airport Road crosses Musgrave Channel at J 3653 7569.

GILNAHIRK 2022

From point on boundary of golf course opposite Ravenswood Crescent (J 3855 7207), east along boundary to eastern edge at J 3922 7282, then by line, between houses, to point on Gilnahirk Road at J 3930 7300, to King's Road (J 3915 7337) to junction with Barnett's Road (J 3892 7350) by Comber Greenway to Abbey Road (J 3987 7356) by Abbey Road across King's Road, then Melfort Drive, Leven Drive and Park, to rear of houses at end of Leven Park at J 4019 7270, by straight line to junction of Ballyhanwood Road and Fort Road (J 4143 7307), by straight line to crest of hill on Gransha Road (J 4183 7235) by Gransha Road to Eden Road (J 4167 7051) to Lisleen Road East, south to Lisleen Road then to Upper Braniel Road to Middle Braniel Road (J 3864 7099) by straight line to point on Lower Braniel Road at south-east boundary of Braniel Primary School (J 3856 7193), clockwise along boundary of school, to include school, to point on boundary of golf course opposite Ravenswood Crescent (J 3855 7207).

HIGH STREET, HOLYWOOD 2022

From point on the shore near Kinnegar Waste Management works at J 3850 7829, along the coast to the junction of the Esplanade and Shore Road (J 3969 7934) thence along Shore Road and Church Road to Church View (J 3995 7915) thence along Church View to Downshire Road (J 3978 7900) thence along Downshire Road to Demesne Road (J 4025 7865) thence along rear boundary of houses in north side of Demesne Avenue and along boundary of golf course to (J 4074 7840) thence to upper entrance to golf course (J 4093 7840) at junction of Church Road and Moss Road, thence along Church Road to Ballymiscaw Road (J 4180 7668) thence along Ballymiscaw Road to Moss Road (J 4019 7575) thence along Moss Road to fork at J 4054 7685 near southern edge of Church Road reservoir, then by line to junction of Old Hollywood Road and Jackson's Road, along Jackson's Road (excluding housing) to Belfast Road to Hollywood Bypass at J 3899 7792, by line to shore at J 3850 7829.

KIRKPATRICK MEMORIAL 2022

From Winston Gardens (J 3826 7393) by Green Road and Knockhill Park to Kings Road (J 3818 7362) thence to Sandown Road (J 3785 7371) by Sandown Road to Knock Road (J 3839 7300) west along Knock Road to point on Knock Road at western boundary of golf course (J 3800 7245), then by line, including Clarawood Estate, to point on Knock River behind Sandhill Park (J 3743 7319) by line to Holland Drive and Newtownards Road (J 3761 7399) by Newtownards Road to North Road (J 3738 7403) to Strandtown School grounds (J 3737 7422) thence by line to Kincora Avenue (J 3775 7410) to Belmont Church Road (J 3806 7419) to Wandsworth Parade (J 3809 7413) by Wandsworth Crescent (but including neither) to Wandsworth Road (J 3849 7424) and via Ormiston Crescent to Upper Newtownards Road (J 3843 7395) thence to Winston Gardens (J 3828 7396).

KNOCK 2022

From Winston Gardens (J 3826 7393) by Green Road and Knockhill Park to Kings Road (J 3818 7362) thence to Sandown Road (J 3785 7371) by Sandown Road to Knock Road (J 3839 7300), along Knock Road to western boundary of golf course (J 3800 7245), following southern boundary of golf course to eastern edge at J 3922 7282, then by line, between houses, to point on Gilnahirk Road at J 3930 7300, to Kings Road (J 3915 7337) to junction with Barnett's Road (J 3892 7350), along King's Road and Cabin Hill Park (both sides) to Upper Newtownards Road (J 3900 7391), along Upper Newtownards Road to Winston Gardens (J 3826 7393).

ORANGEFIELD 2022

From Castlereagh Road at Grand Parade (J 3652 7279) by Grand Parade to Knock River (J 3677 7316) by Knock River to point on Knock River behind Sandhill Park (J 3743 7319), then by line, excluding Clarawood Estate, to point on Knock Road at western boundary of golf course (J 3800 7245), along southern boundary of golf course to point opposite Ravenswood Crescent (J 3855 7207), anticlockwise along boundary of Braniel Primary School, excluding school to west to Wayside Close, and then, including Wayside Close to point on Lower Braniel Road at south-east boundary of Braniel Primary School (J 3856 7193), then west along Lower Braniel Road (both sides) to Glen Road (J 3804 7202), to Knock Road (J 3794 7242), west along Knock Road and Upper Knockbreda Road to junction with Clonduff Drive (J 3713 7170) by upper section of Clonduff Drive and footpath to Montgomery Road (J 3701 7200) by Montgomery Road, Alanbrooke Road and Alexander Road to Ladas Drive (J 3621 7237) by Ladas Drive to Castlereagh Road (J 3652 7279).

STRAND 2022

From Connswater Bridge (J 3633 7423), down Conn's Water to where Airport Road crosses Musgrave Channel at J 3653 7569, then by line to footbridge over A2 Sydenham By-pass at J 3712 7549, along Sydenham By-pass to point opposite Inverary Avenue, along Inverary Avenue (both sides) to Holywood Road, and along Holywood Road to Newtownards Road to Connswater Bridge (J 3633 7423).

APPENDIX 2

Parish Bounds within the Monaghan Presbytery

MONAGHAN

BALLINA AND KILLALA 2022

All Co. Mayo, apart from the portion east of Charlestown lying within the bounds of Ballymote, and Co. Sligo, west of a line from Portavade through Tobercurry to Charlestown.

BALLYHOBRIIDGE 2022

From Munilly Bridge (H 486238) by road south of Munilly House east to junction with R212. South along R212 to road junction east of Scotshouse at H 495196. Turning south-east along this road to crossroads at H 501194, turning south and following L2261 to road junction at H 521172, turning south-west and following road passing Magherintemple and Renard to meet L2032 at H 496143, then by road west to meet R212 at H 483148. By line west to where N3 meets Cavan/Fermanagh county boundary at H 339194. Then along county boundary to point on Quivvy Lough, Upper Lough Erne at H 408216. Then by line north-east to point on A34 between Clones and Newtownbutler at H 463252. Then by line to south-east to Munilly Bridge (H 486238).

BALLYMOTE 2022

From junction of N4 and N17 at Collooney south along N17 to junction with N5, along N5 to Mayo/Roscommon boundary, then south along the Roscommon county boundary to meet N60 at M 5517 7870, then by straight line eastwards to a point M 8735 8960 just north of Elphin to Leitrim county boundary on Lough Bofin at N 0474 8897 north of Roosky, then north along Leitrim county boundary to Lough Allen, then by line to Dowra, then by line to junction of N4 and N17 at Collooney.

BELLASIS 2022

From Cavan/Westmeath county boundary at south-west tip of Lough Sheelin by line to road junction on R154 north-west of Kilnaleck at N 439914, then by line to southernmost junction of N3 and R165 south of Stradone at H 506021. Then by line to Crossreagh on L3510 between Kilmount and Grousehall at H 576010. By line to junction of R178, L3550 and L3008, at N 6343 9209, south along L3008 to become L3009 and then to junction with R194 (N 674860), then by line to Cavan/Meath county boundary on River Blackwater at near

Ballydurrow at N 642 807, then along Cavan county boundary to south-west tip of Lough Sheelin.

CAVAN 2022

From Cavan/Fermanagh county boundary where it meets the N3 at H 339194 south along the N3 to where it meets the N87 at Staghall. Then by line to point on eastern shore of Lough Atrain at H 365052 to junction of R198 and R154 at Crossdoney. Then south-east along R154 to road junction with L2518 north-west of Kilnaleck at N 439914. By line to southernmost junction of N3 and R165 south of Stradone at H 506021. By line north-east to point on R165 west of Drumole at H 527081. By line to Ballyallon Bridge (H 501116), then to junction of R212 and L2032 at H 483148, and then to Cavan/Fermanagh county boundary where it meets the N3 at H 339194.

DRUM 2022

From eastern tip of Annagmakerig Lough at H 589206, by line to crossroads east of Scotshouse at H 501194, turning south and following L2261 to junction at H 521172, turning south-west and following road passing Magherintemple and Renard to meet L2032 at H 496143, then by road west to meet R212 at H 483148. By line to Ballyallon Bridge (H 501116), then by Annalee River to stream at H 528124, then by stream and then road to meet L2032 at Lisnalee (H 541141). East along L2032 to point where Oldbridge Road and Margaret's Lane meet north of Cootehill (H 590151). North-east along Margaret's Lane top meet R188, then along R188 to Dawson Monument at H 610178. By road passing H 592186 to road junction at H 591199, then north by road to eastern tip of Annagmakerig Lough at H 589206.

DRUMKEEN 2022

From eastern tip of Annagmakerig Lough at H 589206, then south by road to road junction at H 591199. By road passing H 592186 to Dawson Monument at H 610178. By road to Corglass at H 638212, then by line east to Enagh at H 656214, then by road to Dundrannan Crossroads at H 659224, west along R183 to crossroads at Aghadrumkeen, (H 630225), north along L 2412, then L2411, L2410 to junction with R189 at Grattan's Cross (H 613286), south along R189 to crossroads east of Amagose Lough at H 594253 then turning south to junction at Drumgarly (H 595249) then by line to eastern tip of Annagmakerig Lough at H 589206.

ERVEY 2022

From Cavan/Monaghan county boundary at Drumbracken (H 765000), by line to road junction at Lurganbane (N 719949), to Cavan/Meath county boundary on R191 at N 684913, to junction of R178, L3550 and L3008 at Beagh (N 634921), south along L3008 to become

L3009 and then to junction with R194 (N 674860). By line to point on R164 at Glebe (N 738868), to junction on R165 in Drumcondra at St Peter and Paul's Church (N 884900), to N2 at Roe's Cross (N 887988), to Cavan/Monaghan county boundary at Drumbracken (H 765000).

KILLESHANDRA 2020

From point on Roscommon/Leitrim county boundary at G 949029 south of Leitrim town, north along country boundary to Lough Allen, then by line to Dowra, then by line to Leitrim/Cavan county boundary at H 035394 in Lough Macneen Upper, then following Cavan county boundary to where it meets the N3. Then south along the N3 to where it meets the N87 at Staghall. Then by line to point on eastern shore of Lough Atrain at H 365052, to point on Killeshandra to Aughnacor Road at H 311052. Then by line to Cavan/Leitrim county boundary at southern end of Rockfield Lough at H 274032, to point on R203 south-east of Carrigallen Church at H 245029, then due west to meet Leitrim/Roscommon county boundary at G 949029 south of Leitrim town.

APPENDIX 3

LINKAGE COMMISSION

Role of Vacancy Conveners in Congregations where Stated Supply Ministry has been granted (First draft)

1. Introduction

There are two main types of Stated Supply arrangements in place across PCI. These are:

(a) Settled Stated Supply

This arrangement is normally in place for a number of years (over 12 in one case) and it is highly likely that for the foreseeable future they will continue to operate in those congregations. There are currently six such appointments, all of these are within the bounds of a Presbytery. If a situation arises where such Settled Stated Supply Ministers are from another Presbytery then the “host” Presbytery will need to have a Vacancy Convener in place. This paper has not been drawn up to address those arrangements.

(b) Temporary Stated Supply Arrangements

In those situations a Stated Supply has been put in place to assist the Presbytery and the Congregations by allowing “breathing space” when a vacancy has occurred and the Presbytery wishes to allow a period of settlement or readjustment or indeed to facilitate wider Presbytery thinking as it addresses vacancies and potential realignment of congregations within its bounds. There are eight such appointments and they are made on a one year basis but can, at the request of a Presbytery, be extended. It is for such situations that this paper has been drawn up.

2. Terms of appointment of Stated Supply

Following discussions with the Presbytery, normally through its Vacancy Convener, the Linkage Commission “nominates” a Minister for a Vacant Congregation on agreed Terms. These Terms set out:

- Service(s) to be covered;
- Hours to be worked per week in respect to pastoral care;
- Holiday entitlements;
- Payment for the above. This figure will be set at a multiple of the Full Supply Fee per week.

In some situations the Stated Supply Minister will chair meetings of Kirk Session and Congregational Committee EXCEPT for any such meetings when the Vacancy is being considered.

In ALL situations the Presbytery is required to keep a Vacancy Convener in place.

3. Role of Vacancy Convener

Currently this appears to vary from situation to situation. Where a vacant congregation is unlikely to take steps to fill a vacancy in, say, the first year and it has been agreed that the Stated Supply Minister is to chair Kirk Session and Committee meetings, the involvement may not amount to much more than a monthly report to Presbytery that Gospel Ordinances are being provided and no steps are currently being taken to fill the vacancy.

HOWEVER:

The Vacancy Convener remains ultimately responsible for who preaches in the vacant congregation.

It is suggested that they also preach on a regular basis in the vacant congregation to maintain links and also to enable them to report to Presbytery.

It is also considered good practice, even where agreement is in place for the Stated Supply to chair Kirk Session and Church Committee meetings, that the Vacancy Convener attends and chairs these meetings from time to time. This will allow, especially, Kirk Session to comment on how they see things going in the life and work of the congregation and take any corrective action at an early opportunity.

While forms may not at an early stage be being completed to seek leave to call, the Vacancy Convener needs to address other matters which form part of the process e.g.

- Manse related matters.
- Training of leadership specially where this has been identified as a deficit
- Assisting in writing or rewriting the Mission Plan which is a vital part of the process

These are only a few examples of the Vacancy Convener's role.

4. Payment of Vacancy Conveners.

The Linkage Commission has in place a Scheme for the payment of Vacancy Conveners which varies depending on the number of families claiming connection with the Congregation. However some Presbyteries have their own Scheme.

Recently a number of Vacancy Conveners have sought guidance as to what they should receive as payment where a Stated Supply is in place. The Code is silent on this matter and advice tends to be given that they "negotiate" this with Presbytery and/or the Congregation. This has potential to cause embarrassment on both sides.

It is therefore suggested that, following consultation with Presbytery Clerks on the content of this Paper, that the Linkage Commission pass a Resolution "strongly recommending to Presbyteries that where a

Stated Supply is in place, the payment to Vacancy Conveners be fixed at a maximum of 1x Full Supply Fee per month (this can be amended to a figure with which the majority is comfortable)."

The rationale for this change is that it is recognised that while the role of the Vacancy Convener is being reduced he/she remains in place to provide the role outlined at Pt.3. above.

JAMES LIVINGSTONE, Convener

COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Very Rev Dr FRANK SELLAR

Acting Secretary: Rev JIM STOTHERS

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The report covers the period from July 2021 to March 2022.
2. The Council looks forward to the return of its Secretary, Rt Rev Dr David Bruce, on the completion of his historic second term as Moderator. The Revs Jim Stothers and Robert Bell are to demit their roles as Acting Secretary and Chaplaincies Secretary respectively at the end of June 2022; the Council expresses sincere appreciation to them for all their work, and it looks forward to Mr Rick Hill taking up the position of Council Secretary towards the end of the year.
3. The Rev Ben Walker completes his term as Convener of the Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee, extended by a year due to the Covid pandemic. Mr Walker has proved to be a first-rate convener, bringing vision, strategic thinking, enthusiasm, and his own gentle but persuasive nature to the task. The Council thanks him and wishes him well.
4. All staff and personnel who had been furloughed at any point under the government scheme returned to work prior to the ending of that scheme; they are all commended for how they have remained committed to their work under very difficult circumstances. Home working for staff has followed the guidance issued.
5. The Council has sought to continue, depending on the grace of God, to deliver the six components of its CMI remit:
 - (a) Developing PCI's strategic priorities in all-age mission in Ireland, and planning initiatives at GA level where appropriate.
 - (b) Considering new church development and church planting.
 - (c) Overseeing all aspects of the Home and Irish Missions, including the Irish Mission Fund.
 - (d) Overseeing the deployment and ongoing support of Deaconesses.
 - (e) Supporting a chaplaincy service in the Forces, Hospitals and Hospices, and Prisons.
 - (f) Supporting mission and ministry in Universities and Colleges through chaplaincy services.
6. Meetings have moved to be mostly in-person, with the option where necessary for members to attend online. Most members have attended in-person. The last Standing Committee meeting was held in September

2021, with Committee meetings resuming in October and the first Council meeting since restrictions were imposed taking place in the Board Room in December.

7. While the work that goes on under the supervision of the Council is not fully back to what it was before the pandemic, this report will show that strong progress has been made, and exciting new work has been established. However, it must again be reported that proposals concerning the Council committee structure have, inevitably, again been delayed.
8. The main focus of the Council's report to the Assembly in 2022 is:
 - (a) The progress of the Home Mission Review. While the pandemic caused a significant pause in the work of the Task Group, some practical matters have been implemented. This has highlighted some issues which may require adjustment.
 - (b) The expansion of the work of International Meeting Point and the resumption of significant work in South Belfast Friendship House.
 - (c) The committed work of all our chaplains through the pandemic, and the appointment of our first Rural Chaplain.
 - (d) Two exciting mission projects, each breaking new ground:
 - (i) A single full-time post being 50% congregational ministry in Dunfanaghy and Carrigart and 50% CMI 'Carrigart Mission Project' working out of the Bewglas Centre there. Sincere thanks are expressed to a couple who have pledged a significant contribution to the financial costs of the mission project over five years, without which it could not have gone ahead.
 - (ii) A West Belfast Special Ministry post under the Home Mission to return to this part of Belfast with active Presbyterian witness. The Council has been greatly encouraged by the support given to the establishment of both these projects throughout the structures of the General Assembly, and by the evident working of the Holy Spirit in so many people and bodies that has brought them about.

HOME MISSION, IRISH MISSION AND DEACONESS COMMITTEE

Home Mission

9. Directory of Home and Urban Mission charges. Linked Congregations (in brackets) are not in the Home Mission. Ministers marked * are called by CMI, as at March 2022.

| HOME MISSION | |
|---------------------------|---|
| MINISTER | CHARGE |
| Rev Michael Anderson* | Arklow |
| Rev Gunther Andrich* | Irvinestown, Pettigo and Tempo |
| Rev Rodney Beacom* | Lisbellaw, Lisnaskea, Maguiresbridge and Newtownbutler |
| Rev Damien Burke* | Drogheda |
| Rev Andy Carroll* | Donabate |
| Rev David Clarke* | Sligo |
| Rev Richie Cronin* | Trinity Cork and Aghada |
| Rev David Curran | (Cavanaleck) and Aughtentaine |
| Rev Jonathan Currie | Kilkenny |
| Rev Al Dunlop* | Howth and Malahide |
| Rev Daryl Edwards* | Drum, Cootehill and Kilmount |
| Rev Helen Freeburn* | Galway (Alternating Scheme) |
| Rev Andrew Gill* | Blackrock and Bray |
| Rev John Hanson* | Clones, Stonebridge, Ballyhobridge and Newbliss (part-time) |
| Rev William Hayes* | Tullamore |
| Rev Dr Keith McCrory* | Maynooth |
| Rev Gary McDowell* | Greystones |
| Rev Jean Mackarel* | Drumkeeran, Killeshandra, Cavan and Bellasis |
| Rev Roger McElnea | (Aughnacloy) and Ballymagrane |
| Rev Colin McKibbin | (Convoy, Carnone, Donoughmore) and Alt |
| Rev Alan McQuade | (First Monaghan) and Smithborough |
| Rev Dr Katherine P Meyer* | Sandymount (Alternating Scheme) |
| Rev Susan Moore | (Kerrykeel, Milford) and Rathmullan |
| Rev William Montgomery* | Fermoy and Cahir |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Rev John O'Donnell* | First Bailieborough, Corraneary, (Trinity Bailieborough) & Ervey |
| Rev Philip Poots* | Moville, Greenbank, Carndonagh and Malin |
| Rev Jonathan Porter* | Dundalk |
| Rev Mark Proctor* | Naas (part-time) with chaplaincy at Tallaght Hospital |
| Rev Stephen Rea* | Carlow and Athy |
| Rev David Reid | (Ardstraw) and Douglas |
| Rev Daniel Reyes Martin* | Corboy and Mullingar |
| Rev Stephen Richmond* | Donegal and Stranorlar |
| Rev Rodney Thompson | (Badoney, Corrick) and Glenelly |
| Alternating Scheme | Christ Church, Limerick |
| Vacant | Ballina, Killala, Ballymote |
| Vacant | Carrigart and Dunfanaghy (part-time) with additional missional duties |
| Vacant | Enniscorthy and Wexford |
| Vacant | (Frankford, Castleblayney), & Corvalley |
| Vacant | Inch |
| Vacant | Kells, Co Meath |
| Vacant | (Newtownstewart) & Gortin |
| Vacant | (Waterside) and Fahan |
| URBAN MISSION | |
| Vacant | Belvoir |
| Rev Rodney Cameron* | St Colomba's, Lisburn |
| Rev Mervyn Gibson* | Westbourne |
| Rev William Harkness* | Great Victoria Street (part-time) with additional missional duties |
| Rev Robert Love* | Taughmonagh |
| Rev Danny Rankin* | Strand, Belfast |
| Rev Lachlan Webster* | Craigavon |

10. Rev Jonathan Currie was installed in the Home Mission and inducted to the congregation of Kilkenny in September 2021.
11. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the fact that, at interviews of candidates for Home Mission vacancies, responsibility for reflecting the views of the congregation or congregations lies with a single congregational representative. It was felt that this was putting too much responsibility on one person's shoulders, and so it was agreed that, "In future, at vacancy interviews, for a single- or double-point charge, each congregation should be allowed two representatives, and for three-point charges and greater, each congregation should be allowed one representative."

Alternating Ministry Scheme

12. The Committee has noted that the Alternating Ministry Scheme will end on 30 April 2022, at which point Christ Church Limerick and Christ Church Sandymount will become Methodist congregations, while Galway United Church will become a Presbyterian congregation, remaining under the Home Mission, with Rev Helen Freeburn continuing to serve as minister.
13. The cessation of the Alternating Ministry Scheme in Sandymount will coincide with the retirement of the Rev Dr Katherine Meyer after 30 years' service in the Home Mission. The Council expresses thanks to Dr Meyer for her commitment to this aspect of the Church's life and work.
14. The Mission Partnership Forum which is the joint Presbyterian and Methodist body which oversees the scheme has agreed that, "It will continue to meet over the next year to discuss the future role of the Forum concerning, for example, areas of common interest in mission."

Home Mission Review Implementation Task Group

15. The Home Mission Review Implementation Task Group continues to do its work, albeit at a slower pace than anticipated due to Covid-19 restrictions and the election of the Council Secretary, Rt Rev Dr David Bruce for two terms as Moderator. Pathway assessments have been conducted under the Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee alongside a Vacancy Assessment Group report and a Tenure Review.
16. A schedule for Home Mission reviews has not been advanced beyond vacancies and those Home Mission congregations linked to non-home mission congregations. The Council agreed that such congregations would cease connection with the Home Mission from 1 July 2022, those congregations being as follows:

Derry and Donegal Presbytery: Alt, Fahan, Rathmullan.

Monaghan Presbytery: First Bailieborough, Corraneary, Corvally, Ervey, Smithborough.

Omagh Presbytery: Aughtentine, Ballymagrane, Douglas, Glenelly, Gortin.

Irish Mission and Deaconesses

17. Margaret Robertson retired as a deaconess, having served most recently in Elmwood, on 31 January 2022 after 16 years' service: the Council expressed its thanks to her at the March meeting for all her work and wishes her a long and happy retirement.
18. Mrs Sylvia Santos Bryce was commissioned and inducted as a deaconess in Groomsport in September 2021, and has recently been called to a part-time deaconess position in West Church, Ballymena.
19. Applications from congregations for the services of a deaconess continue to be received and processed.

Directory of Irish mission workers and the location of their service (March 2022)

| NAME | LOCATION |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| David Boyd | Adelaide Road, Dublin |
| Tom Dowling | Kilkenny |
| Keith Preston | International Meeting Point, Belfast |
| Philip Whelton | Arklow |

Directory of deaconesses and the location of their service (March 2022)

| NAME | LOCATION |
|-------------------|---|
| Sonya Anderson | Shore Street, Donaghadee |
| Paula Burrows | Ballygrainey |
| Rachel Cubitt | Whiteabbey |
| Louise Davidson | Bangor West |
| Eleanor Drysdale | Wellington, Ballymena |
| Joanne Dunlop | Chaplaincy Team – Antrim and Craigavon Hospitals |
| Heidi England | Railway Street, Lisburn |
| Sharon Heron | International Meeting Point, Belfast |
| Roberta Irvine | Greystone Road, Antrim |
| Heather McCracken | Chaplaincy Team – Royal Victoria and Belfast City Hospitals |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Tracey Nicholl | St James', Ballymoney |
| Michelle Purdy | Ballyclare |
| Hazel Reid | First Broughshane and Causeway Hospital |
| Sylvia Santos Bryce | Groomsport (called to West, Ballymena) |
| Rosemary Spiers | Greenwell Street, Newtownards |

INTERNATIONAL MEETING POINT MANAGEMENT PANEL

20. Work continues on the Lisburn Road and at Carlisle Circus, and increased as pandemic restrictions eased. English language classes were trialled in Richview congregation's Pembroke Sreet Halls, but struggled to attract participants.
21. Shirley McGonigle has been appointed to the post of Assistant Project Leader, based at the North Belfast site.
22. A Task Group has been appointed to consider future provision of staffing and accommodation in South Belfast, reporting through the Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee.
23. Discussions continue regarding any support that can be given to a congregation with an existing project it is running with internationals.

STEPHEN SIMPSON, Convener

SOUTH BELFAST FRIENDSHIP HOUSE MANAGEMENT PANEL

24. Carol Reid has been appointed to a Children's Worker post (full-time, 2 years) and is greatly helping with the restarting of work after the pandemic.
25. The Council is grateful for continuing support from PW, including prayer, practical support and finance. A significant reduction in PW grants, however, means that the Council is taking more responsibility for the financing of the project.
26. Rev William Harkness is exploring potential partnerships with local community initiatives.

MARK SPRATT, Convener

DARYL EDWARDS, Committee Convener

HEALTHCARE, PRISONS AND FORCES CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

Healthcare Chaplaincy

27. The Committee maintains on-going contact with the five Health and Social Service Trusts in Northern Ireland, and with the Health Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland, concerning the provision of Presbyterian Chaplaincy in hospitals across Ireland. During the Covid-19 pandemic, our hospital chaplains, the majority of whom are part-time, have faced immense challenges in continuing to provide pastoral care and support to patients, families and staff in extremely difficult circumstances. Profound respect and warmest thanks are due to all who serve in this demanding role. Their ministry and mission are greatly appreciated by all with whom they have contact, and highly regarded by the leadership of the Health and Social Care Trusts. The Committee continues to support a denominationally based approach to healthcare chaplaincy, and is pleased to report that this approach is being followed in the majority of the Health and Social Care Trusts.

Directory of PCI Healthcare Chaplains and the location of their service (March 2022)

| NAME | LOCATION |
|--|--|
| Rev Lindsay Blair | Altnagelvin Hospital (part-time) |
| Vacant | Dalriada |
| Rev David Clarke | Mayo General Hospital (Interim) Sligo University Hospital |
| Rev Richie Cronin | Cork University Hospital |
| Rev Dr David Cupples | South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen |
| Rev Dr Tony Davidson | St Luke's; Mullinure and Longstone |
| Susan Dawson | Coordinating Chaplain, Dublin Hospitals |
| Rev Ken Doherty | Mater Hospital, Belfast |
| Joanne Dunlop (Deaconess Assistant to Chaplain) | Antrim Area Hospital and Craigavon Hospital |
| Rev Helen Freeburn | University Hospital, Galway |
| Rev John Gilkinson | Belfast City Hospital (full-time) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Rev David Hagan | Cavan General Hospital |
| Rev Norman Harrison | Royal Group of Hospitals (part-time) Northern Trust lead Chaplain (part-time) |
| Rev Ross Kernohan | Altnagelvin Hospital (part-time) |
| Rev Jim Lamont | Letterkenny General Hospital |
| Heather McCracken (Deaconess Assistant to the Chaplain) | Royal Group of Hospitals and Belfast City Hospital (Deaconess Assistant to the Chaplain Musgrave Park Hospital (part-time) |
| Rev Roger McElnea | Tyrone and Fermanagh |
| Rev Keith McIntyre | Daisy Hill Hospital |
| Rev Stephen McNie | Monaghan General Hospital |
| Rev Dr Ivan Neish | Antrim Area Hospital (part-time) |
| Rev Jane Nelson | Tyrone County Hospital (now Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex.) |
| Rev Leslie Patterson | Lagan Valley Hospital (temporary cover) |
| Rev Owen Patterson | Downe Hospital |
| Rev Jonathan Porter | Dundalk District Hospital (interim) |
| Rev Mark Proctor | Tallaght Hospital (Adelaide and Meath) |
| Hazel Reid | Causeway Hospital (part-time) |
| Rev Marlene Taylor | Belfast Trust (Bank relief chaplain) |
| Rev Ivan Thompson | Bluestone Psychiatric Unit |
| Rev Alan Thompson | South Tyrone Hospital |
| Appointment pending | Ulster Hospital, Dundonald |
| Vacant | Altnagelvin Hospital (part-time) |
| Vacant | University Hospital, Limerick |

Prisons chaplaincy**Directory of PCI Prisons Chaplains and the locations of their service. (March 2022)**

| NAME | LOCATION |
|----------------------|--|
| Rev Gary Aitcheson | HMP Magilligan (part-time) |
| Rev Rodney Cameron | Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison (part-time) |
| Rev Colin Megaw | Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre |
| Rev Graham Stockdale | HMP Maghaberry (Coordinating Chaplain, full-time) |

28. The Committee is very pleased to report that, during the past year, part-time chaplains have been appointed to both HMP Magilligan and HMP Hydebank Wood College and Women's Prison, where Revs Gary Aitcheson and Rodney Cameron, respectively, have begun their work with encouragement. Through regular contact with the NIPS and the NI Department of Justice, we know that the work of our PCI chaplains is held in the highest possible regard and receives warm support at the highest level.
29. The Committee is very grateful for the continued funding provided for prison chaplaincy by the NI Department of Justice, and whilst appreciating the severe budgetary constraints, continues to make the case for a more realistic subvention towards this work.

Forces Chaplaincy Panel**Directory of Commissioned Chaplains within the Armed Forces (March 2022)**

| NAME | LOCATION |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Rev James Burnett | Royal Navy Reserve (part-time) |
| Rev Mark Donald | Army Reserve (part-time) |
| Rev Simon Hamilton | Royal Navy |
| Rev Mark Henderson | Army |
| Rev Colin Jones | Army |
| Rev Ivan Linton | Army |

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Rev Graeme McConville | Army |
| Rev Michael McCormick | RAF |
| Rev Jonathan Newell | RAF |
| Rev Heather Rendell | Army |
| Rev Dr Paul Swinn | Army |
| Rev Brent van der Linde | Royal Navy |
| Rev Dr Philip Wilson | Royal Air Force |

Directory of part-time Chaplains to Youth Organisations sponsored by the Armed Forces

| NAME | LOCATION |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Rev Joseph Andrews | Air Training Corps |
| Rev Dr Paul Bailie | Army Cadet Force (commissioned) |
| Rev Kenneth Crowe | Army Cadet Force (commissioned) |
| Rev Richard Graham | Air Training Corps |
| Rev Keith Hibbert | Army Cadet Force (Commissioned) |
| Rev Edward McKenzie | Army Cadet Force (Commissioned) |
| Rev Michael Rutledge | Air Training Corps |
| Rev Prof. Patton Taylor | Air Training Corps |
| Rev Scott Woodburn | Air Training Corps |

30. Expressions of interest in Forces Chaplaincy

- (a) One expression of interest in military chaplaincy was received but not pursued because of age restrictions.
- (b) One application for Army Reserve Chaplaincy has been approved by both the Panel and the Army and the applicant will be commissioned in May 2022.

31. Moderator's visits

- (a) Owing to Covid-19 travel restrictions, the Moderator was unable to visit any chaplains in their home placements, although he was able to meet several chaplains at the October General Assembly.

ROB CRAIG, Convener

RURAL CHAPLAINCY PANEL

32. The Rev Kenny Hanna was inducted to the post of Rural Chaplain in the areas covered by the Presbyteries of Down, Iveagh, Newry and Armagh at a service in Mourne Presbyterian Church on Sunday 7 November 2021. The aim of this three-year pilot project is to support farmers, farming families and the rural community living with issues of isolation, challenges to mental health, economic pressures and changes in the regulatory and trading context – and in so doing, seeking out and exercising opportunities for a pastoral and missional ministry.
33. A Rural Chaplaincy Panel, representative of the participating Presbyteries, as well as the wider farming and agri-food community, has been established. Its role is to provide support and guidance to the Rural Chaplain, and to oversee the project. At its first meeting, the Rural Chaplain presented a three-year Rural Chaplaincy Strategic Plan, emphasizing the core values of the project – Christ Centred, Mission Driven and People Focused, and capturing the essence of his ministry and mission as that of ‘Pastoral Evangelist’.
34. Since the beginning of the project in November, it is encouraging to report that the Rural Chaplain has:
 - (a) Found a warm welcome at local marts.
 - (b) Established significant pastoral contacts with farmers and farming families.
 - (c) Received opportunities to speak in local congregations and to support particular congregations in local missional projects.
 - (d) Built up positive relationships with agri-food organisations and businesses.
 - (e) Begun plans for a presence at the agricultural shows in Castlewellan and Markethill in 2022, in partnership with the local congregations and relevant presbyteries.
 - (f) Made progress in identifying suitable volunteers to support him in the work and recognized the need for appropriate training of the volunteers.
 - (g) Appreciated good relationships and opportunities for positive publicity through the farming press as well as making good use of social media.
35. The Panel has agreed Guiding Principles re the many opportunities that were emerging. It was agreed that:
 - (a) Local congregational missional projects in which the Chaplain was to have an involvement should have the support of the relevant presbytery and be in line with its missional strategy.
 - (b) The local congregation should take the lead role in the development of such missional projects, with the Rural Chaplain having an advisory/consultative role – he should not be ‘carrying’ the work.

- (c) Outside the presbyteries covered by the Pilot Project, the Rural Chaplain's role should be as a consultant, with a maximum of two consultative meetings.
- (d) In some circumstances, there might be benefit from discussions and input between the Linkage Commission and the Rural Chaplain

NIGEL REID, Convener

Police Chaplaincy Pilot Scheme

- 36. Although a pilot scheme, initiated by the PSNI and involving local chaplains from the main denominations, has been run in the Ards/North Down area, with positive feedback from serving officers, senior management and chaplains themselves, there has been little further development.

ROBERT BELL, Committee Convener

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

- 37. There are 360,000 tertiary level education students across this island. PCI has 2 full-time chaplains in Belfast, in Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland currently has no chaplains in Dublin.
- 38. Away from Belfast, the denomination provides less than a total equivalent of 5 days a week to third level chaplaincy: Presbyterian chaplains who manage a parish can deliver only half a day per week.
- 39. The Committee continues to hold to the principles that:
 - (a) chaplaincy should be missional as well as pastoral; and
 - (b) the work of a chaplain ought to be rooted in the life of a local church.
- 40. The Committee also recognises that universities are becoming ever more secular and that influence from groups such as Atheist Ireland is ever increasing, particularly in the Republic of Ireland. The Committee and the denomination should therefore be prepared to think about and implement changes with regards to chaplaincy and student ministry to be able to respond to the rapidly changing university landscape.
- 41. The Committee wishes to put on record its prayerful thanks to all our university chaplains, both part-time and full-time, who are faithfully and diligently working across Ireland and engaging in mission and ministry to students.

Post-pandemic recovery

42. In March 2020, the work and ministry of university chaplains changed dramatically because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
43. The return to a more normal chaplaincy provision has differed across the island. Some universities and colleges have been quicker to open up again to the regular rhythms of life whilst others have been more cautious in their approaches. CUs have also been operating at different levels and returning at different paces making the work of chaplains, particularly our part-time chaplains, challenging at times.

Dublin

44. It is lamentable that Dublin universities have been without chaplaincy provision for some years now. However, as a result of conversations with members of the presbytery over the past two years, the convener and secretary met recently with Rev Sam Mawhinney (Adelaide Road) and Rev Andrew Gill (Blackrock and Bray) in Dublin to discuss opportunities for mission and ministry amongst students.
45. The Committee is thankful that there is a willingness to see a new work pioneered there and recognises the importance of local direction and buy-in. Therefore, a new Dublin Partnership Group, which will bring together local churches and the Committee (similar to the Belfast Partnership Group in Belfast), will be established in the near future. This will allow local churches, in partnership with the Committee, to continue to explore possibilities and to drive forward this vital emerging work.

Belfast

46. Rev Dave Gray will be leaving chaplaincy in QUB to take up a congregational charge. Whilst the Committee is sad to be losing Dave, who has proven to be a dynamic, thoughtful and committed chaplain, it is delighted that the Lord has called him to an exciting new phase of his ministry.
47. The work of appointing the next QUB chaplain is underway.

Belfast Partnership Group

48. The work of the Belfast Partnership Group, in bringing together local Belfast city-centre churches and the Committee in supporting chaplains and chaplaincy work, is ongoing.
49. The Belfast Partnership Group, the Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy Committee, the Council for Mission in Ireland, the Belfast Conference and the North and South Belfast Presbyteries are unanimous in their agreement that an additional member of the chaplaincy team in Belfast is a strategic and missional priority. As such, the North and South Belfast Presbyteries are in the process of making a joint application to the Mission Grants Panel to seek funding to pilot the role of student staff worker.

50. It is envisaged that a student staff worker would link and liaise with chaplains, local churches, student groups and other Christian organisations to facilitate mission to students in Belfast. The hope is to encourage greater involvement from local congregations and their members in reaching students with the good news of Christ and see students welcomed into and involved in the life of those congregations.

THE DERRYVOLGIE AND ELMWOOD AVENUE MANAGEMENT PANEL

51. Thanks are due to Rev David Gray and his team for the day to day running of Derryvolgie and to Mr Graham Patterson, the Property Support Officer, for all his help in the management of both these sites.
52. Currently, there is full occupancy of students which has helped the financial position of the halls of residence and Covid-19 has not adversely affected our end of year position.
53. As reported last year, our main floor tenancy with Clements has been terminated. The Panel is seeking alternative tenants. Financially, 75% of the outstanding rent has been recouped and, along with a full occupancy of tenants in the offices, this puts matters in a more positive position to fulfil the Assembly's request to have the Elmwood property operate at no financial cost to the Church.
54. An ongoing review of the properties is still a major priority, making sure all statutory requirements are met.

JOHNSTON LAMBE, Convener

CRAIG LYNN, Committee Convener

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Home and Urban Mission

Vacancy assessments

55. The Committee continues to facilitate assessments of Home Mission congregations that are vacant: Dunfanaghy and Carrigart, Balllina, Killala and Ballymote, and Enniscorthy and Wexford. In the case of Dunfanaghy and Carrigart, a Vacancy Assessment Report was produced and a mission project proposal was considered which will enable a composite full-time post, comprising a 50% part-time congregational ministry funded in the usual way, and a 50% dedicated missional work, funded by CMI, but made possible by a generous

contribution to the cost of the missional work by a couple who live in the north Down area. This is to be known as the Carrigart Mission Project, working out of Carrigart's Bewglas Centre and it will involve members of Carrigart in local leadership. The proposal outlined the work, funding and motivation of the project. The proposal was agreed and forwarded to the Linkage Commission to enable Leave to Call to be granted. An interview panel for the post was appointed.

Tenure Reviews

56. The Committee has continued to be represented on various Tenure Reviews of Home Mission Congregations: Craigavon, Naas, Howth & Malahide.

Property grants

57. Following the recommendation of The Home Mission, Irish Mission and Deaconess Committee it was agreed that: "Former Home Mission (including Urban Mission) congregations continue to be eligible to apply for Property Repair Grants and Property Capital Grants for a period of five years after they have left the Home Mission, subject to review at that point, with the possibility of an extension of the period of eligibility. This is subject to Code Par 300(4)."

South Belfast Friendship House

58. Following the earlier request of the South Belfast Friendship House Management Panel and consultation with this Panel, the Home Mission, Irish Mission and Deaconess Committee, and PW, it was agreed that the recruitment for up to two years of a temporary member of staff as a Children's Worker with administrative skills be approved, subject to a Job Description and Personnel Specification being approved by SBFH Management Panel. This was a replacement post, and it was noted that when Great Victoria Street Manse was sold, there was an understanding that this money be used for mission within the South Belfast area.

Urban Mission Network

(Facilitator: Neil Harrison, Mission Development Officer)

59. The Network continues to exist online but it also gathered in person on 3 November in Abbey, Monkstown, focusing on 'Educational Underachievement amongst PUL Boys'. The speakers were Dr Andy Brown (Principal Lecturer in Teacher Education at Stranmillis and Chair of PCI's State Education Committee) Jeff Dunn, (Principal of Ballysally Primary School) and Rev Mark Johnston, (Minister of St. Andrew's, Bangor).
60. London City Mission has agreed to host a Summer Conference for the Urban Mission Network. 14 members, including the Mission

Development Officer, are to travel to London from 30 May – 1 June, during which time they will engage in training from LCM's staff as well as avail of opportunities to visit some of their projects within local congregations.

Special Ministry in West Belfast

61. Over the year a project has been developed to call a minister to be installed in the Home Mission to undertake a Special Ministry in west Belfast. The Belfast Conference, through its West Belfast Mission Strategy report, set out a vision as follows: that PCI would seek to establish at least one vibrant worshipping community in West Belfast, as opportunities emerge through prayer, building relationships and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Along with the vision of the Belfast Conference and the desire of West Kirk congregation has come a burden given to a number of individuals in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to see a work in this area in a way that parallels this vision and desire. The Council for Mission in Ireland believes that this is evidence of the prompting of the Holy Spirit to the Belfast presbyteries, including North Belfast, West Kirk as a local congregation, and a number of individuals, to return to this part of Belfast with active Presbyterian witness. This proposal has gained the support not only of the Council for Mission in Ireland, but of the Belfast Conference, North Belfast Presbytery and the Linkage Commission, gaining helpful feedback, endorsement and recommendations that have enabled its development. Leave to Call has been given by the Linkage Commission and a Task Group has been appointed to take matters forward and, at the time of writing, an advertisement has been sent out and applications for the post are being received.

BELFAST CONFERENCE

62. The Conference discussed a report prepared by the West Belfast Mission Strategy Group which presented a vision for mission in west Belfast. It adopted a slightly revised version of the report as follows.
 - (a) The North and South Belfast Presbyteries shall cooperate together through a joint West Belfast Representative Body. The body will be brought into being, and its remit set, through similar resolutions passed by the two presbyteries. It shall include up to three representatives appointed by each congregation actively involved in the area and two representatives appointed by each presbytery, of which one should be a representative of the Presbytery Mission Standing Committee.
 - (b) It shall have the following purposes:
 - (i) Prayer: Coordination of regular ongoing prayer for all PCI missional activities in west Belfast, including those outlined above.

- (ii) Collaboration: the group should work together to encourage, facilitate and coordinate existing and future missional activities in west Belfast. This will include sharing of information, learning around practice and accountability.
 - (iii) That the Linkage Commission be recommended to make unassigned areas in west Belfast a 'Special Area of Mission' under the oversight of North and South Belfast Presbyteries. Congregations would then be invited to be partners in this area of work.
 - (iv) The report is to be sent to the North and South Belfast Presbyteries along with a set of resolutions which it recommends they pass.
63. The conference has continued to consider and provide advisory comment on areas of ministry and mission in Belfast. In particular, advisory comment was given in support of the proposal concerning Special Ministry in West Belfast. Matters concerning extra personnel, support and the opportunity for the person in this role to listen / talk with the Belfast conference are now reflected in the proposal.

ALASTAIR DUNLOP, Convener

CHURCH PLANTING PANEL

64. The Church Planting Panel is making progress on the development of a strategy for church planting for PCI. The current focus is upon the development of guidance in two areas. Firstly, a handbook is being developed for congregations and presbyteries to help navigate the steps involved in church planting. Secondly, a document is being developed to help individuals who feel called to church planting. This will consider a pathway for a church planter that includes recruitment, assessment, training and support/mentoring. This will include engagement with the Council for Training in Ministry.
65. A PCI Church Planting Conference is scheduled for 7 May 2022 in Dundalk with Scotty Smith as keynote speaker alongside local seminar contributors.

MARTIN McNEELY and TOM GILLIAM, Co-Conveners

REVITALISATION TASK GROUP

66. The Revitalisation Task Group has continued to consider the matter of revitalisation in congregations which have not or are unlikely to get unrestricted Leave to Call, cognisant of some exciting stories of growth and partnership across the denomination.

67. The group has engaged with the Linkage Commission in a review of the Reviewable Tenure Process and Guidelines Document. Given the strategic opportunity for revitalisation that Reviewable Tenure brings, the Task Group has made a number of suggestions that it is hoped will benefit all parties in the process. In addition, the Task Group is aware that some experiences of revitalisation do not include Reviewable Tenure and will be considering a range of suggestions for resources that might support congregations and presbyteries in these situations.
68. The focus for the Task Group has more latterly shifted towards revitalisation opportunities that are not likely to involve Reviewable Tenure, such as those involving a linkage or amalgamation. The Task Group would like to offer guidance that enables and envisions a revitalisation mindset to emerge in decision making, perhaps at presbytery level. Recent further engagement with the Secretary of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness has been very helpful for the Task Group. It now intends to issue a report to the Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee to outline possibilities in how to take this work forward.

BEN WALKER, Convener

MISSION GRANTS PANEL

69. The Mission Grants Panel has continued to receive and approve, as appropriate, applications over the course of the year. It has been agreed that the maximum total grant of the Mission Support Fund (one of the funds that the Panel administers) would be increased from £28,500 to £36,000 for three years due to inflationary reasons. The matter of grant extensions has also been clarified: 'An extension of up to two years may be granted. After five years a new application would need to be submitted.' The Panel is also reviewing the annual review and evaluation processes.
70. The Panel has been asked, through the Committee, by the Home Mission Review Implementation Task Group, to consider two matters:
 - (a) A two-tier system for grants, with different criteria for Home Mission congregations, allowing them to get closer to 100% funding (given the budgetary issues for many congregations)
 - (b) Encouraging different models of mission. Given that the majority of grants are used to employ personnel, there may be other ways usefully to resource congregations e.g. education and accompaniment (either with PCI or from an external PCI agency).

KENNY HANNA, Convener

Migrants' ministry

71. A report from the IMP Future Provision Task Group made a number of recommendations which were approved:
- (a) That IMP South Belfast continue on its present site in the interim and that active steps be taken by the Management Panel (or other appropriate body) to enable it to remain where it is (through securing funding or renegotiation of the lease), or to secure other suitable premises.
 - (b) That IMP South Belfast trial the use of the Pembroke Street Halls as a satellite.
 - (c) That the Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee actively pursue developing IMP, so that it obtains a further presence in appropriate locations in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
 - (d) That the expertise of the present Project Leader be utilised in this development of IMP both before and after his retirement.
72. The development of the work of IMP is of increasing importance to the Committee. Following on from established projects in North and South Belfast, some consideration needs to be given to whether IMP becomes a wider 'brand' with several local manifestations; how these develop; and to what degree there is 'central' control. This also follows a conversation with those who lead the Globe Café (emanating from Kirkpatrick Memorial and based in The Dock at the Titanic Quarter) and the emergence of other potential areas of development. Further consultation will take place with the IMP Management Panel.

Other strategic matters

73. There remain further strategic issues for the Committee to consider and develop, including:
- (a) Night-time ministry and the development of a working group. A meeting with volunteers from the former Nightlight project took place on 22 June 2021 to receive feedback and input regarding night-time ministry strategy. Work progresses towards gathering information from presbyteries regarding night-time ministry projects and developing a group to consider strategy.
 - (b) How CMI could/should support presbyteries in the context of the scarcity of ministerial resources, but also the potential of church planting.
 - (c) How we engage with individuals who present themselves with a heart for a particular missional work in Ireland.

BEN WALKER, Committee Convener

FINANCE PANEL

74. The accounts for 2021 show a credit balance at year end. This is due to the sale of a number of Irish and Home Mission properties and the fact that projects planned were not started or run as anticipated during the year.
75. The Council is grateful to those who have so generously remembered its work in their wills and also for personal and congregational donations. These generous contributions greatly help aid the work of the Council.
76. Thanks are expressed to the PW for their continued financial contribution, albeit somewhat lower than previously, as a consequence of a reduction in PW income.
77. It is hoped that the projects planned for Maynooth, Donabate, Dundalk and Greystones will be started in 2022.
78. The Panel also notes an increased uptake in grants from the Irish Mission Fund Grant and the Mission Support Grant Fund.
79. The Panel acknowledges the work of Mr Nehru Dass, our Finance Manager, and Mr Graham Patterson our Property Support Officer for all their help and guidance.

JOHNSTON LAMBE, Convener

PROPERTY PANEL

80. The Property Panel continues to work in close partnership with the Finance Panel to support the grants application and approval process in relation to church property matters.
81. Over the past year the Panel has continued to support a considerable number of congregations with a variety of building and property requirements. Guidance is given in relation to new building projects, minor refurbishments, general building repairs and property valuations for acquisition and disposals. This has been applied to meeting houses, halls and manses.
82. The Panel seeks to ensure congregations will source the best advice to address the challenges of aged and dilapidating buildings, reduce the impact of the costs of building repairs and ensure the best options are identified for the sustainability of church property. Home and Urban Mission congregations are encouraged to make contact for support and guidance should they require advice for the appointment of construction professionals in design, costing and trades. This is particularly important with the challenges relating to the need for specialists in the area of building conservation.
83. It is evident that, as time continues to pass, the need for building works of repair, refurbishment and redevelopment of our property is only going in one direction. With the whole Church, the Property Panel is

concerned that as our buildings age, the costs associated with their maintenance increasingly become a drain on financial resources which could otherwise be used in direct gospel ministry. However, buildings themselves are a valuable asset for settled gospel ministry in any location. The Panel looks forward to further serving the Church as it faces the challenges ahead.

ALAN McQUADE, Convener

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: Rev N.A.L. CAMERON

Secretary: THE CLERK

Since the 2021 General Assembly, it has proved necessary for the Judicial Commission to meet and a verbal or tabled report will be given in the private session of the Assembly (Saturday 10am).

CODE REPUBLISHING PANEL

1. Since meetings resumed in June 2021, the Code Republishing Panel has met regularly and, since the beginning of January, weekly to complete the task given to it. At the time of writing, the last two chapters are being revised. It is intended that a final initial draft of the new Code shall be completed by the time the General Assembly meets in June. Clearly, with the prolonged break during the coronavirus restrictions, the work has taken longer than anticipated, but tribute should be paid to the dedication of a core group who have given an enormous amount of time to bringing the project close to the completion of this first stage.
2. Obviously, the initial timetable must now be revised and the recommendation is as follows:
 - (a) The draft document to be completed by June 2022.
 - (b) A booklet containing the draft document and a commentary on significant changes and the reasons for them sent to Presbyteries by September 2022.
 - (c) Presbyteries to send back comments and suggestions by 31 December 2022.
 - (d) The Judicial Commission will also review the draft document, September–December 2022.
 - (e) All comments and suggestions will then be considered by the Code Republishing Panel and the draft edition of the new Code amended.
 - (f) The amended version will be considered by the Judicial Commission.
 - (g) A second draft of the new Code will be prepared, together with a report on the suggested changes and why they were adopted or not, and published with the Annual Reports 2023.
 - (h) A full discussion will take place at the 2023 General Assembly where final amendments can be made.
 - (i) The agreed text will then be sent down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act for report to the 2024 General Assembly.

- (j) If agreed at the 2024 Assembly, the new Code will come into effect in January 2025.
3. It should be noted that the substantial discussion of this document needs to take place at Presbyteries during September to December 2022. Presbytery Clerks and Business Committees are asked to make appropriate arrangements so that necessary discussion can take place, recognising that this is the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. It is important that the views of the whole Presbytery are garnered and not just those of “interested” individuals. While a final version, as agreed by the 2023 General Assembly, will again be sent down to Presbyteries this will be under the Barrier Act, where a simple vote is taken.
4. The Clerk of the General Assembly will be in discussion with the General Assembly Business Committee to ensure that adequate time is provided for discussion during the 2023 Assembly.
5. At the 2021 General Assembly, the Panel was asked to consider two recommendations of the “Decision Making and Dissent” Task Group:

Recommendation 8

That the Judicial Commission’s Code Republishing Panel be instructed to insert into the Code appropriate definitions outlining three different types of General Assembly decision:

- (a) Decisions that are binding and must be followed (these will include both provisions inserted into the Code and other binding decisions adopted by Assembly resolution).
 - (b) Decisions that are in the form of guidelines that should be followed in all but exceptional circumstances, the exception having to be justified to a superior court if required.
 - (c) Decisions that are in the form of guidance, that is, good advice that should be taken into consideration.
6. After considerable discussion, the Panel is of the view that there are in fact four different types of decision made by the General Assembly:
 - (a) Provisions of the Code, which represent the law of the Church and, as such, are binding upon all members of the Church, Congregations, Courts of the Church, Commissions and Committees of the Assembly, and all other agencies of the Church. These must be obeyed and observed without equivocation and without exception.
 - (b) Regulations of the General Assembly, which must be adhered to by all, wherever and whenever they apply.
 - (c) Guidelines which are not compulsory but set out how the General Assembly considers members, Congregations and Courts of the Church should proceed in circumstances to which the guidelines apply. If, in exceptional circumstances, they are not strictly followed there should be compelling reasons for diverging from them.

- (d) Guidance, which is offered by the General Assembly as advice to be considered by members, Congregations and Courts of the Church in coming to decisions.

The Panel, if the General Assembly agrees, intends to define these four types of General Assembly decisions in the new Code and also suggests that a schedule of (b) General Assembly Regulations and (c) General Assembly Guidelines should be prepared and attached as appendices to the Code. Where the status of a guideline already agreed by the General Assembly is not clear that should be decided by the Judicial Commission, or referred to the General Assembly for clarification. In future when the General Assembly agrees a position it should be made clear whether it falls into category (b), (c), or (d).

It would also be helpful if the Clerk's Office was able to compile an easily accessible version of the Guidance issued by the General Assembly.

Recommendation 12

That the Clerk of Assembly, in consultation with the Judicial Commission's Code Republishing Panel, be instructed to report to the 2022 General Assembly (including tabling overtures to amend the Code if appropriate) to clarify and simplify Assembly procedures so that a clear process is in place whereby the General Assembly can be requested to:

- (a) consider reviewing or changing a current policy or area of work;
- (b) consider developing a new policy or area of work;
- (c) consider making a specific exception to a particular policy;
- (d) consider making a statement on a particular issue of concern.

The Clerk has had an initial discussion with the Panel and has agreed to write a paper for further discussion.

7. At its most recent meetings, the Panel has been examining the procedures in the current Code regarding preliminary inquiries, appeals and references (Par 161f), and the procedures for formal disciplinary proceedings (Par 329f). The Panel has noted that the provisions for formal disciplinary proceedings are not only cumbersome, but are also overly confrontational, both in tone and in practice. The Panel therefore, with the approval of the General Assembly, intends to present a new set of less confrontational procedures in the initial draft of the new Code which is sent to Presbyteries in the autumn 2022.

DONALD J. WATTS, Convener

SPECIAL JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: Rev N.A.L. CAMERON

Secretary: THE CLERK

1. Since the 2021 General Assembly, it has proved necessary for the Special Judicial Commission to meet and a verbal or tabled report will be given in the private session of the Assembly (Saturday 10am).

COMMISSION ON APPLICATIONS

Convener: THE CLERK

It was not necessary for the Commission on Applications to meet.

COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS

Convener: Rev COLIN MORRISON

Secretary: Rev DAVID THOMPSON

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness has met on two occasions since last year's General Assembly.
2. The report details:
 - (a) The ongoing challenge of this season for congregational life and witness.
 - (b) A general account of the steps taken by the council and its committees in gradually restoring a greater regularity and rhythm to their work.
 - (c) The council programme from November 2021 to August 2022 and beyond.
 - (d) Resumption and release of resources for congregations.
 - (e) The ministry of Presbyterian Women.
 - (f) Other specific council projects and areas of participation.
 - (g) Proposed application by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Education Authority (NI) for Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation status.
 - (h) Proposal to conduct a presbytery listening exercise.
 - (i) Looking ahead with hope in God.

The ongoing challenge of this season for congregational life and witness: The mix of mood, movement and momentum.

3. The last two years have seen many biblical metaphors drawn upon to try to make sense of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the life and witness of the church and what it has felt like to minister in an extended season of disruption and restriction. Often the mood in which we are trying to minister is as important, if not more so, as how much movement or momentum we feel we are achieving. Indeed, those three things are probably inextricably connected.
4. In Exodus chapter 5, we are reminded of the time when Pharaoh and his slave drivers ordered the captive Israelites to make bricks without straw. When the people of God complained about these increasingly

challenging circumstances, Pharaoh's response was to call them lazy and to demand that they continue to meet their previous quota of bricks. Mood, movement and momentum spiralled downwards.

5. In both congregational and denominational life in the period of the pandemic, it has often felt like we are labouring in similar circumstances. Every effort to do even the smallest thing has been fraught with difficulties. Every basic decision has become complicated. Every imaginative plan has run up against compromises necessary to ensure mitigations are observed and infection avoided. Church life feels fragile and frail. Working in such circumstances for a prolonged period is draining and discouraging – we might even say, oppressive.
6. Chiding ourselves, or being carelessly encouraged by others to try to do what is simply not achievable in current circumstances, also brings with it a sense of oppression of spirit. Mood matters, and so for that reason, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness has had to exercise prayerful and pastoral wisdom in its messaging and attempts to encourage, support and accompany congregations and their leaders and members in this season of church life. The aim has always been to exercise a ministry of gentle encouragement in the spirit of Jesus, rather than a ministry and messaging more akin to that of Pharaoh that is experienced as harsh and discouraging.
7. As the council continues to walk with congregations still experiencing a wide variety of realities as they emerge from the worst effects of the pandemic and its impact on church life, it does so looking forward to God's leading of his people out of the captivity of restrictions into the liberty of an experience of new life as the children of God. Remembering that lifts our mood, stimulates movement and creates momentum.

A short year. A lengthening stride. A sustainable pace

8. With the 2021 General Assembly having been delayed until October due to the circumstances arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, and this council report for the 2022 General Assembly having to be submitted in March 2022, the usual 'church year' for the council to carry out and reflect on its work has been effectively compressed into a five month period.
9. Since the last meeting of the General Assembly, the council and its three General Assembly committees have met on two occasions each. In doing so the focus has been threefold. Firstly, to ensure continuing responsiveness in accompanying congregations through the twists and turns of their ongoing journey towards emerging from the impact of the pandemic. Secondly, beginning to piece together early opportunities to identify what might be beginning to suggest itself as important denominational learning from the experience of the pandemic for the future life and witness of congregations. Thirdly, to move beyond pandemic response mode and restore some greater regularity to patterns

of council work with a programme of online events and in-person gatherings where possible, as well as trying to pick up previous work on resources and projects interrupted by the pandemic. In addition, some new pieces of work have both emerged and been progressed.

10. Following the 2021 General Assembly, the priority was for the council's three General Assembly committees to meet and take stock of circumstances at that time, begin to revisit and reassess previous priorities and recommence a more regular rhythm of activity. At their October 2021 meetings, both the Congregational Life Committee and the Congregational Witness Committee focused on gathering feedback on circumstances in congregations with reference to their particular remits and on resetting priorities in the area of resources. This resulted in overall recommendations for resource priorities which were approved by the Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee at their November 2021 meeting.
11. The Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee also played a key role in setting a provisional schedule of events for the period January to August 2022. This became an invaluable framework on which to construct a programme of digital and in-person gatherings as restrictions on what was possible arising from the pandemic continued to ebb and flow.
12. The council meeting of 12 January 2022 received a detailed report of the work of the committees, gathered feedback on congregational life and witness on the ground and received reports about some newly emerging initiatives. It also approved and recommended a future presbytery listening exercise and the production of a *Back Together Again* resource aimed at helping congregations, and the denomination as a whole, reflect on the centrality of community in all aspects of church life in the light of learning from the impact of the pandemic.
13. The detailed outworking of this process enabled programming for the first half of 2022 and a resumption of resource production, the detail of which is set out in paragraphs 21-33 below.
14. At their meetings in February 2022, the Congregational Life Committee and the Congregational Witness Committee received reports on the progress of work under their remits and again sought feedback on circumstances in congregations with reference to ministry among members and engagement in local and global mission. The Congregational Life Committee contributed ideas for outline content of the *Back Together Again* resource. The Congregational Witness Committee discussed immediate priorities in enabling congregations to recapture a focus on local mission around a previously identified theme of sharing Jesus today. In both cases, these meetings played a key role in shaping future work and re-establishing a more settled and strategic approach to council activity.
15. At its February 2022 meeting, the Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee also took soundings on the situation in congregational life and witness at that time. It received a report on

progress of a variety of areas of work, considered the circumstances which best facilitated a recommencement of the Fresh Light counselling ministry and offered some further observations and parameters which will enable the shaping of programmes and events for the church year 2022/23.

16. The meeting of the council on 9 March 2022 received a report detailing progress in all aspects of the work from January 2022 and plans for programming and release of resources until August 2022. Members considered and agreed a resolution relating to a proposed PCI application to the Education Authority (NI) to seek to attain the status of a Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation which was transmitted to the General Council and will be before the General Assembly for final approval (see paragraphs 58-65 below for further details).
17. Throughout this period council panels have been called only where absolutely necessary to transact urgent matters of business. This streamlining of processes and procedure has been essential in focusing and facilitating sharper decision making and effective delivery while irregular circumstances demanded. It will end from September 2022, when panels will be reconvened to take stock of the current situation from which to move forward in their particular areas of work.
18. Council recognises the disruption to participation, processes and procedures caused by the impact of the pandemic on the regular way of meeting to discuss, debate and deliberate over the last two years. This situation has not been unique to the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, however the Council Convener and Secretary have been tasked with taking appropriate steps within the powers available to the council to renew and refresh ways of encouraging and facilitating council, committee and panel engagement and commitment with a view to restoring more regular rhythms and patterns of council life from September 2022.
19. All of this work has enabled the council to lengthen its stride, however members of Assembly need to be mindful that, at time of writing, the work continues to be delivered against the backdrop of considerable ongoing challenges, including:
 - Every initiative between January and August 2022 having to be designed and delivered from scratch, rather than being able to rely upon previous patterns or experience or return to previous templates;
 - Ongoing uncertainty about what is and is not possible, or likely or unlikely to gain increasing participation, when considering in-person gatherings, social distancing and the impact of all sorts of factors on the fine details of programmes;
 - Having to cope with short lead in times for publicity and sign up of participants for events;
 - A staff team which was largely working remotely until April 2022 due to ongoing government advice that working from home

should continue where possible;

- The significant reduction in the size of the staff team due to redundancies, a pending vacancy and staff members having themselves contracted Covid-19;
- The limitations of capacity available to the council from the Creative Production and IT departments, along with an extended period in which it was not possible to take payment for resource orders or event bookings via the PCI website.

This cocktail of practical difficulties and obstacles has made the period from Christmas particularly stretching and stressful.

20. Just as at congregational level it is important to realise that there are a number of important balances to be struck in the work as things move forward, so with the council. There is a balance between gaining momentum and setting a sustainable pace which is realistic about capacity, as well as watchful concerning the wellbeing of those charged with doing the work. There is a need to restore some previous activities, but also to take time to reassess priorities and to reshape for the future, rather than impatiently revert to previous patterns of activity. Timing is crucial, as it is possible to be doing the right thing too early as well as too late.

The council programme November 2021 to August 2022 and beyond

21. Last year's General Assembly received an appendix to the council report that detailed the recommendations of the Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee regarding council priorities for programming from September 2021 to February 2022. This included a final recommendation that this committee be provided with a paper in January 2021, or before if changing circumstances deemed appropriate, detailing assessing and scheduling a suitable set of priorities for the period March to August 2022 based on the developing situation and information available at that time. This is essentially the process that was followed to arrive at the council programme since the last Assembly. At time of writing, some of this has already been delivered, other aspects are planned and publicised.
22. The programme offered a mix of what the council identified and reported to last year's General Assembly would be its twin foci in this period – accompanying congregations on their ongoing journey towards emerging from the impact of the pandemic and facilitating denominational learning from the experience of journeying through this unusual period.
23. Participation in events so far, along with bookings for future events at time of writing, have been encouraging. Some further detail, as was available when the report was being compiled, is given in month by month outline in the paragraphs 24-32 below.

24. November 2021

- Gathering for full time children's, youth and family workers – Tuesday 9 November 2021.
- *Fanning the flame with confidence* events
 - Thursday 11 November 2021, 10.30am-12.30pm, Terrace Hotel Magherafelt.
 - Wednesday 17 November 2021, 10.30am-12.30pm, Belmont Hotel, Banbridge.
 - Thursday 18 November 2021, 10.30am-12.30pm, Assembly Hall, Assembly Buildings.
 - Tuesday 30 November 2021, 10.30am-12noon (ROI) online.

Offering a mix of encouragement, sharing and prayerful reflection on the challenges of leading in congregational life during this season of the pandemic.

25. December 2021

- Investment of staff time in Moderator's Hope at Christmas initiative.

26. January 2022

- Rekindle webinars.
 - Taking stock: Edging forward in children's ministry – 25 January 2022.
 - Taking stock: Edging forward in pastoral care – 27 January 2022.

These two webinars took place under the 'Rekindle' branding and had a particular focus on helping congregations take stock and edge forward in these areas of congregational life. Groups were encouraged to gather on church premises to join the webinars together, providing opportunity to discuss the application of content to their specific congregational circumstances. This proved a successful format with the children's ministry webinar attracting 41 groups and 126 attendees and the pastoral care webinar attracting 32 groups and 174 attendees. While not a replacement for in-person engagement, this model offers a digital format to consider building upon for the future.

27. February 2022

- Webinar: PW/women's ministry Intentional leadership – 12 February 2022. 230 registered. Some gathered to watch in groups on church premises.
- *Rekindle* webinar – Taking stock: Edging forward in youth ministry – 22 February 2022. 31 groups registered, with a total of 134 attendees.

28. March 2022

- *Now?* In-person, evening event for young adults – 4 March 2022.

This small scale event sold out. Focusing on the themes discipleship, wellbeing, friendship and church, some of this material was recorded and released on social media, offering the wider church both young adult perspective on the impact of the season of the pandemic and raising awareness of the particular challenges it held for this age group.

- *Ears to hear* gatherings.
 - Thursday 10 March 2022 – In-person, morning event: The witness of the local church
 - Tuesday 29 March 2022 – In-person, morning event: Discipleship in the local church

The *Ears to hear* initiative is an unfolding and ongoing attempt to open and gradually deepen a denomination wide conversation to enable reflection, renewal and reshaping of congregational life and witness as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and its restrictions continue to recede.

As a first step, *Ears to hear* mornings offered in-person gatherings to explore together with others a variety of aspects of being the church. In each area of ministry or mission, time and space for conversation was facilitated to allow participants to:

- linger with our shared experience over the past two years;
- listen together for what God seems to be saying through it;
- learn how that begins to shape questions with which we will need to grapple in the life and witness of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland;
- lean into how this conversation translates into congregations.
- Webinar: *Two years on – Parenting and discipleship of children two years after the first lockdown* – 23 March 2022.

29. April 2022

- *Onward* – Live streamed youth event – 2 April 2022.

Live streamed from Orangefield Presbyterian Church, this event offered a mix of mainstage input and dynamic elements in which youth groups, gathered to view in their own church premises, could participate. Given all the uncertainties around the viability of in-person gatherings in the run up to this period, it offered a helpful platform around which congregations could continue to regather young people.

- *Ears to hear* – in-person, morning event: Children's, youth and family ministry in the local church – 5 April 2022.
- Release of pre-recorded material for children's ministry celebration for use in local church setting: *Living stones: Building God's church back up again*.

This material offered a simple, flexible plug and play programme for use in a variety of children's ministry settings as local congregations judged most appropriate to their needs and circumstances.

30. May 2022

- *PW Annual Conference and Celebration* – In-person morning and afternoon event in Assembly Buildings, Belfast – 7 May 2022.

Preparations and publicity for this event were progressing at time of writing, with provision made for a capacity of 800. The keynote speaker is Amy Summerfield of the Kyria network.

- Webinar: Parenting teens as we emerge from the pandemic period – 19 May 2022.

31. June 2022

- General Assembly: Under 30 delegate fringe event – 22-25 June 2022.

Planning for the Under 30 delegate elements of the General Assembly has been integrated into wider preparations under the General Council and Business Committee. A fringe event will take place on Thursday 23 June 2022 between the end of business and the evening rally. Places will be by registration only with further details of how to book to follow.

32. August 2022

- *Impact* – Alternative to summer outreach team programme – 18-21 August 2022.

This initiative will offer young people participating a mix of morning worship and teaching and involvement in outreach work in three congregations in greater Belfast in the afternoon and evening. It will finish with a joint evening celebration on Saturday night and participation in morning worship in the three host congregations on Sunday.

33. By resolution of last year's General Assembly it was agreed that a series of *Coming Back: Going Forward* events would be delivered as a priority in the phase of emerging from the pandemic in which congregations were best able to reflect on the challenges of coming back to more regular patterns of church life and anticipate the opportunities of going forward in new ways. The Council Secretary consulted with clerks of presbyteries to construct a programme of seven regional in-person events and an online event for congregations in the Dublin and Munster and Monaghan presbyteries.

The schedule for this initiative was as follows:

- Tuesday 26 April 2022, 7.45-9.15pm – In-person event Ballymena, Route, Coleraine and Limavady presbyteries – Venue: First Kilrea.
- Tuesday 17 May 2022, 7.45-9.15pm – In-person event North, South and East Belfast presbyteries – Venue: Assembly Buildings, Belfast.

- Thursday 19 May 2022, 7.45-9.15pm – In-person event Tyrone and Armagh presbyteries – Venue: Dungannon.
 - Tuesday 24 May 2022, 7.45-9.15pm – In-person event Templepatrick and Carrickfergus presbyteries – Venue: Ballyclare.
 - Thursday 26 May 2022, 7.45-9.15pm – In-person event Derry and Donegal and Omagh presbyteries – Venue: Strabane.
 - Tuesday 31 May 2022, 7.45-9.15pm – Online event Dublin and Munster and Monaghan presbyteries.
 - Tuesday 7 June 2022, 7.45-9.15pm – In-person event Newry, Dromore, Iveagh presbyteries – Venue: Ballydown, Banbridge.
 - Thursday 9 June 2022, 7.45-9.15pm – In-person event Down and Ards presbyteries – Venue: Greenwell Street, Newtownards.
34. During this period council staff were also heavily involved in the content and delivery of the provision of a series of four online Refresh events in the month of February 2022. These were developed by the council in collaboration with the Moderator for the encouragement of the following groups of congregational leaders – ministers, elders, additional pastoral personnel and children’s and youth workers.
35. An ongoing digital programme continues to provide regular podcasts, blogs and weekly Tides devotionals.
36. Looking ahead, the Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee will continue to oversee a gradual reconstruction of a fuller schedule of programmes and events beyond summer 2022 and into the next church year 2022/23. Significant flexibility is required in doing so as many unknowns remain, including the pace of resumption of the life and witness of congregations, the particular emerging needs and priorities in the next season of church life, as well as the capacity of the reduced council staff team and how that can be most effectively accommodated and apportioned across the wide ranging remit given to the council by the General Assembly.

Resumption and release of resources for congregations

37. The onset of the pandemic in March 2020 interrupted the processes of completing work on a number of resources. This work had to be set aside for a time as the council pivoted to respond to the more immediate needs of congregations and because staff were furloughed. The pandemic also came just at the point at which the council through its committees had agreed the priorities for the next phase of resource production to help congregations develop their work in the areas of congregational life, local witness, involvement in global mission and ministry among children, young people and their families. More positively, the particular circumstances of the pandemic and challenges that resulted, also stimulated a range of new resources and experimentation with new formats of delivery.

38. From September 2021, the council has further focused and progressed its output in the area of resource production by adopting a mix of resuming previous work, revisiting and re-establishing immediate and future priorities and ring fencing limited capacity to meet the more immediate needs still arising in response to the ongoing impact of the pandemic.
39. Since the last General Assembly the following resources have been progressed as detailed below:
- Copies of the *Steady* resource were made available free to order to congregations using funding obtained from the Education Authority (NI). They provided material for youth fellowships and Bible classes or one-to-one conversation in equipping young people to appreciate and lean upon God's constant steadiness in their everyday lives as they continued to navigate the circumstances of emerging from the pandemic;
 - *Bite-size* the first four in what will be an ongoing series of downloadable youth discipleship material (released January 2022);
 - *Leading small groups* offers a downloadable resource for small group leaders (released January 2022);
 - The *All the days of my life* evangelistic resource, focusing particularly on reaching those in later life (released February 2022);
 - The annual PW *Inspirations* material for use in women's ministry on the theme 'Deeper together' (released March 2022);
 - The *Blaze* initiative for stimulating an ongoing focus on awareness and involvement in God's global mission for children and families in congregations (releasing April 2022);
 - A *digital worship resource hub* is being created and will be housed on the PCI website to support the development of worshipping life (including contemporary psalms). Lead responsibility has been outsourced to a project worker deployed for a limited number of hours per month to develop this material, with a reference group put in place to oversee this work;
 - A suite of video and printed resources on baptism (work recommenced, with release scheduled post Easter 2022);
 - A new communicants' preparation course with printed and video material entitled *Into Full Church Membership* (work recommenced, with release scheduled post Easter 2022);
 - *Expressions*, a major Bible study resource with printed and video material, covering aspects of discipleship and mission, is in production (release scheduled August 2022).

40. At its meeting on 12 January 2022, the council commissioned an additional piece of work on a resource to come out in time for the moment of opportunity for a greater return to a more normal pattern of church life as the pandemic finally recedes. With a working title of *Back Together Again*, this short, simple booklet will seek to aid denominational and congregational reflection on the place of community, or being together, at the centre of congregational life and witness. This is the central aspect of church life most impacted by the pandemic over the last two years. The aims of the resource will be to:
- Reaffirm the importance of community, or being together, as the central feature of church life;
 - Offer some general reflections on things that we may have learned about aspects of community during the pandemic in areas of congregational life and witness such as worship, pastoral life, discipleship, leadership and witness;
 - Provide a stimulus to a conversation in the denomination and among leaders about how being together in these areas of church life might be patterned differently, but achievable, as regular aspects of church community resume.

This work is being progressed with release of the booklet anticipated in August 2022.

The ministry of Presbyterian Women

41. The ministry of *Presbyterian Women* has continued again this year under difficult circumstances, but also with significant encouragements in stories of the fuller re-emergence of women's ministry in congregations in a variety of creative and positive ways. Programmes and resources undertaken since the last General Assembly are listed in the preceding sections of the report, however the PW Panel has also been active in guiding a return to more regular activities, with the return of the *Wider World* magazine in its previous fuller format from March 2022 and a new annual theme of 'Deeper together' launched in spring.
42. As well as continuing to raise funds for PCI projects delivered through the Council for Mission in Ireland and Council for Global Mission, new PW home and overseas mission projects for 2022 have been launched. The home project will see funding raised to refurbish a kitchen to facilitate ministry at the premises used by the International Meeting Point at Carlisle Circus, Belfast. The overseas project will focus on raising funds for a PCI partner church, the Evangelical Christian Church in Timor, in particular to enable the restoration of the Saira Kash Radio Station which was damaged by Cyclone Seroja in April 2021.

43. Throughout the period of the pandemic, under the guidance of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, PW has taken lead responsibility in shaping an appropriate response to the situation in support of PW groups as well as the wider work of resourcing other forms of women's ministry in congregations. This has been appreciated, but also offered an opportunity for ongoing learning and fine tuning in terms of what such wider resourcing involves. The use of digital platforms for webinars delivered as a necessary alternative to in-person PW Forums while restrictions continued, has also offered a glimpse of the potential of increasing the reach and accessibility of women's ministry by a range of means not previously available. These will be areas to further explore in the future.

Other specific council projects and areas of participation

44. A number of other significant projects have been progressed by the council in a variety of ways.
45. The challenges of resuming the ministry of PCI's *Fresh Light* counselling have proved complex and remain significant. Progress has been made in ensuring the infrastructure for resuming the ministry is in place following staff redundancies and two supervisors having chosen not to resume. The overall current counselling capacity has been ascertained from a questionnaire to counsellors. It remains limited. The experience of a similar Christian counselling organisation to Fresh Light, but with a much greater capacity, shows that having resumed in-person services in the final quarter of last year, applications had to be suspended within seven weeks due to high demand. When able to reopen, a long waiting list continued for a first appointment. Reflecting on this, council decided this was the kind of situation they wished to avoid as it would lead to frustration among potential clients, place pressure on very limited counselling provision and ultimately damage the reputation of the service in the denomination.
46. Having explored the possibilities of resuming counselling online or by telephone rather than in-person, it became obvious that this had both challenges as well as opportunities. These are not mediums Fresh Light has used to deliver counselling before and resuming in this way was likely to see the ministry almost instantly overwhelmed by demand from all over Ireland because of its immediate accessibility. The survey of counsellors also showed that their overwhelming desire was to return to in-person provision.
47. The increasing possibility of being able to resume in-person counselling as the worst effects of the pandemic and its restrictions began to recede, while not without its difficulties, offered a better way to filter demand and so sustain a more viable service. Nevertheless, the challenge of re-establishing venues for in-person counselling as congregations continued to get their own activities back on their feet, involved significant work and further time.

48. At its meeting on 23 February 2022, the Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee carefully considered all of these factors and approved the following way forward:
- That resumption of Fresh Light counselling continues to be paused with a reassessment of the situation in May 2022 when capacity may have increased and restarting in-person counselling may be more practical. The Council Convener and Secretary were authorised to permit resumption should circumstances allow;
 - That the Council Secretary arrange an online meeting to convey the complexities of the ongoing situation to counsellors.
49. At time of writing this process towards resumption of the ministry was proceeding as planned and steady progress has been, and is being, made.
50. The council welcomes the willingness of the volunteer counsellors to resume their ministry. Without them the service could not be provided. However, over the last two years, this has had to be carefully balanced with the demands of good governance, careful management and realistic leadership. Without such oversight, the ministry will neither survive nor be able to thrive once again. The council will continue to encourage the exercise of necessary wisdom and patience as the best way forward continues to emerge in what remains a fragile situation.
51. The new *Marriage Panel*, approved by last year's General Assembly and intended to offer support to ministers in the areas of pastorally addressing requests for remarriage or inter-church marriage, commenced its work in March 2022 with publicity circulated to all ministers to launch this new initiative.
52. A new *Congregational Apprentice* opportunity was launched in February 2022. The council is facilitating a framework designed to bring together those who would like to serve as a congregational apprentice with churches who would like to host someone who will be supported in playing a key role in the development of some identified aspect of their church's life or witness.
53. Unlike the previous *PCI Intern scheme*, although still needing to be 18 or above to apply, apprenticeships have no upper age limit nor are they restricted to working in the area of children's or youth work. The identification and appointment of an apprentice is the responsibility of the congregation. Apprentices can serve either in their own congregation or respond to a congregational advertisement hosted on the PCI website to serve in a new setting.
54. An accompanying programme of training for apprentices, jointly designed and delivered by the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and the Institute for Ministry (Union Theological College), begins with a two-day intensive induction at the start of September 2022, and will then be delivered one Friday each month until June 2023. Apprentices in any congregation can register to be part of this programme.

55. Given current circumstances as congregations continue to only gradually restore a full range of activities as we emerge from the pandemic, it might be anticipated that opportunities and uptake of apprenticeships will be limited in the next church year. However, there is widespread encouragement for this developing piece of work and council intends to carefully nurture its growth and expansion in subsequent years as a significant opportunity for both developing leaders and enhancing the work of congregations.
56. Contributions to the General Council's Pandemic Response Task Group and Communications Strategy Review Task Group have been made on behalf of the council by the Council Convener and staff members. Some progress has been made in the use of currently available mediums to improve communication with congregations and their members, most notably the growing number of subscribers to the *E-quip* subscription ezine. Nevertheless, the council would reiterate its long standing encouragement to the General Council to be both as creative and immediately responsive as possible in addressing the current weaknesses in present provision in the area of communication which is vital to the support and development of the ministry of the council.
57. The council's report to last year's General Assembly highlighted the potential of further thinking and work towards developing the provision of short, simple, shareable content for congregations to make available to members via social media and of exploring how to facilitate increasing congregational use of such material as an important means of challenge and encouragement in all aspects of their life and witness. This, and a range of other questions about how to effectively harness the gains of digital and online ministry accrued during the pandemic, remain part of the ebb and flow of reflection in the church. As the tide of a greater regularity to life continues to roll back in, there is now evidence of both continuing digital engagement by some, alongside a gradual disengagement in other quarters. The council will continue to confer with the Creative Production Department so as to assess what will prove most useful in helping the local church maximise the possibilities of engaging digital audiences as the immediate future unfolds.

Proposed application by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Education Authority (NI) for Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation status

58. The council has been engaging with the Education Authority (NI) on behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to explore the potential of attaining the status of a Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation (RVYO).
59. Following discussions between the Education Authority (NI) and the four main churches in 2019, the potential of exploring each denomination becoming a Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation

(RVYO) was encouraged. This represents a significant change of policy in the statutory youth sector which previously would not directly fund the work of any denomination. In part, it is a welcome acknowledgment of the volume and quality of children's and youth ministry delivered by the church sector, as well as a desire to proactively support that work.

60. The major advantage of PCI attaining RVYO status would be that both congregations and the denomination centrally would be able to apply for significant amounts of funding to support and develop ministry among children and young people more easily and directly. It should be noted that many PCI congregations already access grant funding from the Education Authority (NI) (e.g., through registration with other uniformed organisations), while others have no knowledge of the possibilities, or are dissuaded from doing so because of the challenges of negotiating the present application and evaluation processes.
61. In preparation for further consideration of an application to become an RVYO, a research project fully funded by Education Authority (NI) was commissioned to obtain an overview of the scale, scope and specific needs for support of children's and youth ministry delivered by congregations of PCI across Northern Ireland. This research will also actively explore ways in which future Education Authority (NI) funding application and evaluation processes can be streamlined and reconfigured to better fit the capacities and realities of those in the leadership of local churches who may wish to apply. This project is now underway. Given the challenges of doing such work against the backdrop of the disruption of church life, to better enable this piece of research to be completed by the target date of March 2023, a further application for funding was made to the Education Authority (NI) to fully fund six part-time regional project workers to act as conduits between the researchers and congregations on the ground. Their role will also involve facilitating aspects of denominational support offered to congregations, their children's and youth ministry leaders and their children and young people as the shadow of the pandemic recedes. On receipt of this further funding, the regional project workers were appointed in January 2022 and will continue in their role until the end of the research project in March 2023.
62. Throughout the period of the pandemic, the Education Authority (NI) has also actively encouraged PCI to apply for funding to support children's and youth ministry on the ground, and readily and generously responded to applications to provide free materials around the issue of children and young people's mental health written from a distinctively Christian perspective. This enabled the council to provide 5,000 copies of *Jesus and Emotions* (a resource for children and families), 5,000 copies of *Shaken* and 2,000 copies of *Steady* (resources for use directly by young people or through congregational youth ministry). Funding for 75 PCI Youth Apps free for use in congregations was also provided. All of this provision has been gratefully received by congregations.

63. It should be noted that full funding for all of this valuable work and ministry has been provided by the Education Authority (NI) without any condition of the future requirement that PCI applies to become a RVYO.
64. To access the funding round for the period 2023-2026, it is now necessary for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to decide whether or not to proceed with an application to become an RVYO. The Council for Congregational Life and Witness considered the matter at its meeting of 9 March 2022 and resolved to support an application as a means of supporting the future development of ministry and mission among children and young people at congregational and denominational level, and authorised that the necessary steps be taken to do so. This recommendation was transmitted to the General Council for their consideration, along with some more general comments, where it was subsequently approved.
65. A resolution recommending that the General Assembly approve the application of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to the Education Authority (NI) to become a Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation and authorise the necessary steps to be taken to progress that work has been submitted.

Proposal to conduct a presbytery listening exercise

66. At its meeting of 12 January 2022, the council agreed to bring a resolution to the 2022 General Assembly to embark on a two year listening exercise across all 19 presbyteries to enable it to better resource the whole church, as well as to more fully understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
67. This initiative is intended to help the council better understand and appreciate particular needs and issues across the variety of settings represented throughout the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Its aim is to arrive at a more nuanced future envisioning, equipping and enabling of the support and development of congregational life and witness offered, especially as the church emerges from the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.
68. Practical details of how this exercise might be conducted have not yet been devised, but having consulted with clerks of presbyteries, the council subsequently agreed to seek permission for the initiative from this year's General Assembly, but not commence the process proper until September 2023. This will create space for planning and preparation, but hopefully also allow a more settled post pandemic situation in both congregational and presbytery life, so enabling a better engagement with the process and greater clarity concerning issues on the ground. A resolution to this effect has been submitted.

Looking ahead with hope in God

69. Having begun this report with the discouraging image of the hopeless task of trying to make bricks without straw, it is encouraging to bring it to a close with an altogether more positive picture from Psalm 127 that reminds us that, unlike Pharaoh, God does not charge us to build anything for him. Rather he invites us to join in with a work in which it is reassuring to remember that he always takes the lead. As the psalmist says, *'Unless the Lord builds the house the builders labour in vain.'* As God's co-labourers in this season of the rebuilding of congregational life and witness, the psalmist further reminds us that it is *'in vain [we] rise up early and stay up late – for he grants sleep to those he loves.'*
70. So depending and resting upon God, we look expectantly to see the future house the Lord will build among us. He takes the strain and liberates us from all sense of oppression, to labour gladly and expectantly with the resources he will generously supply for the next stage of our exodus journey as congregations from the long shadow of the pandemic.

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev DAVID BRICE

Secretary: Mr DERMOT PARSONS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council report reflects the work of the Council for Social Witness, showing how the wider issues impacting society in the past year have impacted on our services that support vulnerable people and, through the Taking Care programme, on the life of our Church. The themes of safeguarding, the impact of Covid-19 on the wider care sector, our staff teams and community, have permeated our work this year and were taken into account when Council discussed and agreed one-year 2022-2023 Business Objectives.
2. Specialist Services Committee oversees the work in our Criminal Justice and Addictions services. Covid-19 has presented challenges to ways of working, which have adapted responsively to a changed situation.
3. Taking Care Committee oversees our safeguarding work in congregations, with the review of Taking Care materials and training now commencing. Alongside this, work on developing policy and training for adult safeguarding in congregations has started. Work has also commenced for the Republic of Ireland Taking Care group.
4. Older People Services Committee has responsibility for the work in our Care Homes in Northern Ireland and Tritonville supported living service in Ireland. This work has been particularly challenging for residents and staff during the Covid-19 pandemic. Work has now started on enhanced governance arrangements to support services.
5. Disability Services Committee oversees the work of the services provided to people with a disability, and the Kinghan Mission for the Deaf Community and, since committees resumed in 2022, has discussed issues relevant to current services and meeting emerging needs. The challenge to fully utilise the facilities of Lawnfield House remains and, along with the continuing work to align Peacehaven with other disability services, this remains a key focus for the committee.

Council Convener's Report

6. These are initial impressions after one year in the role, plus a question that often eludes an answer. The question is one often discussed with our new Council Secretary and Director of Social Services, Dermot Parsons, who is welcome to the Council.

NUMBERS THAT ARE NOTEWORTHY

- 24/7care
- 365 days a year
- 2 countries (NI & ROI)
- 400 staff (if fully staffed)
- 6 Homes for older people
- 1 Supported housing service for older people
- 3 homes for people with a disability
- 2 Supported Living services for people with a disability
- 1 Day care service for people with a disability
- 3 rehabilitation services
- 1 Kinghan Mission for the Deaf community
- 17 projects in total
- c. 200 separate policies
- 3 yearly update of policies
- £11,020,824 expenditure
- 376 active ministers to receive Taking Care training
- 532 congregations to receive Taking Care training
- 17,289 Sunday School children to be safeguarded
- 19,493 children in non-uniformed organisations to be safeguarded
- 35 Council members
- 4 Committees
- 1 Panel
- 5 Conveners
- 6 Senior Management Team

Faith Fortifies

7. Love often comes in the form of action. Acts of love are demonstrated in our services on a daily basis. Acts of kindness and compassion to those who feel unloved, uncared for. Acts that give dignity when people lose independence. Loving acts even when people are grouchy. Acts that give hope to the despairing. Acts to encourage and fortify those who feel weak. Acts to share fun and a smile. Acts of personal care to those who are bed-bound and the dying. Acts of worship to those of faith. Acts to share the gospel to those who are open. Such a calling requires personal inner qualities that are found and renewed in our faith in God through Jesus.

Regulations are a reality

8. Our Home and Service Managers are key to the successful endeavour of our Council but contend with regular and frequent assessment of the quality and safety of their services. The Care sector is very heavily regulated, as it should be. Despite the complexity of the regulatory framework, there is a purpose to each regulation linked to the wellbeing of service users. When reflecting on regulations, it can be seen how compliance leads to the provision of safe and decent care, helps prevent unintended harms occurring, and provides the basis for the excellence we are called to deliver. Regulations are both a burden and a route towards excellence. CSW Homes are not bureaucracies, but regulations and standards are the obligatory part of the framework within which we serve God and others. On a regular basis, there are unannounced visits to many of our services by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) in Ireland, and also from other statutory bodies regarding food hygiene, fire safety, infection prevention and control, or contractual compliance. These are serious and weighty inspections that can result in formal action being taken, or even restrictions placed on services. Reports of inspection findings are available to the public and can receive significant public attention. They fall heavily upon our Managers, whose main purpose is to organise and deliver compassionate Christian care. I find myself praying for them often - it is a very challenging job.

The Question

9. The elusive question, the question that has been present all year, “How can we best help our Home and Service Managers to do their job?” Our Managers have a heavy burden, can we lighten it, can we share it?

COUNCIL SECRETARY’S REPORT

10. 2021-22 has, for the third year in succession, been a year that has brought unprecedented challenge across social care in both Northern Ireland and Ireland. While other parts of society were able to flex in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, this was not an option for social care. Council for Social Witness has continued to provide care for some of the most vulnerable people – those who are old, people with disabilities and people with particular needs often marginalised by society.
11. Far from Council services being required to continue as normal, in fact the challenges for residents, staff and managers have increased hugely. It is now the third year of care homes having to restrict visiting arrangements in ways that have changed as time has moved on, but which have still created isolation for residents. For a third year, CSW staff are delivering care within an infection prevention and control

regime that is fatiguing and may make it harder to communicate easily with residents. For a third year, residents in the care homes have become ill with Covid-19 as well as the “normal” illnesses that occur – although, thankfully, fewer residents were seriously affected in the later Covid waves. And for a third year, a problem that worsened as 2021 moved into 2022, it has been necessary to cope with high levels of staff absence with Covid infection. During this time, there have been some remarkable examples of sacrificial service, with managers and staff working huge numbers of additional hours to make sure that our residents’ needs could be met during these extraordinary times.

12. It also seems that the number of people who want to work in social care may have reduced during the time of the pandemic, leaving the Council with significant challenges in recruiting staff to provide care in a number of settings.
13. The disturbance caused by Covid-19 has also impacted the work in Taking Care, as the normal arrangements for people to gather were disrupted and many congregational activities were delayed. Now, however, the Council sees the need for Taking Care work becoming more pressing in both jurisdictions and the need to reorganise to take forward key initiatives.
14. Through this period, it has been encouraging to see individual services continuing to seek to meet the spiritual needs of our residents – staff leading devotions, residents accessing services online, clergy reaching into services and the assurance very much present that God would not forsake either residents or staff during these uncertain times.
15. The Council has also seen a significant change in the leadership of the Council staff team, as Lindsay Conway retired after over 19 years as Secretary to the Council for Social Witness. This has been a time for reflection and, as there is a gradual move away from Covid restrictions, a time to consider what the new season should bring.
16. Undoubtedly, the sustained pressures of recent times have left their mark on an over stretched management team and our working approaches require restoration and refreshment, as we now look to the future in a changed society. Public sector health and care provision has been challenged and will take years to recover. The Council’s staff also have been challenged with a depleted staff team, and management processes that have been stretched heavily during the pandemic years.
17. The Convener has asked about support for managers in their challenging role, and that question can be extended further, to ask how the Council will support the flourishing of consistent excellence on the back of the last three years. There is a certain amount of consolidation required, alongside establishment of some new ways of working, but the Council can confidently lead the team of managers forward in the light of the rich and diverse challenges inherent in our Mission Statement “People Matter to God”. Already, some changes have been introduced that

will strengthen governance arrangements for Council and support managers in moving forward. These developments include:

- Restoration of salary differentials for managers
- Establishment of a risk framework to enable us to identify problems early and prioritise work towards areas of greatest concern
- Setting in place a revised framework of audit and management support processes in our social care services, making it easier for our managers and external bodies to evaluate our practice
- Starting the process of revising our policies and procedures to meet contemporary needs
- Strengthening our senior management support by both the creation of a new senior post and refinement of roles within the senior team
- Planning to realign the Adult Safeguarding Champion role to enable greater focus on Taking Care priorities
- Adopting a limited one-year business plan to allow the Council's work to recover, while also consulting on the projected content of a 3-year plan from 2023-2026.

Business Objectives 2022-2023

18. The Council for Social Witness approved an ambitious set of objectives for the period 2019 to 2022, aiming to frame the efforts of the newly structured team to have wide impact on our society.
19. By Christmas 2019, Council noted the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in other countries and there were early discussions about what this could mean in Northern Ireland. Probably no-one could have envisaged the huge impact of the pandemic on how we live and, in particular, on those who use health and social care services. Care home services have been directly and severely impacted by Covid-19. In Council services there have, sadly, been a number of resident deaths. Residents have been forced to lead constricted lives, at times very isolated from those they love, while our managers and staff have coped bravely with waves of sickness and staff absence.
20. Now, in common with the rest of society, the Council recognises the hope that this year may at least see the impact of Covid-19 reduced, along with easing of the protective measures that have dominated working lives. The Council can see, though, that the health and care environment of 2022-23 is very different from that of 2019. Our own regional staff team is weary and depleted and, like other social care providers, the Council for Social Witness needs to devote time and effort to rebuilding systems, refreshing staff teams and considering how to meet new challenges.

21. Society will also be different, emerging from the pandemic, and it is too early to second guess what that will be like. For these reasons, the Council has agreed for 2022-3, to:
- Defer preparation of a three-year strategic plan for 12 months, to allow Council to both identify new societal needs for our response and prepare the team and services for new challenges, and;
 - Adopt a one-year set of limited business objectives. This approach will allow engagement with the most pressing and evident needs, while it also requires engagement in the consultation necessary to develop a strategic plan that connects with relevant stakeholders in the church and more widely. See Appendix 1.

SPECIALIST SERVICES COMMITTEE (SSC)

22. In light of the ongoing pandemic, the Committee acknowledges, with grateful thanks, the continued dedication of all staff working at Carlisle House, Gray's Court and Thompson House and also the support staff in the Council for Social Witness office. We wish to acknowledge Mr Dermot Parsons' appointment as Director of Social Witness and pray God's blessing upon him in his lead role.
23. At the SSC's most recent meeting, they approved the adoption of a Risk Management Approach (RMA) in line with the proposal from the Business and Finance Panel for the CSW.

Thompson House

24. Understandably, the pandemic had an adverse impact on how services could be delivered to residents; group activities were difficult to facilitate and visitations limited. Reliance on new technologies for online meetings with Probation and other professionals was a lifeline and yet, throughout 2021, Thompson House achieved a 93% occupancy rate. A remarkable achievement in light of Covid and prisons ceasing temporary (home leave) releases for prisoners in the last year of their sentences.
25. All residents availed of the Covid booster vaccination with only four residents testing positive for Covid and requiring to self-isolate. Several serious incidents have also taken place during the period, all of which were resolved by our dedicated and professional staff team.
26. A tailor-made Bible study called 'The Difference' was run. Residents engaged fully throughout all five sessions, and when completed asked for further time around God's Word. A very real encouragement for our project worker, Neil Gillespie, who set up and facilitated this group study. Supporting People provided a grant for a Christian artist from the Prison Arts Foundation to work with the residents. The facilitator has been a great addition to the work of Carlisle House and some of the artwork now adorns hostel walls.

Carlisle House

27. Carlisle House has managed to remain relatively Covid free throughout 2021, with staff maintaining good adherence to Public Health guidelines. We had two separate staff team members contracting Covid and one case within our client group, however, none of them prevented the rehabilitation treatment programme from continuing. As the ease of current restrictions continues within the community, clients are increasingly requesting more time for trips out and family visitation. This raises the issue of finding the correct balance between risk of harm from disease and clients' mental wellbeing.
28. Staffing levels remain adequate as a result of operating at 60% capacity. Recruitment of Substance Use Practitioners, Addiction Social Workers or Mental Health Nurses remains a problem. Current salary scales hinder attracting staff with the necessary experience, knowledge and skills that are required within a TIER 4 Therapeutic Treatment Service setting; this is currently under review.
29. A recent RQIA inspection was generally positive, with only one significant issue raised, i.e., was a 'waking' Support Worker required during nights? Should RQIA require this change, this would no doubt have financial implications.
30. In the next 12-24 months, TIER 4b Residential Addiction Treatment Services will be required to go through the process of tendering. Carlisle House is therefore negotiating with local universities to undertake a comprehensive external evaluation of our services.

Gray's Court

31. Supporting People undertook its 3-year validation visit during the summer of 2021. They requested that this visit be done virtually to assist them in learning the new process. We received a 'pass' with Supporting People commending the Team in all aspects of their work. The post of Project Worker was reviewed, resulting in the acknowledgment of their increased role responsibility. The post was renamed Project Lead with the necessary adjustment in salary. A new Support Worker, Aisling Finnegan, was appointed with previous experience as a Probation Officer and Social Work; this will be a significant addition to the team. A new gym has been fitted for use by residents.

JOHN STANBRIDGE, Convener

TAKING CARE COMMITTEE

32. Taking Care remains a very important work within our denomination and work has continued at a high level throughout the pandemic. The committee would like to thank, in particular, Jacqui and Cathy for the continued dedication in the office.

33. The Taking Care Committee met on 8 March 2022. The Strategic Objectives were reviewed and Business Objectives were agreed for the year 2022-2023.
 - (a) It was acknowledged that Taking Care 2 was well out of date and urgently needed an update. Work had begun on this update prior to Covid-19 but, due to furlough and additional workload, this was postponed. A new task group has been formed to recommence this work. This will be undertaken alongside a review of the Taking Care training.
 - (b) The Republic of Ireland Taking Care Group met and work is progressing on Terms of Reference and a work plan.
 - (c) Work is on-going in developing and implementing training and a policy for Adult Safeguarding in churches.
 - (d) Jacqui Montgomery-Devlin is developing and delivering training in Trauma Informed Practice.
34. In line with the spirit of effective and good governance, Taking Care has developed a risk register to identify, assess, control and review the status of uncertainties that can potentially impact all areas of Taking Care activities.
35. The Taking Care office continues to be very busy; processing 555 AccessNI forms in the period July 2021 - February 2022 and 170 Garda Vetting forms, as well as continuing to organise and deliver training and responding to phone/email queries, some of which are more complex than others and, therefore, require more time. It must be noted too, that the Garda Vetting forms are a continual processing workload as re-vetting is required every three years.
36. Training remains to be a matter of concern for the committee. Trainers have worked tirelessly, delivering training both in-person and online where possible. There is a need to recruit more trainers as there has been a reduction in the available trainers by almost 20. There is currently a back-log of almost 800 leaders seeking training.
37. Positively, in discussions, there have already been a number of expressions of interest in becoming trainers. Possible ways of streamlining training within Presbytery have been discussed to ensure maximum use of training sessions. During the period July 2021 – February 2022, there were seven sessions of foundation training and 32 sessions of refresher training. During the same period, a total of 74 Designated Persons and Ministers have been trained.

KEITH HIBBERT, Convener

DISABILITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

38. The committee would like to firstly congratulate Caroline Yeomans, our Head of Disability Services, on the birth of her daughter, Pippin. Caroline will be returning from maternity leave in May and the committee assure her of our prayers as she transitions back into her role. Much acknowledgement and thanks go to Margaret Millar who has provided maternity leave cover in Caroline's absence.
39. The Kinghan Church has been enjoying worship and fellowship as a community for deaf people and more recently alongside and among the community within Windsor Presbyterian Church. The future life and witness of Kinghan continues to be in relationship with Windsor and the committee is grateful for the work and efforts of Rev Ivan Steen and the session of WPC. A task group has been set up from within the Disability Service Committee to investigate how to progress and formalise this link. This will include considering membership of KC and the recognition of leadership and ordination within KC, as well as the possibility of accredited preacher training in British Sign Language. Our thanks and appreciation also go to Judith Currie, the congregational support worker within KC.
40. The committee wishes to acknowledge the arduous challenges that each disability unit has faced, and met with extreme professionalism and care. The crisis of Covid-19 has continued to take its toll among residents, their families and our staff. This, alongside RQIA visits and inspections, staffing interruptions due to sickness and the general nature of caring for the vulnerable, has made for a difficult season in Disability Services.

Aaron House

41. Unfortunately, there were two deemed outbreaks of Covid-19 in spring 2022, the first had a heavy impact on both staff and residents with the majority in both of these groups testing positive. The second outbreak was not as serious with two residents testing positive, both of whom were able to isolate without impacting on the other residents and a more minor impact on staffing. RQIA carried out an unannounced inspection – concentrating on the safe and effective care of our residents. This was very positive with the staff being congratulated on their knowledge and understanding of the residents' needs and the provision of a pleasant environment for residents.
42. Like other Day Centres, the Aaron House Day Care service has been unable to open for people from the outside community for some time, owing to potential Covid-19 risk in people gathering together.

Willowbrook

43. A small number of tenants were impacted by Covid-19, which was not classified as an outbreak as the tenants affected live in separate

houses, with no staff impact in relation to Covid. It was likely this was related to wider community infection. Both tenants were not happy at contracting this virus as it resulted in them having to isolate and not be involved with their friends and family. Both tenants are aware of how to reduce the risk of contracting this virus. Tenants are actively involved with staff in a number of activities on site, celebrating Chinese New Year with a tenant whose family provided some decorations and who talked to the other residents about what Chinese New Year was about and their culture – this was enjoyed by all, as was the Chinese food. Tenant and family tea parties have started again and these are welcomed by all. Plans are underway for day trips with tenants.

Lawnfield

44. As of late March, the long expected RQIA inspection of the Supported Living service is still awaited – the inspector wanted to meet with the tenants as it has been some years since there has been face to face contact. The tenants have full diaries and getting a suitable date and time which suited all parties, particularly during the pandemic, continues to be a challenge. Tenants and residents are well cared for and the staff are understanding of their needs. We have 15 residents in Lawnfield and two tenants in the Supported Living service – the manager is confident that the rooms in the residential care home currently designated as “respite” will be fully utilised between March and September.

Peacehaven

45. Work to formalise PCI’s role with Peacehaven Trust continues, although it is hoped this drawn out process will conclude later this year.
46. The manager has identified that the needs of the tenant group are changing and is actively engaged with external stakeholders to ensure that the future needs of these tenants can be met. There was an unannounced HIQA Inspection last week, concentrating on Infection Protection and Control. The service was found to be either fully compliant or substantially compliant in all aspects of this inspection which was a good outcome. Covid -19 has had minimal impact on the staffing of Peacehaven.
47. Our thanks to Andrea McComiskey (acting manager of Lawnfield), Liz Wilson (manager of Willowbrook), Isobel Harper (manager of Aaron House Residential Home), Francis Mooney (manager of Aaron House Day Centre) and all the staff under their care and direction.
48. The committee has taken note of a particular issue regarding the general recruitment of staff within the health and social care sector, to which Disability Services have not been immune. We appreciate the work and effort of Laura Kelly (HR) in investigating this and the strategies being rolled out to counter this.

49. Lastly, a word of warm welcome to Dermot Parsons, the new Secretary of the Council for Social Witness and Director of Social Care Services, taking up his post in November last year. The committee has already been greatly encouraged by his vision and looks forward to the implementation of strategy to ease the burdens under which heads of services, and heads of homes find themselves.

STEPHEN LOWRY, Convener

OLDER PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

50. The Council of Social Witness continues to provide residential and nursing care for older people in its various homes in Northern Ireland and in Tritonville supported housing in Dublin. The work and witness of Older People's Services continues 24/7, 365 days a year. Our various homes and facilities are managed and staffed for the benefit of our residents and play a significant role in the witness of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. As a denomination, we are indebted to the staff in our homes who have worked tirelessly to provide a caring, loving and safe environment to support our residents in the face of the most horrendous challenge in the coronavirus pandemic. We must also commend the vast number of volunteers whose time and effort has greatly enhanced our work and witness.
51. The running of all our homes is overseen and facilitated by a dedicated team in Assembly Buildings whose manifest commitment to the work and to its witness to our Lord is a source of great encouragement and inspiration for all who are aware of even a little of the volume of work that they do; they go far beyond the call of duty, and we acknowledge our sincerest appreciation and admiration to them.
52. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been felt most acutely by the residents, their families and staff of our homes. The ongoing prayer of our denomination is greatly needed for staff and volunteers who served away beyond the call of duty over the last year.
53. Ongoing staff training is a regular part of the professional programme, and the Christian ethos is vital in what is an important part of the Church's mission to older people.
54. Recent inspection reports from RQIA (Regulation Quality and Improvement Authority) have clarified areas for further development and enhancement of our work to older people to support the delivery of thoroughly professional care provided in all locations.
55. Health and social care and their cost, and not least the cost of care of an increasingly older population, is often in the news. At a time when some residential/nursing homes have had to close or be sold, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland continues to provide residential and nursing care for older people in its various homes in Northern Ireland and in our supported housing service in Dublin.

56. The OPS committee will continue to support our staff and volunteers. We also seek to explore the expansion of our work and witness post Covid.
57. We would appeal for your encouragement and prayers for those who work in our homes who have, and continue to be, on the frontline of fighting Covid-19 and protecting the most vulnerable. May the Lord help us to fulfil the call of Leviticus 19:32 “show respect for the elderly and revere your God”.

NIGEL REID, Convener

| Objective number | Proposed new objective | Current status | Target date(s) | Owner | Comment |
|------------------|--|----------------|---|--------------------------------|--|
| 1 | To review CSW structures and processes and bring forward proposals that will deliver good governance across the Council objectives | Not started | Complete by 1 October 2022 | David Brice | |
| 2 | To set in place arrangements to support the CSW Management Team with securing good operational performance | | Complete by 31 March 2022 | David Brice/ Dermot Parsons | Review governance and management structures |
| 3 | Senior Team to explore links between existing services and host presbyteries and develop proposals for action to strengthen connection | | Complete by 31 March 2022 2 by 30 September 2022 | Dermot Parsons | DP – 2 presbyteries HoS – 1 each |
| 4 | To explore the need for service provision in presbyteries where there are no CSW services and develop initial proposals if relevant | | Complete by 31 March 2022 2 by 30 September 2022 | Dermot Parsons | DP – 2 presbyteries HoS – 1 each Engagement with local health and care bodies in these areas |
| 5 | Review previously agreed plans for Harold McCauley House and progress appropriately | On hold | Defined SMART project plan complete for 30 September 2022 | Denise Keegan | |
| 6 | Updated Taking Care Guidance, and supporting training developed and implemented | | 1 March 2023 | Jacqui Devlin | |

| Objective number | Proposed new objective | Current status | Target date(s) | Owner | Comment |
|------------------|---|----------------|-------------------|------------------|---|
| 7 | Agree TOR and workplan with ROI Taking Care Group | | 1 March 2022 | Jacqui Devlin | |
| 8 | Develop and implement Adult Safeguarding Training and Policy for churches | | 30 September 2022 | Jacqui Devlin | |
| 9 | Deliver training in Trauma Informed Practice to senior management team | | 30 September 2022 | Jacqui Devlin | With Laura Kelly and David Farrow |
| 10 | Alongside (3) and (4) above, working from the 2019 Christmas Cracker, review the needs of congregations around respite and support for inclusion for people with disabilities | | 1 March 2023 | Caroline Yeomans | Using same engagement opportunities as 3 and 4 |
| 11 | Develop and implement approaches for recruitment, retention and absence management to support good service delivery | | 30 September 2022 | Laura Kelly | Laura Kelly has started developing a plan including both strategic and operational working groups |
| 12 | Work with HSC Trusts to determine the need for outreach service for Thompson House and develop a business proposal if required | | 30 September 2022 | David Farrow | |
| 13 | Review service provision model and prepare for service tendering for Carlisle House/ Grays Court services | | 30 September 2022 | David Cuthbert | |

COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

CONVENER: Rev Daniel Kane

COUNCIL SECRETARY: Rev Trevor Gribben

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council for Public Affairs is tasked with helping to develop the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's thinking on current issues and communicating the General Assembly's views in the public square. It also works hard at developing relationships with legislators and decision makers on the island of Ireland, making representations to them on behalf of the Church, and responding to various public consultations. As a Council, we are also committed to pursuing appropriate and mutually beneficial partnerships with other PCI Councils and external bodies, as well as developing a public theology which empowers us to have robust, biblically informed and compassionate outward facing engagement. Progressing the various aspects of our paper "Graciously Confident Gospel Engagement in the Public Square – A Framework of Principles, Postures and Practices" received by the October 2021 Assembly acts as a timely catalyst to this end.
2. The Council expresses its deep appreciation and gratitude to Miss Karen Jardine, Public Affairs Officer, for the massive amount of biblically faithful and omni-competent work she carries out on behalf of the entire denomination. Karen is an immense asset to our denomination, not least with regard to rebuilding our reputation and getting our voice heard in the wider public arena.
3. The Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow completed his term as convener of the Republic of Ireland Panel last year. The Council is deeply indebted to Trevor for his godly, wise and insightful leadership as it has navigated through some major challenges and thanks him most sincerely.
4. The Council for Public Affairs has met in-person on two occasions since last year's General Assembly, with its Committee and Panels also meeting, mostly via MS Teams. The report below summarises the work of the Council's Committee and Panels over the period August 2021 – March 2022.

STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

5. The State Education Committee commends and applauds the significant work of governors, principals, school leadership teams, teachers, classroom assistants and support staff as they have continued

to support the education, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people against the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

6. It has been an exceptionally busy season for the State Education Committee responding to legislation making its way through the NI Assembly, engaging with the Independent Review of Education Panel, and hosting the ‘PCI Talks Education’ conference in January 2022.
7. PCI Talks Education

Around 120 people attended the ‘PCI Talks Education’ morning in Assembly Buildings on Saturday 29 January representing Presbyterians involved across the education sector, and invited guests from other education bodies. The morning began with opening remarks from the Minister for Education, Miss Michelle McIlveen MLA, followed by a keynote address from Dr Irvin Scott of Harvard University’s Leadership Institute for Faith and Education. He introduced the three-tiered model of engagement between schools and churches/faith-based organisations. Dr Andy Brown then hosted a panel discussion with: Rev Robert Herron, PCI’s representative on the Education Authority; Leanne Dunlop, Field Ministries’ Director for Scripture Union NI; Dr Barbara McDade, Stranmillis University College; and Mark Beattie, Principal of The Diamond Primary School. Following the formal input, those attending were invited to join facilitated small group discussions, considering a number of topics including:

- PCI’s vision for, and role in, education
- Ways in which PCI congregations can support local schools
- The nature of a “single education system”
- Transfer from primary to post-primary school
- Ways in which PCI can better support Christians involved in education

The morning closed with a short input from the Moderator. A video of the conference is available on the PCI website at www.presbyterianireland.org/letstalkeducation

8. Independent Review of Education
 - (a) ‘PCI Talks Education’ has informed an initial response to the Independent Review of Education. A key part of PCI’s response focuses on the importance of ethos. Drawing on an article from Dr Olywn Mark, Lecturer of Practical Theology at Union Theological College, the Review Panel has been reminded that there is no such thing as ‘morally neutral’ education. Non-denominational Christian values and principles continue to have a significant role in shaping and grounding the education system here. Just as there is an increasing focus within our schools on mental and physical health, so too it is important that the spiritual wellbeing of children and young people is not neglected within the school environment. There should be room for each of these within the parameters of a holistic education system.

- (b) In regard to a 'single education system' PCI has reminded the Panel that across these islands, from Ireland to England, from Scotland to Wales, there is no single education delivery mechanism but rather a multiplicity of arrangements. One of the benefits of our current 'dispersed' system, is that it provides for many different people from a variety of walks of life to be engaged in, and support, school communities. Significantly, the current arrangements in Northern Ireland facilitate and provide for parental choice. Should the opportunity for parents to choose the ethos within which they wish their children to be educated be removed, there is a risk that new, informal sectors might be formed in response.
 - (c) PCI's submission to the Panel concludes as follows: "There is a well-known saying, often associated with African cultures, that 'it takes a village to raise a child'. Never is this more true than in the context of educating our children and young people, enabling them to reach their full potential, and preparing them to be responsible and conscientious citizens. PCI remains ready to play its part in supporting schools, educators and pupils for years to come, just as it has until now."
9. Legislation
- (a) The Northern Ireland Assembly has passed two private member's bills relating to education – the Integrated Education Bill and the Fair Employment (School Teachers) Bill.
 - (b) Integrated Education Bill – PCI, along with the other transferor churches, the Catholic Church and most of the main education bodies, had significant concerns relating to the legislative process, the substance of the legislation, and the narrative that developed in the public square around its intent. While the NI Assembly Committee for Education did undertake a thorough scrutiny of the legislation, there was no report of the consultation that took place as it was being developed, nor any sort of Equality Impact Assessment carried out to assess the potential impact across the education system, particularly on funding and resources. The legislation will require the Department of Education and the Education Authority to 'encourage, facilitate and support' integrated education. This will leave both bodies no choice but to prioritise integrated education over and above the other sectors. It is unfortunate that the public narrative around the legislation fell into lazy stereotypes regarding the controlled and maintained sectors. Debate has not acknowledged, or has simply dismissed, the role played by Shared Education, or the fact that in areas which are naturally integrated and reflective of diverse communities, the local schools also reflect this diversity. Language used by some political leaders has also been unhelpful. PCI is not against integrated education, but the integrating of education should not be associated solely with one sector. The Bill passed

all its stages and will be for any new Minister for Education to implement following the Assembly election.

- (c) Fair Employment (School Teachers) Bill – this legislation removes the exemption from Fair Employment legislation that currently exists in relation to teachers. PCI submitted written evidence to the Committee for the Executive Office and was subsequently invited to brief the Committee at its meeting on 16 February 2022. Through these interactions, PCI sought to highlight the importance for schools in any sector to be able to protect their ethos. Despite a late introduction to the NI Assembly, this legislation also passed all its stages and will come into force within the next two years.

10. Relationships and Sexuality Education

This curricular area continues to the subject of much scrutiny. Whilst in the public square it is often said that “RSE does not exist”, the reality is that the subject has been part of the mandatory curriculum across schools in Northern Ireland for a number of years. In representations with government and statutory agencies PCI, along with other denominations, has continued to uphold the value and importance of school ethos, and specifically a non-denominational Christian ethos, as the lens through which education, including RSE, is best delivered.

11. Transferor Representatives’ Council

PCI continues its participation in the TRC with colleagues from the Church of Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland, and is represented on TRC by Dr Andy Brown (Vice-Chair), Miss Karen Jardine, Rev Dr Colin McClure and Mr John Wilkinson OBE. TRC representatives have engaged with MLAs on legislation that has progressed through the NI Assembly; made representation to the Independent Review Panel; met with the Minister for Education, Miss Michelle McIlveen MLA; and participated in regular meetings with the Education Authority, and other educational bodies. Work continues on the Jointly Managed Church School initiative and TRC also funded research conducted by the Centre for Research on Educational Underachievement at Stranmillis University College, *Beyond the Stereotype*.¹ This research considered strategies to tackle educational underachievement primarily in rural communities. A workshop to consider the research with educators and church representatives took place in March 2022.

1 *Beyond the Stereotype – New Research Explores Views of Educational Success and Underachievement in Controlled Schools – Stranmillis University College | A College of Queen’s University Belfast*

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND PANEL

12. Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow retired as convener of the Republic of Ireland Panel at the end of 2021. The Council is grateful for his leadership and years of service in this role and welcomes Rev William Hayes as his successor.
13. Having previously made a submission to the Oireachtas Committee on Justice on the Dying with Dignity Bill, the Panel welcomed a decision by the Committee that the legislation should not progress.
14. The Panel continues to be engaged with issues relating to newcomer communities to Ireland, and followed with interest the recent research undertaken by VOX Magazine, Evangelical Alliance Ireland, and Evangelical Alliance NI, on experiences of racism within congregations across the island. As the Panel considers how it might respond to some of the issues which have emerged through the research, there is recognition that this cuts across other Council remits, including Global Mission, and Mission in Ireland.
15. In common with schools in Northern Ireland, the education system in the Republic of Ireland has faced a number of ongoing challenges in relation to Covid-19. There continue to be difficulties in hiring substitute teachers, partly because teacher supply has not matched the growth in pupil numbers. There are also specific issues in border areas in attempting to hire teachers from Northern Ireland. With regard to special education there have been difficulties in facilitating provision within denominational and, particularly, fee-paying schools. This has the potential to create a situation whereby children from the same family may be split across different schools for their education, rather than being educated together. The increased secularisation of schools in the Republic of Ireland mirrors attempts in the northern jurisdiction, and highlights the ongoing need for ministers and local congregations to proactively engage in their local schools. In anticipation of a forthcoming citizens' assembly on education, the Panel has been reflecting on the different Presbyterian approaches across Ireland, with schools of Presbyterian patronage more common in border areas, than the rest of the country.

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PANEL

16. The Peace and Reconciliation Panel's event to mark the role that PCI played around the formation of Northern Ireland and the administrative partition of the island of Ireland, On These Steps, took place in Union Theological College on Friday 17 September 2021. In a year that became fraught with difficulties around how its centenaries might be remembered, On These Steps created a unique space for church, civic and political representatives from across the UK and Ireland to gather

to hear different perspectives and reflect on the past, whilst looking in hope towards a shared future across these islands.

17. The Principal of Union Theological College, Rev Professor Gordon Campbell, welcomed guests to the event and acted as MC. The Moderator, Rt Rev Dr Bruce, gave a reflective address that spoke to all traditions represented at the event. Ian McBride, the Foster Professor of Irish History at the University of Oxford, brought a historical perspective. Political reflection also played a key part in proceedings, with a panel discussion hosted by the journalist and broadcaster Judith Hill. Panellists included Northern Ireland's First Minister, Paul Givan MLA and Junior Minister, Declan Kearney MLA, representing the deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, who was unable to attend. Newly appointed Minister of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Conor Burns MP, also took part along with Ireland's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney TD. A specially commissioned song by local musician Ferna, and a retelling of King George V's address to the opening of the Parliament in 1921 provided artistic and imaginative interludes. A full report of the event, including transcripts of the addresses from Dr Bruce and Professor McBride, and associated video footage, can be found on the PCI website.²
18. While it is not possible, nor prudent, to reproduce the Moderator's contribution here in this report, there is merit in highlighting a couple of his comments. Recognising the reality of mistrust, division and the violence once endured, Dr Bruce posed the question "... does the gospel provide a basis for hope for the future as we stand at this crossroads, regarding each other across the way, 100 years on? There are some things we will never be able to forget, and indeed which we must try not to forget. Victims of violence who have lost loved ones still seek justice, however unlikely such recourse through the courts might be. To remove that from them is to remove hope, and is antithetical to the gospel, which unites both love and justice in the person of Jesus Christ."
19. Looking to the future, he went on to say:
"North, south, east and west on these islands present us with a web of opportunities to grow – economically, culturally, spiritually, if we have the vision for it. In a post-Brexit, Protocol environment some of this has been made more complicated, but if anything, it has been made more urgent. We must work tirelessly to sort out the new configurations of our cultural, commercial and spiritual connections. No shortcuts. No quick fixes. No buck-passing. Just gritty determination to get the detail done."
20. As a follow up to the event, the Panel has embarked on a series of seminars entitled *Beyond These Steps*, seeking to bring some of the emerging themes to a wider group of Presbyterian people. The first of

2 Church marks historic moment in time – Presbyterian Church Ireland (presbyterianireland.org)

these took place in December in Ballykeel Presbyterian Church, with a focus on loyalist communities. The second, with young adults, was held in Assembly Buildings in March, and a third seminar focusing on border communities is to be held in Monaghan Town later in April. The final seminar will present the listening and learning from these engagements to key listeners within the denomination's leadership.

21. The Council and Panel are grateful to the Irish Government Department of Foreign Affairs Reconciliation Fund which has provided financial support for these events.
22. *Considering Grace* continues to be an important tool in contribution to conversations about legacy and dealing with the past. All outgoing MLAs have received a copy, either through personal engagement at a PCI event, through face to face meetings, or by post. Following the resolutions passed at last year's General Assembly, engagement with the Northern Ireland Office on UK Government proposals for dealing with the past has been ongoing. At the time of writing this report, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland has not yet brought forward legislation to implement any of these proposals.

HUMAN DIGNITY PANEL

23. It was deeply disappointing that just before Christmas the NI Assembly chose not to progress the Severe Fetal Impairment (Abortion) Amendment Bill. This was private member's legislation proposed initially by Paul Givan MLA, and then taken up by the late Christopher Stalford MLA, when Mr Givan was nominated as First Minister. The legislation would have challenged some of the excesses of the abortion provisions introduced by the Secretary of State by removing the clause which provided for abortion access following the diagnosis of a non-fatal fetal abnormality. Although controversy around commissioning of services continues, the trajectory for Northern Ireland to have one of the most liberal abortion regimes on these islands continues. An additional concerning development has been the decision of the Secretary of State to give himself powers to direct not only policy on this matter, but any other areas as he sees fit. This potentially includes the delivery of relationships and sexuality education to children and young people, without consideration of school ethos. This undermining of devolution, in already unstable political times, is a cause for serious concern.
24. PCI also made a submission to the NI Assembly Committee for Health during its consideration of the Abortion (Safe Access Zones) Bill. This legislation seeks to create buffer zones around clinics and other premises providing abortion services. PCI's submission³ expressed concern for those who may find their distress compounded by activities

3 202111-Health-Committee-Safe-Access-Zones-(final).pdf.aspx (presbyterianireland.org)

or behaviours that should not be part of any legitimate protest, and encouraged the Committee to consider whether existing legislative provision, properly enforced, might provide the remedies sought by the Bill sponsor. This legislation was passed by the NI Assembly just before the end of the mandate, and the impact of its implementation on the freedom to share opinion in a reasonable, lawful and peaceful manner remains to be seen.

25. In autumn 2021, the UK Government undertook a consultation on the banning of conversion therapy in relation to sexual orientation and gender. While the policy consultation only covered England and Wales, all parts of the UK were encouraged to respond. In its submission, the Church states that coercive interventions with a view to changing an individual's orientation are wrong, and where current legislation does not adequately deal with these coercive practices, then it would be appropriate to consider introducing new laws. PCI also welcomed the commitment by the UK Government that it is not the intention that everyday religious practice will be impacted by any policy changes, or legislative developments, resulting from the consultation. The submission also welcomed assurances that any individual should be free to seek support to live in accordance with their conscience, including where that is shaped and formed by their personal understanding of their faith or holy texts. The Council will continue to monitor relevant developments in this policy area across the island of Ireland.

WELFARE AND WELLBEING PANEL

26. The Panel has identified 'loneliness' as an issue to scope with relevance to a number of policy areas including health and social care, the cost of living crisis, and increasing social isolation across all levels of society which has been exacerbated by experiences during the pandemic.
27. Following the Council meeting in March, a statement from the Moderator on the cost of living crisis was released highlighting some of the significant challenges across Ireland, as well as innovative responses from congregations and organisations. The Moderator echoed concerns that faith, charity and third sector organisations should not be expected alone to alleviate the growing financial pressures experienced by many in society, and called on the political parties North and South to prioritise the development of anti-poverty strategy within their respective jurisdictions.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TASK GROUP

28. Following receipt of the paper, "Graciously Confident Gospel Engagement in the Public Square – A Framework of Principles, Postures and Practices" at the General Assembly in October 2021, a

Task Group has been established to consider how the strategic and theological challenges presented in the paper can be taken up at all levels across the denomination.

Consultation Responses

29. The Council has responded to a range of public consultations and calls for evidence over this time period. These are available to view on the PCI website and a list of submissions made since August 2021 is included at Appendix A. For information, the following are included as part of the General Assembly Report:
- (a) Submission to Independent Review of Education
 - (b) Hate Crime

Partnership Working

30. It is important that the work of the Council for Public Affairs is not isolated or disconnected from other initiatives and interactions across the denomination. Throughout this period, there has been collaboration with the Global Development Committee, the Urban Mission Network and the Council for Social Witness. Over April and May, collaboration with CSW will include responding to consultations relating to the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland, Supporting People and the Reform of Adult Social Care.
31. Opportunities for inter-church engagement through the structures of the Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM) continued on a range of issues including legacy and the implementation of the NI Protocol. The Dublin City University Centre for Religion, Human Values and International Relations is carrying out two research projects in partnership with the ICC/IICM. The first, 'Economics of Belonging', seeks to explore how the experience of faith communities can help shape and inform the development of more effective wellbeing indicators, across the island of Ireland, that could help policy makers and the community and voluntary sector work together more effectively in order to address the root causes of poverty and deprivation.
32. The second project, 'Multilateralism and Methodology', examines the ways in which our current structure for international cooperation may not be fit-for-purpose when it comes to some of the major global challenges that are of concern to churches, including climate justice and global peace-building efforts. The project is analysing ways in which religious leaders can support political efforts to address these challenges through effective multilateral engagement. The Public Affairs Officer contributed to a panel discussion as part of a two-day conference on Multilateralism and Methodology at the end of February in DCU, the contributions from which were particularly poignant given the unfolding backdrop of events in Ukraine.

33. The former Secretary to the Council for Social Witness, Mr Lindsay Conway OBE, had been PCI's representative on the Community Faiths' Forum, facilitated by NICVA. Following his retirement, this position is now filled by the Public Affairs Officer, who also, for the year 2021/22, has been the faith representative on Belfast City Council's Shared City Partnership.

APPENDIX A

Consultation responses August 2021 – March 2022⁴

| Date | Title | Organisation | Type | Responder |
|----------|---|--|-----------------------------|---|
| Aug 2021 | Introduction of a statutory Duty of Candour in Northern Ireland | Department of Health | Policy Consultation | Council for Public Affairs and Council for Social Witness |
| Nov 2021 | Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Bill | NI Assembly Committee for Health | Committee call for evidence | Council for Public Affairs |
| Feb 2022 | Banning Conversion Therapy Government Consultation | UK Government – Cabinet Officer | Policy consultation | Council for Public Affairs |
| Feb 2022 | Belief Marriage and Minimum Age for Marriage | Department of Finance | Policy consultation | Council for Public Affairs |
| Mar 2022 | Fair Employment (School Teachers) Bill | NI Assembly Committee for Education | Committee call for evidence | Council for Public Affairs |
| Mar 2022 | New Strategies relating to Domestic and Sexual Abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls | Department of Health, Department of Justice and the Executive Office | Policy consultation | Council for Public Affairs and Council for Social Witness |
| Mar 2022 | Improving the Effectiveness of Hate Crime Legislation in NI | Department of Justice | Policy consultation | Council for Public Affairs |

4 PCI Consultations December 2020 – Present – Presbyterian Church Ireland (presbyterianireland.org)

APPENDIX B

SUBMISSION TO THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF EDUCATION

Background

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has over 200,000 members belonging to 530 congregations across 19 Presbyteries throughout Ireland, north and south. The Council for Public Affairs is authorised by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to speak on behalf of PCI on matters of public policy, with the Council's State Education Committee carrying specific responsibility for education matters in Northern Ireland.
2. Throughout the denomination, many hundreds of PCI members work across a wide variety of roles within education including principals, teachers, classroom assistants and support staff. In addition, hundreds of others serve as transferor governors on boards of governors within the controlled sector, both at primary and post-primary levels.
3. PCI is also represented on the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC) with colleagues from the Boards of Education of the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland. TRC works closely with the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC), and engages regularly with the Education Authority, Department for Education, and other relevant education bodies on the provision of quality education for children and young people across Northern Ireland.
4. PCI recognises the significant work being undertaken by the Independent Review Panel which has been tasked with identifying barriers within the education system which inhibit positive outcomes for children and young people as well as explaining structural issues which lead to inefficiencies or ineffectiveness; and to provide a set of focused and strategic recommendations on how the Department and the Executive might improve outcomes for pupils, support to schools and the effectiveness of education administration.
5. There is so much to commend within our current education system: teaching is valued and respected in our community, leading to a cadre of wonderful, talented, successful, high-achieving young people who aspire to join the profession. This leads to a professional approach to teaching which goes the extra mile and sees great successes for children and young people. Our system is also grounded in a solid values-base, with each of the main sectors having their foundations firmly in Christian ideals and beliefs.
6. On the other hand, whilst we have results at the top end which are the envy of many countries, our tail of underachievement is one of

the worst in Europe. We have parents and pupils who engage fully in a selective system, whilst others don't value education because they feel less valued. We have more children having to wait longer for less support for their particular needs, and we have mental health issues which need to be addressed in a system not adequately equipped to do this. If provided with a blank page, not many would come up with the education eco-system that exists locally today. Or in the words of the old adage – if you're going there, you wouldn't start from here.

7. The Independent Review provides a significant opportunity for all those interested in, and involved with, education in Northern Ireland to reflect on their participation and roles. On 29 January 2022, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland hosted a morning called 'Let's Talk Education' to facilitate discussion within the denomination on these important matters. This included contributions from the Minister for Education, Michelle McIlveen MLA; Dr Irvin Scott (via video-link), Founder of the Harvard Institute for Leadership in Faith and Education; a panel discussion with Rev Robert Herron, PCI representative on the Education Authority, Dr Barbara McDade, Director of Student Recruitment and Community Engagement at Stranmillis University College, Leanne Dunlop, Field Ministries' Director at Scripture Union Northern Ireland and Mark Beattie, Principal of The Diamond Primary School. These contributions can be viewed at PCI Talks Education Conference (*vimeo.com*).
8. 'Let's Talk Education' also provided an opportunity for PCI representatives involved in education to discuss some of the areas under consideration by the Independent Review. This submission to the Review Panel, while not responding to all the matters under consideration by the Review team, reflects some of the discussions which took place on the day.

History

9. PCI's engagement with education is part of its history and heritage across the island of Ireland for more than a hundred years. It is widely recognised that the vast majority of schools were originally established by local churches from the four larger denominations in pursuit of social justice and better quality of outcomes for boys and girls. As a consequent part of the significant changes which arose following the partition of Ireland and creation of Northern Ireland in 1921, the Protestant denominations transferred their schools to the control of the new Northern Ireland state, on the understanding and acknowledgement that church representatives would continue to have a role with regard to school governance, the teaching of religious education, and the outworking of collective worship.
10. This arrangement and intersection between school and church, continues across almost all schools within the NI system ensuring a holistic approach to the education of children and young people, recognising their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs.

Ethos

11. There is much discussion about the nature and value of “ethos” within the school system. Whilst the term “ethos” is often confused with other terms such as climate, culture, atmosphere, spirit, etc., in essence, it can be defined as who we are, what we do, why we do it that way, where we want to go and how we intend to get there. Within the Controlled sector, in which PCI has particular interest, this has been articulated by the CSSC as schools which “are open to all faiths and none, in providing high quality education for children and young people to enable them to learn, develop and grow together, within the ethos of non-denominational Christian values and principles”. PCI commends the recent work undertaken by the CSSC in the development of its ethos self-evaluation tool, which has equipped controlled schools to more intentionally consider their ethos and how that permeates throughout school life.
12. Dr Olwyn Mark, Lecturer in Practical Theology at Union Theological College, provided the following reflection with regard to the role and place of Christian ethos within schools as part of the Let’s Talk Education morning held at the end of January:

For education to flourish, it requires clear goals and a purpose, and it is impossible to exclude beliefs and values from the overall vision of a school. In the debates surrounding the role of the Church or religion in education, we should be clear that there is no morally neutral education. As Professor Trevor Cooling points out in ‘Doing God in Education’, teaching is concerned with the meaning and significance of what we learn, the values that we hold to be important and the kind of people that we should be. It is based on an understanding of the world and our role and purpose in it. A vision for education will ultimately be grounded in the ethos of a school.

In considering the impact of a Christian ethos in a school, the analogy⁵ of a dinner party is a useful one, in particular, reflecting on three components that are essential for a successful dinner party – the ambience, the menu, and the presentation.

The ambience is the felt experience of being part of the school – the welcome and hospitality that is received, the interactions between pupils and staff, the communal experiences and activities in the life of the school, including collective worship. It is essentially how the Christian vision and values are embodied and experienced in the day-to-day running of the school. Many aspects of this experience will be found in other schools, and shared values will be identified, but a Christian ethos will embed these values in the Christian story.

5 A more detailed discussion of this analogy and an exploration of Christian distinctiveness in education can be found in Trevor and Margaret Cooling’s short book *Distinctly Christian Learning?* (Cambridge: Grove Books Ltd, 2013) and Trevor Cooling’s report: ‘Doing God in Education’ (Theos: 2010).

The menu is the content of what is taught. A distinctly Christian education will not just give attention to what is taught in RE, or shared in a school assembly, but how the curriculum educates the whole person for all of life. In affirming the inestimable value and worth of every pupil, and the unique gifts and qualities that they bring to the world, holistic learning enables each one to gain knowledge and develop and flourish in their skills and abilities through a rich and varied curriculum. This will include giving particular attention to moral and spiritual formation.

*The third component – the presentation – will give attention to the learning experience or pedagogy. A holistic vision for education will give attention to how learning and practices in the classroom contribute to the formation of character and a vision of a life well lived. This will be embedded in a particular vision of what it is to be human. Can a history lesson, for example, create the opportunity for pupils to explore how they can be agents of change in the world? Can a maths class be more than just mastering technical skills, but turned into a lesson on generosity? Can a science class inspire awe, wonder and curiosity about the natural world and the Creator? Can a French lesson be more about honouring our neighbour than finding our way to the train station? As James K. A. Smith notes in his book, *You Are What You Love*:*

‘A Christian education can never be merely a mastery of a field of knowledge or technical skills; learning is embedded in a wider vision of who I am called to be and what God is calling the world to be’.

13. We offer Dr Mark’s reflection to the Review Panel to aid its deliberations recognising that it also provides much food for thought for us in PCI. We commend Dr Mark’s early comment that there is “no morally neutral education” and place on record that non-denominational Christian values and principles continue to have a significant role in shaping and grounding the education system in Northern Ireland. Additionally, as the Panel considers the role of education in supporting the mental health and well-being of our children and young people it is important that this recognises spiritual wellbeing.
14. The *annex* to this submission provides two local stories – one from Ballymena and one from Bangor – as to how this ethos works out in practice.

A “single education system” for Northern Ireland

15. PCI notes that within the Review Panel’s terms of reference there is a specific focus in defining what a “single education system” means and would entail in practical terms, assessing the costs and benefits of such an approach. In a recent article for PCI’s denominational publication, the *Presbyterian Herald*, Dr Andy Brown, Convener of the State Education Committee, made the following observation:

“...we have a system which divides and duplicates. Education in N Ireland receives more money per pupil than Scotland or Wales,

but less of it goes into the classroom than the other regions. We have a plethora of employers, administrative organisations, trade unions, bodies and agencies, many of which have similar functions.”

16. It would be foolish and disingenuous to not recognise the strain on resources precipitated by the current arrangements. PCI notes that part of the rationale for creating the Education Authority was to reduce the financial burden of administrative support to schools. However, without significant investment supporting such structural change it will take much longer to realise those benefits with many areas, like school transport, still waiting to be streamlined.
17. It is important to acknowledge that there are some respects in which a single education system already exists, for example, with regard to the common curriculum and the common funding formula. However, across these islands, from Ireland to Scotland, England and Wales, there is no one single education delivery mechanism but rather a multiplicity of arrangements.
18. Significantly, the current arrangements in Northern Ireland facilitate and provide for parental choice. Should that choice be removed by the creation of a “single education system” which did not allow parents to choose the ethos in which they wish their children to be educated, there is a risk that new informal sectors might be formed in response.
19. One of the benefits of our very “dispersed” system of education at the moment is that it provides for many different people from a variety of walks of life to be engaged in and support local schools. Another potential drawback of a “single education system” which might replace the current sectoral offering would be to remove such opportunities.
20. Children and young people should be central to the Panel’s considerations in this regard, whatever response it arrives at within this remit. PCI provides, for the Panel’s consideration and deliberations, some comments which arose during the discussion time at ‘Let’s Talk Education’ on this issue:
 - (a) A “single education system” is one in which all schools:
 - (i) equally meet the needs of all abilities and aptitudes of students
 - (ii) provide equal opportunities for all irrespective of social class or background
 - (iii) are recognised as being on a par
 - (iv) have a common funding system
 - (v) have parity of access to curriculum and resources
 - (vi) have buildings and facilities which are fit for purpose
21. PCI would also encourage the Review Panel to consider how the success of Shared Education might serve as a model for better and more intentional collaboration between schools with regard to shared lessons and extra-curricular activities. Given the exponential use of

technology and remote learning as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, how might such innovations be used to facilitate shared learning between schools which are not geographically close, providing greater curricular access?

Transition and transfer of children from primary school to post-primary school

22. The transition and transfer of children from primary school to post-primary school continues to be a perennial bone of contention within education discussions. As you can imagine, in a denomination like PCI, there is a depth and breadth of views and there is a need for further internal debate and discussion on this matter.
23. Again, we offer some of the comments and observations that arose from discussions at 'Let's Talk Education' for the Panel's consideration:
 - (a) The importance of a child-centred approach
 - (b) The current system is blunt, taking into account only a limited number of predictors of future achievement, and tends to distort delivery of the curriculum from years 5–7 in primary schools
 - (c) Selection at 11 disadvantages boys in particular
 - (d) Understanding what value society places on education, and in particular academic achievement, with the suggestion that an academic route is more highly valued than a technical/skills-based route
 - (e) The widespread use of private tuition within the current system providing those who can afford such support an advantage over those that cannot – this is a matter of social justice
 - (f) The need for choice and flexibility
 - (g) On a practical level it is observed that, in some areas, grammar schools have become increasingly comprehensive in their intake and where previously they may have selected around 20-25% of the cohort, now it is more like 35-40%. This reflects an attitude whereby a grammar school is considered to be the best option for a child to reach their potential, and so grammar schools are more able to fill their places. However, this also results in non-selective schools, and those who attend them, feeling increasingly like 'the poor relation'
 - (h) There is a need to provide a curriculum at the appropriate pace and cater for different learning styles

Other areas

24. PCI recognises that there are other significant areas which this submission does not cover, but which are important to members of the denomination, including, but not limited to:
- provision for special educational needs;
 - the role of education inspection and school improvement;
 - the experiences of children and young people in education other than in school settings;
 - an over-reliance on data as a measurement of ‘success’;
 - a system driven by testing, with little time for teacher creativity;
 - mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff;
 - changing situation of newcomer families to Northern Ireland;
 - the potential for education to become politicised.

Concluding comments

25. PCI recommends that the Review Panel takes the following into account during its deliberations:
- (a) That the spiritual health and wellbeing of children and young people is just as vital as to their physical and mental health and wellbeing, and there should be room for all within the parameters of a holistic education system.
 - (b) That there is no such thing as a ‘morally neutral education’.
26. There is a well-known saying, often associated with African cultures, that “it takes a village to raise a child”. Never is this more true than in the context of educating our children and young people, enabling them to reach their full potential, and preparing them to be responsible and conscientious citizens. PCI remains ready to play its part in supporting schools, educators and pupils for years to come, just as it has until now.

Rev DANIEL KANE, Convener of the Council for Public Affairs

Rev TREVOR D. GRIBBEN, Clerk of the General Assembly

ANNEX

“HOW CAN WE HELP?” – SERVING THE CLANDEBOYE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Rev Mark Johnston, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Bangor

“How can we help?” Four words that have enabled the building of a strong relationship between the St Andrew’s Church family in Bangor, and Clandeboye Primary School, down through the years. The church building and school premises are located right beside each other, which has helped strengthen the links between the church and school, but the relationship goes much deeper than this, as we seek to be a gentle and loving presence for Jesus across the school community.

For decades now, members of St Andrew’s have faithfully served as Governors in the school, and today the Clerk of Session and Minister are Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Governors, bringing specific input with finance, staffing and pastoral support. An every member ministry is encouraged across St Andrew’s, with Christian parents equipped to be a rich aroma for Jesus at the school gate, and as they serve as part of the Parent Teachers’ Association. A team of faithful ladies from the church family called ‘Early Birds’ serve hot chocolate, juice and food to children and their parents every Tuesday morning from 8am to 9am, on their way to school. This has become a key part of children’s weekly schedules, and it provides a wonderful opportunity to build trusted relationships over a cuppa with parents and carers too.

In partnership with Scripture Union, we have a ‘Back to School with God’ Sunday Worship gathering at the start of September each year, where we regularly invite the Principal to chat about the joys and challenges of school life, and throughout the year we share updates at worship gatherings, as we encourage one another to pray for the school community. We help with Assemblies, as well as teaching classes, using Scripture Union’s ‘Amazing Jesus’ lessons for P4 and P5, and the ‘It’s your move’ resource for P7 pupils as they prepare to transition to Year 8. Scripture Union and Prayer Spaces in Schools Ireland have also helped us to host an annual Prayer Space for all the children and staff, over the last three years, as part of the RE curriculum – an interactive and creative space in the church building where pupils have the opportunity to explore prayer.

Following the first Prayer Space three years ago, learnings were shared with the Board of Governors, which encouraged the development of a Mindfulness Space in the school building, and prompted the beginning of a town wide initiative called ‘Bangor Cares’ that focussed on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

We deliver scones and buns from the local bakery into the staff room every other month, with a letter of encouragement, thanking the team

for all they're doing in the lives of the children and their families. Volunteers from the church make Christmas gifts every year for all the children and staff in the school, with a little message of hope to each one. Last year our Knit 'n' Natter group in the church knitted 600 stockings and filled them with goodies for all the children. We work closely with the Principal, and Counsellors, to provide additional support to vulnerable families, in the form of emergency food parcels, and other practical help when needed. When we've been made aware of the financial burdens that some families were facing in recent years, and as this need was presented to the church family, some members of St Andrew's were prompted to set up a Pre-Loved School Uniform stall, where second-hand school uniforms are provided by parents in the school and made available throughout the year in the basement of the church building for families. Some of our members also teach English to the parents of some of the international children who are part of Clandeboye Primary School. As the trusted relationship between the school and church family has built up over time, this has opened a door for us to be able to promote our Youth Ministries and Holiday Bible Club, and further opportunities have subsequently emerged for us to share the love of Jesus with children and their families.

Going forward, we continue to greatly value the relationship the Lord has enabled us to have with the school. We do not take it for granted! As we've recently redeveloped our church building and added a new Welcome Centre, we're encouraging the school to consider making use of the church complex as part of their 'Clandeboye Campus.' This has already begun to happen, with team building sessions for staff, and consultation meetings between staff and parents taking place in the Welcome Centre. Our church halls are freely used for after-school activities, so as to enable greater opportunities for development in the lives of the children. The Lord continues to provide ways for us to help staff, pupils and their families in many creative ways. It's a slow and steady work, as we continue to be a gentle presence in the school community, in ways that bring glory and honour to Jesus. And it often starts with us asking the question, "How can we help?"

SERVING THE BALLYKEEL PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Rev Martin McNeely, Ballykeel Presbyterian Church

Ballykeel Presbyterian has a very strong relationship with Ballykeel Primary School, Ballymena. This is expressed in two ways: formally and informally.

Formally, Ballykeel Presbyterian has two positions on the Board of Governors of the School. I (as minister) serve along with a member of our Church, who is also a community worker. This gives us regular input into the shape of school policy-making and how it helps local

children. Pre-Covid we were regularly invited by the Principal to share in Assemblies and SU. In turn, we invite the School community over to the Church for the annual School Carol service. Hopefully, we will be allowed to resume these times of sharing soon. Given the proximity of the manse, I also serve as key-holder for any 'emergencies' out of hours. Because the Church and the community are so close physically and socially, I have also been invited in to minister to the School community during times of trauma – for example the bereavement of a child or in times of tension in the estate. I regularly work in partnership with the School as we liaise with wider statutory bodies and stake holders such as the community groups or local politicians. Myself and the School principal are often in communication about issues of pastoral concern and ways in which we can steer resources towards families in need.

Informally, Ballykeel Church has multiple links with the school, not least the hundreds of boys and girls down through the years who have spent time in both premises. Although we have children attend different schools in Ballymena, the majority of children (along with parents) have been to Ballykeel Primary. A good number of our members have worked in Ballykeel School as cleaners, caterers or classroom assistants. Practically, our buildings have been used as an 'overflow' for school musical practices and our car park reduces traffic congestion for the school children as they travel to Ballykeel.

The ethos of both School and Church is very much focused on caring for the parish area in which we serve. The history of both institutions is tightly interwoven. We have worked closely together in our estate context for the good of Ballykeel for nearly five decades. We are so thankful for the partnership we share and trust it will continue for many years to come.

APPENDIX C

PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND CALL FOR VIEWS ON IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HATE CRIME LEGISLATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Background

1. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has over 200,000 members belonging to 500 congregations across 19 Presbyteries throughout Ireland, north and south. The Council for Public Affairs is authorised by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to speak on behalf of PCI on matters of public policy.
2. PCI appreciated the opportunity to engage with Judge Marrinan's Independent Review of Hate Crime Legislation in Northern Ireland. This was carried out in an inclusive and comprehensive manner, producing a very substantial report with significant recommendations.

General comments

3. As a denomination, PCI condemns unlawful acts that seek to bully and intimidate individuals within society in Northern Ireland. We continue to encourage gracious and informed discussion about how the moral and religious diversity which characterises contemporary society can best be achieved. This includes regular engagement with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, where discussions have considered how to 'disagree well' in the public square.
4. As the Department of Justice begins the process towards drawing up new legislation in this area, PCI welcomes the staged approach to consultation. The issues involved are important, and must be handled with wisdom and sensitivity without being rushed. PCI also acknowledges the proactive engagement by DoJ on the consultation and a PCI representative attended an online engagement session led by DoJ, co-ordinated by NICVA's Community Faiths' Forum towards the end of 2021.
5. In an article in the *Newsletter* in August 2020, PCI's Public Affairs Officer commented that "*freedom to only express ideas that are popular is no freedom at all*". It is paramount therefore that efforts in finding a way forward on hate crime do not become a precursor to curtailing legitimate debate or the exploration of differences of opinion in a constructive and positive way.

Definition of a Hate Crime/Attitudes

6. PCI welcomes the indication that the DoJ is not proposing to include a definition of hate crime explicitly in the Hate Crime Bill, recognising that it could be too prescriptive and open to interpretation, which in turn could have unintended consequences. Creating a definition in itself is not a panacea. The blunt instrument of the law, even as a last resort, is no substitute for the hard, and often challenging, work of transforming hearts and minds.
7. DoJ is suggesting that the attitudes of “bias, bigotry, prejudice and contempt” may be included in guidance as recognised motivating factors of hate crime. PCI would urge caution in this approach to prevent the curtailing of open debate and expression of genuinely held views. In a world increasingly defined through the lens of individual identity, and choices which we are often told are fluid and non-binary, there is risk of being left with a binary option which boils down to this – “if you are not for me then you are against me, and if you are against me (while of course you have a the right to hold your personal beliefs) there is no place for you to articulate those beliefs”. The place of public debate or personal expression risks becoming a zero-sum game where if “you win, I lose” and vice versa.
8. The terms ‘bias’ and ‘prejudice’ carry low thresholds and cannot simply risk becoming synonyms for expressing an “alternative point of view”. Such terminology can be directed towards people of faith, for example, when expressing a perspective on marriage that may now be seen by some in wider society to be biased or prejudiced. The inclusion of a provision (regulation 131) in the *Marriage (Same-sex Couples) and Civil Partnership (Opposite-sex Couples) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2019* that Article 8 of the Public Order (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 be amended so that any discussion or criticism of marriage which concerns the sex of the parties to marriage is not to be taken of itself to be threatening, abusive, insulting or intended to stir up hatred or arouse fear, recognises some of the complexity in this area.
9. PCI notes that DoJ acknowledges in its consultation document that “some criminal justice partners have argued that additional attitudes would not have a significant effect on how incidents were recorded and investigated... [and] the current notion of hostility is set at the correct level to ensure criminality is dealt with without broadening hate crime into the discrimination sphere”. PCI urges the DoJ, and incoming Minister, to pay particular attention to these perspectives.

Addition of a Third Threshold of ‘By Reason of’

10. PCI notes that this third threshold was not included in the recent, and often controversial, Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, neither has it been recommended by the Law Commission in England and Wales for inclusion in future hate crime legislation. PCI concurs with views expressed which indicate that there is little demonstrable evidence that this additional third threshold will provide any success of

redress, and therefore agrees that it should not be added to the current thresholds in legislation.

Defining Sectarianism in relation to Hate Crime Law

11. PCI notes the consideration of sectarian hate crimes where the term ‘sectarian’ denotes religion or perceived religious background as an indicator of a particular group, alongside political opinion. Between 2016 and 2019, there were over 400 attacks on places of worship – both Christian and other faith.⁶ Property belonging to the GAA and Orange Order is also attacked on a regular basis, often not making the headlines.
12. These continued attacks on property highlight that the term ‘sectarian’ should be referred to specifically within any new hate crime legislation. Of course, sectarian hate crimes are not only levelled at buildings, and it is important that such provision also encompasses attacks on individuals, or groups of individuals. It is a sad indictment on all of us in society here that, over 20 years since the signing of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement, this remains an issue for which robust legislation is required.
13. The definition suggested by DoJ refers solely to “Christian sectarianism” rather than those of other faiths, or none. It also does not refer to political opinion. PCI is of the view that such an approach keeps a focus on the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland with regard to internecine tensions. PCI also notes that any non-Christian religious sectarianism will not be treated differently to other hate crimes, and will be considered under the categories of racial or religious hate crime. It is vitally important that other non-Christian faith communities in Northern Ireland have confidence that this is indeed the case.

Stirring Up Offences

14. With regard to consideration of the ‘stirring up offences’, the concern, in particular, is that in removing the dwelling defence, the offence can be widened, and would not be subject to the clear and obvious protection that individuals’ discussions within their own homes would not give rise to criminal liability. The existing legislation provides a fairly robust protection in allowing people to express their genuinely held opinions within their home, as opposed to the broader question of determining what is a private conversation. Placing restrictions on discourse within private dwellings may remove the freedom to discuss controversial topics at home between family members, friends or other guests.
15. PCI notes the view of the Department that the dwelling defence is no longer fit for purpose and in particular does not provide a suitable or appropriate defence for private, online communication. However, whilst stating that alternative protection needs to be put in place, there

6 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-49414293>

is no clear definition within this document of what that will be, or how it might be applied. On a very practical level, it is much easier to define a ‘private dwelling’ in law than a ‘private conversation’.

16. Challenges to the expression of faith in the public square are becoming more common. For many Christians, grounding their public conduct in the truth-claims of their faith forms a key element of their religious commitment. Recognising this is a vital part of what it means for a society to genuinely value religious freedom.
17. There must be space within society to express views with which others may disagree, recognising that this works both ways and allows people to express views about religious belief with which we may disagree. This includes inside the home. Often people of faith use their homes as extensions of their faith, and religious activity. Many Christians demonstrate hospitality – inviting family, friends and other guests into their home, as a clear expression and outworking of their faith. Others use their homes to host discussions on subjects of interest to their understanding of faith, including Bible study or missionary activity overseas and locally. PCI anticipates that it would not be the intention of the Department or incoming Minister to potentially criminalise such activities.
18. PCI acknowledges that, as with most legislative challenges, this is an issue which is somewhat nuanced. However, PCI would strongly oppose any change to legislation which would remove protection from individuals to express their strongly held personal and/or religious beliefs within their own home without being at risk of committing a criminal offence. The danger in changing the test is that in application it may be watered down or not provide as effective and clear a protection as the existing statutory defence currently applied not only in Northern Ireland, but in England and Wales.
19. On balance, it may be better to retain the clear definition which currently exists, rather than to seek to define a new test which will be uncertain, and will have to be interpreted and applied by the Courts, in order that clarity can be brought to bear on what it means in practice. The need to balance Articles 8, 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights against any proposals is not insignificant.
20. Should the Department and incoming Minister be minded to introduce a specific defence for private conversations, it is important that there be clarity about what would fall under this protection. For example, a private conversation may take place with more than one other person. However, such a provision should be additional to, not a substitute for, the private dwelling defence.

Role of the Director of Public Prosecutions in Decisions for Stirring Up Prosecutions

21. Acknowledging the drawbacks of making the Director of Public Prosecutions solely responsible for decisions on whether or not to prosecute stirring up offences, PCI has sympathy with the view that

retaining this level of consent acts as an additional safeguard against potential misuse of the legislation.

Exploring Misogyny/Transmisogyny in Hate Crime Law

22. PCI notes the intention of the Department to include gender in phase two of the public consultation on hate crime later this year, and at this stage is seeking views to inform its own considerations relating to misogyny, which incorporates transmisogyny. On these questions PCI makes the following observations:
- (a) Incorporating transmisogyny into misogyny for the purposes of this call for views, conflates two separate and distinct characteristics. This is unfortunate and should be avoided in any further consultation.
 - (b) The expansion of hate crime legislation into further and wider breaches has the potential risk of becoming increasingly pervasive and moves far beyond what might be considered the original function of hate crime legislation which was to protect vulnerable and minority groups. Indeed, where gender becomes a potential factor in hate crime, it is expanded to incorporate almost anyone.
 - (c) With regard to gender identity and specifically transgender identity, PCI acknowledges that these are contested conversations across many spheres in society. Without opening a discussion on these different perspectives, PCI is clear in its view that a biblical ‘theology of the body’ argues that one’s body cannot be ignored but is crucial in determining our identity. There may be some who find that view, or those of other denominations and faith groups, to be ‘hateful’. Might this create a potential conflict between the freedom to hold and express religious belief and the expansion of legislation?
 - (d) PCI would seek to resist any changes to legislation which would make it more difficult to secure a conviction for domestic abuse and sexual offences, or create further difficulties for victims.

Concluding remarks

23. PCI looks forward to further engagement with the Department of Justice and the incoming Minister on these important issues, and PCI representatives would be happy to meet with officials to discuss any aspect of this submission.

Rev DANIEL KANE, Convener of the Council for Public Affairs

Rev TREVOR D. GRIBBEN, Clerk of the General Assembly

OVERTURES

GENERAL COUNCIL

Purpose – to give greater flexibility regarding the procedures for the commissioning of representative ruling elders to the General Assembly.

Anent Par 102(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 102(4) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

That for all meetings of the General Assembly the commission of each representative ruling elder shall be lodged with the Clerk of Assembly.

Purpose – to make the appointment of independent examiners/auditors a responsibility of the Kirk Session.

Anent Par 240(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 240(1) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

A full statement of the congregational accounts, including those of organisations under the control of the Kirk Session, shall be prepared each year by the Congregational Committee, and duly examined or audited by independent examiners or auditors appointed by the Kirk Session or its Congregational Committee.

Purpose – to reflect changes already agreed by the General Assembly regarding the recording of members' contributions to congregations and the amended time-line for the submission of congregational accounts to Presbyteries.

Anent Pars 240(3) and 240(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Pars 240(3) and 240(4) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (3) A list of all contributors to the stipend or weekly freewill offering and to the Central Ministry Fund, with the respective accounts paid by each, shall be similarly prepared; provided that –
 - (a) the list of contributors is shown by number except where a contributor wishes their name to be recorded; but
 - (b) in order to preserve the status of contributors shown by number, their names and numbers shall be held in the joint custody of the Clerk of Kirk Session and the FWO Secretary of the congregation.

- (4) Copies of the independently examined or audited accounts, including those of congregational organisations, and lists of contributors and, if required, the minute book and records of receipts and disbursements of the Congregational Committee, shall each year be submitted to Presbytery, not later than 31 May each year.

Purpose – to make clear that the adoption of accounts at a congregational meeting is optional and at the discretion of the Kirk Session.

Anent Par 257(2)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 257(2)(a) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

The annual report of the Congregational Committee shall include a full statement of accounts, which shall be submitted to the Kirk Session for approval and then, if the Kirk Session deems desirable, its report may be submitted to the congregation for adoption.

COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS

Purpose – three overtures to update the Code in regard to changes previously agreed whereby the work of ‘Re-marriage Panel’ has been reviewed and ongoing areas of responsibility now sit under the ‘Marriage Panel’.

Anent Par 85(5) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 85(5) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

Where difficulty arises as to whether a marriage by the Church is advisable, the minister may consult with his Kirk Session or avail of the support offered by the Marriage Panel of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness before agreeing to celebrate the marriage.

Anent Par 85(6) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 85(6) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

A minister should not join in marriage a member of the Church with one holding beliefs or having a Church membership incompatible with the Christian witness of the Protestant Reformation, until careful instruction has been given in the doctrines and obligations of our evangelical faith, and potential pastoral and practical considerations have been explored for which support is available from the Marriage Panel on request.

Anent Par 85(7) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 85(7) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

While this Church does not prohibit the marriage of a divorced person or persons, it is strongly recommended that a minister does not join in marriage a person who has been divorced without having sought to explore potential pastoral and practical considerations for which support is available from the Marriage Panel on request. In the case of a divorced minister wishing to remain in office after re-marriage the approval of Presbytery shall be obtained.

LINKAGE COMMISSION

Purpose – to enable the terms ‘merge’ and ‘merger’ to be used by PCI in reference to what is currently referred to as ‘amalgamate’ and ‘amalgamation’. This will bring the language in the Code into line with the language in the civil sphere (e.g. of the Charity Commission) and greatly clarify and simplify the necessary legal steps. Provision is also being made (in the overture relating to Par 106) for a congregation to merge with either a Presbytery or with the General Assembly, which in certain rare cases would facilitate the legal transfer of assets.

Anent Par 35 of the Code

It is hereby overtured that in Par 35, a new sub-paragraph (i) be added in the following terms:

- (i) as charity trustees of the congregation, where applicable, execute the vesting declaration required by the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2006 to carry into effect a resolution of the General Assembly for the merger of the congregation with another congregation or charity.

Anent Par 57(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 57(3) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

When deciding upon the terms of any merger or dissolution, the Linkage Commission shall have power to recommend the future ownership or dispersal of property and assets belonging to both or either congregation, and congregational trustees shall seek to carry out such recommendations given to them by the Commission.

Anent Par 106 of the Code

It is hereby overtured that in Par 106, a new sub-paragraph (i) be added in the following terms:

- (i) sanction the merger of a congregation with another congregation, (or with the Presbytery which has jurisdiction over the congregation, or with the General Assembly)

Anent Par 128(5)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 128(5)(a) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

whether the case is one for continuance, linkage, merger, dissolution, porting or other special provisions as may be appropriate, including dissolution of existing linkages for alternative arrangements;

Anent Par 256(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 256(3) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

Upon merger or dissolution of a congregation, the Linkage Commission shall also ensure that adequate steps are taken to safeguard all such Church property.

Anent Par 260(h) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 260(h) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

the names of congregations which have been constituted by order of the General Assembly; and the names of congregations which have been ported, linked, merged or dissolved;

Anent Par 273(6)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 273(5)(b) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

No congregation shall be dissolved or merged, with loss of its identity, except by authorisation from the Assembly. Where the Commission has been instructed by the General Assembly to agree terms, where one or more congregations are being merged or dissolved by resolution of the Assembly, the Commission shall endeavour to agree the terms with the Kirk Sessions involved. Where it proves impossible to obtain the agreement of one or more Kirk Sessions, but the Presbytery consents, and in the case of Home Mission congregations the Council for Mission in Ireland consents, the terms shall be recommended by the Commission and all the parties concerned shall seek to carry out such recommendations.

Anent Par 273(6)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 273(6)(c) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

When any congregation is considering a proposal for dissolution, merger or linkage with another congregation, no arrangements regarding the sale of its properties and distribution of the proceeds or the income therefrom shall be made without first obtaining the agreement of the Commission.

TREVOR D. GRIBBEN, Clerk of Assembly

RESOLUTIONS

GENERAL COUNCIL

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE (INITIAL REPORT)

10am Thursday morning

1. That the Draft Order of Business for the 2022 General Assembly be approved.
2. That the ‘Guide to Assembly Procedure’ (yellow pages) be approved with the appropriate General Assembly Standing Orders suspended when necessary to facilitate alternative presentations etc.
3. That each year the General Assembly should decide on whether any specific items of business for the week should be taken in private session; with proposals for such matters to have come from the General Assembly Advisory Committee and to have been included with the initial report of the General Assembly Business Committee.
4. That a grant of £20,000 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Panel of the General Assembly Business Committee.
5. That the initial report of the General Assembly Business Committee be received.

GENERAL COUNCIL – SECTION 1

Approx 10.25am Thursday Morning

6. That Section 1 of the report of the General Council, with the exception of the Initial Report of the General Assembly Business Committee, be received.

GENERAL COUNCIL – SECTION 2

4.15pm Thursday afternoon

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

7. That for 2022, the Assessments Rates, along with the related allocation of funds, be as set out in Appendix 1 of the Report of the Support Services Committee and that the rate of assessment for the Pension Fund be set at 24% of stipend paid in the year.

8. That the 2022 budgeted expenditure for the Incidental Fund, as set out in Appendix 3 of the Report of the Support Services Committee, be approved.
9. That under Par 223(3) of the Code, leave to retire pre-66 is given to:
 - (a) Rev C.F.D. Clements (Second Castlederg & Urney), on or after 29 November 2022
 - (b) Rev Dr W.D. Cupples (Enniskillen), on or after 31 January 2023

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE

10. That the 2023 United Appeal and Grants be as set out in the report of the United Appeal Committee.
11. That Section 2 of the report of the General Council be received.

GENERAL COUNCIL – SECTION 3

2pm Friday afternoon

SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN CHALLENGING TIMES

12. That the recommendations of the Supporting Families in Challenging Times Task Group be agreed.
13. That Section 3 of the report of the General Council be received.

GENERAL COUNCIL – SECTION 4

4.15pm Friday afternoon

PANDEMIC RESPONSE (GOVERNANCE) TASK GROUP

14. That the procedures outlined in Appendices A – E of the Report of the Pandemic Response (Governance) Task Group be adopted.

PANDEMIC RESPONSE (THEOLOGICAL, MORAL AND SPIRITUAL) TASK GROUP

15. That the Interim Report of the Pandemic Response (Theological, Moral and Spiritual) Task Group be noted.
16. That Section 4 of the report of the General Council be received.

GENERAL COUNCIL – SECTION 5

3pm Saturday afternoon

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

17. That the following resignations be accepted, and appointments made:
 - (a) the resignation of the Rev D.T.R. Edwards as Convener of the Home Mission, Irish Mission and Deaconess Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that _____ be appointed in his place.
 - (b) the resignation of the Rev B.J. Walker as Convener of the Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev D.T.R. Edwards be appointed in his place.
 - (c) the resignation of the Rev N.D. Craig as Convener of the Church Relations Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev H.M. Freeburn be appointed in his place.
 - (d) the resignation of the Rev Dr S.E. Hughes as Convener of the Council for Global Mission, that she be thanked for her services, and that the Rev S.A. McCracken, be appointed in her place.
 - (e) the resignation of Mr James Livingstone as Convener of the Linkage Commission, that he be thanked for his services, and that _____, be appointed in his place.
 - (f) That the Rev N.J. McCullough be re-appointed as Convener of the Council for Training in Ministry for one further year.
18. That the following appointments of General Assembly Trustees be made:
 - (a) That Mr Hugo Wilson (elder, Knock) be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of Mr Douglas Crowe, retired, and the appointment of Mr Hugo Wilson as a said Trustee due attestation is made by the signature of the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Clerk of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871.
 - (b) That Mr Stephen Warke (elder, Templepatrick) be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of Sir Bruce Robinson, retired, and the appointment of Mr Stephen Warke as a said Trustee due attestation is made by the signature of the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Clerk of the General Assembly in accordance with the provisions of the Irish Presbyterian Church Act, 1871.

19. That the nominations to the General Assembly Commissions, Councils and Committees (as tabled in the separate Nomination Booklet) be approved.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

20. That the recommendations of the General Assembly Advisory Committee, relating to post-2022 Assembly and pre-2023 Assembly conferences be adopted.

AD-HOC AREAS OF WORK

21. That the General Assembly grant permission for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to apply to the Education Authority (NI) to become a Regional Voluntary Youth Organisation (RVYO) in the terms outlined in the report to the General Council from the Council for Congregational Life and Witness (CCLW); and that the CCLW be authorised to take forward the process, consulting with the Clerk of Assembly as and when appropriate.
22. That from the 2022 General Assembly onwards, the General Assembly Advisory Committee (under the General Council) be given responsibility for receiving reports from Presbyteries in relation to both Ministers without Charge and Ministers Emeritus.
23. That, under Par 226(a) of the Code, the Rev Terence Richard Graham be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregation Joymount, Carrickfergus.
24. That the Rev Dr Paul Swinn be enrolled as a Minister Emeritus (Released) of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, remaining under the care of the Presbytery of Dromore.
25. That Section 5 of the report of the General Council be received.

REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES

Approx 10.20am Thursday Morning

1. That the Reports of Presbyteries be received.

COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

2pm Thursday Afternoon

1. That the following candidates, their nominations having been sustained by the Council for Training in Ministry, be accepted as students for the ordained ministry, and placed under the care of their presbyteries:

| Name | Congregation | Presbytery |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Matthew Banks | Tullyallen | Newry |
| James Burke | Second & Third Rathfriland | Iveagh |
| Jack Neilly | Hamilton Road, Bangor | Ards |
| Alex Richardson | Richhill | Armagh |
2. That the recommendations concerning those whose retention as licentiates and ministers without charge has been sought by presbyteries be adopted.
3. Consolidated Resolution:
 - (a) That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be set to raise £115,000
 - (b) That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be set to raise £475,000.
4. That the Report of the Council for Training in Ministry be received.

TRUSTEES

10am Friday morning

1. That the following recommendations be adopted:
 - (a) regarding the Mrs A.M. Davidson Trust;
 - (b) regarding the Sir Wm. V. McCleery Trust;
 - (c) regarding the Miss Irene Scott Trust;
 - (d) regarding the Miss Ida Mary McGeown Trust;
 - (e) regarding the Victor Morrow Trust.
2. That Mrs M. Guilier and Mr N. Bennett, having completed their second term of five years as Trustees, be permitted to remain in office until the 2023 General Assembly.
3. That the alteration to the Trustee Bye-Law, as set out in Appendix 1 of the Trustees Report, be approved.
4. That the Report of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland be received.

COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION

10.30am Friday Morning

1. That the General Assembly, in extending a heartfelt welcome to delegates of global mission partner churches and organisations attending this Assembly in-person, encourage regular partner consultations characterised by listening to and learning from one another, and further reflection on the distinctives of partnering well in the mission of Christ and his Kingdom.
2. That the General Assembly give thanks for the faithful, enduring witness to the gospel of PCI's global mission workers and affirm the guiding principles in mission (as set out in Appendix C of the Report) upon which their endeavour is prayerfully founded.
3. That the General Assembly give thanks for the faithfulness and generosity of congregations and members of PCI, despite an uncertain and struggling global economy, in supporting the World Development Appeal 2021 and the Moderator's Appeal for Ukraine, and commend the 2022 World Development Appeal to all congregations.
4. That the General Assembly encourages the Council to listen carefully to voices on the margins as it seeks to lead thinking in global issues, commending the Global Development Committee's plan of work 2023-2025.
5. That the report of the Council for Global Mission be received.

RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO OVERTURES

5.15pm Friday Afternoon

1. That the Overture anent Par 102(4) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
2. That the Overture anent Par 102(4) of the Code be made an Interim Act.
3. That the Overtures anent Pars 240(1), 240(3), 240(4) and 257(2)(a) of the Code be received and that, under Par 111 of the Code, they be made the rule of the Church.
4. That the Overtures anent Pars 85(5), 85(6) and 85(7) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
5. That the Overtures anent Pars 85(5), 85(6) and 85(7) of the Code be made Interim Acts
6. That the Overtures anent Pars 35, 57(3), 106 and 128(5)(a) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
7. That the Overtures anent Pars 35, 57(3), 106 and 128(5)(a) of the Code be made Interim Acts.

8. That the Overtures anent Pars 256(3), 260(h), 273(6)(b) and 273(6)(c) of the Code be received and that, under Par 111 of the Code, they be made the rule of the Church.

LINKAGE COMMISSION

7.15pm Friday Evening

1. That the congregations of First and Second Islandmagee be amalgamated as and from 31 December 2022 or other suitable date, on Terms set by the Linkage Commission.
2. That the congregation of Townsend Street be dissolved on 31 December 2022 or other suitable date, on such terms as set by the Linkage Commission or otherwise as approved in cy pres applications to deal with the investments of the congregation and the Townsend, Belfast, Presbyterian Endowments.
3. That the congregation of Dromore (Route) merge with the congregation of Drumreagh on 31 December 2022 or other suitable date, on such terms as set by the Linkage Commission.
4. That the revised bounds for the North, South and East Belfast Presbyteries be approved, with the current bounds of Townsend Street retained until that congregation is either dissolved or amalgamated.
5. That the corrected and clarified bounds for the Monaghan Presbytery be approved.
6. That the Report of the Linkage Commission be received.

COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

8pm Friday Evening

1. That the General Assembly recognise the immense challenges faced by all our chaplains throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, and express profound gratitude for all that they have done.
2. That the General Assembly note that the Home Mission congregations linked to non-Home Mission congregations will leave the Home Mission as of 1 July 2022.
3. Composite resolution:
 - (a) That the General Assembly welcome the work initiated under the Rural Chaplaincy Pilot Project and commends the mission and ministry of the Rural Chaplain to the prayers and support of the whole church.
 - (b) That the General Assembly welcome the establishment of posts under the Carrigart Mission Project and West Belfast Special Ministry Project and commend those who may be appointed to the prayers and support of the whole Church.

4. That the General Assembly express thanks to the Rev Jim Stothers for his work as Acting Secretary of the Council for Mission in Ireland and to the Rev Robert Bell for his work covering the area of Chaplaincy within the Council.
5. That the report of the Council for Mission in Ireland be received.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

5.15pm Thursday afternoon (in public)

CODE REPUBLISHING PANEL

1. That the proposals made in paragraph 5 of the Report of the Code Republishing Panel, regarding different types of decisions made by the Assembly, be adopted.
2. That the proposal made in paragraph 7 of the Report of the Code Republishing Panel, for the revision of the inquiry and discipline sections of the Code, be adopted.
3. That the report of the Code Republishing Panel be received and the proposals in paragraph 2 of that report, regarding a revised time-table, be adopted.

10am Saturday Morning (in private)

1. That the report of the Judicial Commission be received.

SPECIAL JUDICIAL COMMISSION

10am Saturday Morning (in private)

1. That the Report of the Special Judicial Commission be received.

COMMISSION ON APPLICATIONS

10.00am Saturday Morning (in private)

1. That the Report of the Commission on Applications be received.

COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS

11am Saturday Morning

1. That the General Assembly encourage the Council for Congregational Life and Witness in embarking on a two-year listening exercise across all 19 presbyteries from September 2023 to enable it to better resource the whole church and to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and that presbyteries participate fully in this important initiative.
2. That the report of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness be received.

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS

12 noon Saturday Morning

1. That the General Assembly commend Council for Social Witness managers and staff for their resilience and care for residents, service users and relatives throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. That the General Assembly welcome the Council for Social Witness's pursuit of excellence through the development of strengthened governance arrangements and risk management protocols.
3. That the General Assembly note the Council for Social Witness's adoption of a set of business objectives for 2022-3, recognising this as an effective way to plan operational recovery from the protracted challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. That the report of the Council for Social Witness be received.

COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

2pm Saturday Afternoon

1. That the General Assembly encourage the Council for Public Affairs to continue to pursue graciously confident Gospel Engagement in the public square through its interactions with the Northern Ireland Executive and departments, and the Governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom.
2. That the General Assembly express its concern about the significant and rapid increases in the cost of living across Ireland, particularly in relation to food prices, electricity and energy supply; and calls on those in government in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to not only find ways to mitigate the immediate crisis, but also prioritise the development of anti-poverty strategies in each jurisdiction that begin to tackle the root causes of endemic poverty on the island.

3. That the General Assembly express its deep regret at the continued and unhelpful undermining of the devolution settlement by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, in giving himself powers to direct Northern Ireland Executive Ministers and Departments on matters including, but which stretch beyond the provision of abortion services, to education and other areas within the devolved competency of the NI Assembly.
4. That the General Assembly recognise that with regard to reforming legislation on hate crime, the blunt instrument of the law, even as a last resort, is no substitute for the hard and often challenging work of transforming hearts and minds; and call for any legislation developed in this area by the Northern Ireland Executive or Government of Ireland to be handled with wisdom and sensitivity, recognising that the freedom only to express ideas that are popular is no freedom at all.
5. That the General Assembly encourage the Council for Public Affairs through its State Education Committee, and the Republic of Ireland Panel, to engage with proposed changes and reforms to the education system in both jurisdictions; recognise there is no such thing as 'morally neutral education', and continue to commend a Christian ethos as a valuable framework for nurturing the holistic wellbeing of children and young people, educationally, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.
6. That the report of the Council for Public Affairs be received.

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