

GENERAL ASSEMBLY



ANNUAL REPORTS



GENERAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMISSION



REPORTS

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NOTE: Resolutions submitted but not taken by the Special Commission but remitted to the anticipated Special Assembly are written in italics and marked thus: *

GENERAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMISSION

REPORTS

SECTION A

**Reports and Resolutions submitted
in advance of the June 2020 meeting**

NOTE: Resolutions submitted but not taken by the Standing Commission but remitted to the anticipated Special Assembly are written *in italics* and marked thus: *

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 1

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

Secretary: THE CLERK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The General Council on behalf of the General Assembly conducted its business through seven committees and nine task groups. As in former years the Council was scheduled to convene for three meetings but, due to the unprecedented circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic, it was decided to cancel the April meeting.
2. At the meeting on 19 March 2020, while observing the Public Health Agency (NI) advice, the Council agreed contingency plans to, (a) enable the General Assembly business to be conducted (see Appendix 1 for the Minute of the subsequent Special Meeting of the General Assembly) and, (b) to enable General Assembly Councils to function (see Appendix 2 for a list of the standing Committees appointed).

Committee Reports 2019-2020

3. The Church Relations Committee commends to the General Assembly the resource produced by the Irish Council of Churches, on the issue of homelessness, entitled ‘In Six Months a Lot Can Change.’
4. The Nominations Committee reports on the problem of how to replace a Direct Presbytery Nominee when a vacancy occurs on a committee, and asks the General Assembly to agree its revised procedure to address the issue (see General Council Section 5, pages 1-2).
5. The Moderator’s Advisory Committee includes in its report changes regarding the retirement age for PCI ministers (see General Council Section 2, page 4).
6. The General Assembly Business Committee was informed of the Memorial of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery requesting that the General Assembly be held in Dublin every four years beginning 2024. The Committee recommended to the General Council that a Task Group be appointed to consult on this and produce a report (see General Council Section 1, pages 23-24)

Task Groups 2019-2020

7. Following the 2018 General Assembly the Implementation Task Group was appointed to compile a resource to address the issue of training kirk sessions on the theology and practice of the Church’s

understanding of a ‘credible profession of faith’, and to provide pastoral guidelines on homosexuality. The Council commends the Task Group for its assiduous work over the past year in producing these two closely related resources, to be presented at the General Assembly. It is proposed that they be sent in one document to presbyteries for discussion and comment.

8. In the report to the 2019 General Assembly the Implementation Task Group referred to the issue of inconsistency in regard to vows taken at baptism and admission to full membership. The General Council appointed the Vows for Full Membership and Baptism Task Group to consider how best to clarify the vows taken at admission to full membership and at baptism. In this report the Task Group presents in three appendices, vows taken at admission to communicant membership and at the baptism of believers and of infants (see General Council Section 4, pages 10-14).
9. The Human Identity Task Group completes three years of intricate work on the remit to provide a biblical and pastoral response to the issues related to gender identity. The Task Group, like the Implementation Task Group, has completed draft guidelines for pastoral care of those who struggle with gender identity and produced a booklet for distribution. The intention is that presbyteries will be able to discuss and comment on the guidelines.
10. The 2019 General Assembly agreed to continue with the experimental evening sessions in 2020. The General Council was instructed by the Assembly to form a task group to explore ways to make the General Assembly more accessible for those who find attending difficult. Making the General Assembly More Accessible Task Group was appointed; its make up included diversity in the age of its members and in their geographical location. A detailed report with a number of ideas are included for further consideration (see General Council Section 4, pages 16-18).
11. The Decision Making and Dissent within The Presbyterian Church in Ireland Task Group sent down the 2019 report to presbyteries and received helpful responses from all nineteen presbyteries. The report to the General Assembly involved detailed deliberation over the presbytery contributions and much rumination and discernment in its completion. The report includes ten recommendations for the consideration of the General Assembly (see General Council Section, 4 pages 1-9).

Debate on General Council Business

12. As normal, the business of the General Council will be considered under five different sections – see the Initial Report of the General Council Standing Committee for details.

Retiring Conveners

13. At this General Assembly two Conveners of General Council Committees retire.

Rev John Brackenridge has served as Convener of the Church Relations Committee since 2015. During this period, he has been a faithful representative for PCI at both the Irish Council of Churches and the Irish Inter-Church Committee and Meeting. He has also represented PCI at the Conference of European Churches and at other ad-hoc meetings. In all of his work John has brought a heartfelt commitment to the fostering of good working relationships with other Christian denominations at both local and national level. Giving leadership in this, one of the more challenging areas of PCI's life, is never easy. John however, has done so with both wisdom and forbearance during his years as Convener of Church Relations.

Very Rev Dr Roy Patton has served as Convener of the General Assembly Business Committee since 2015. He has, during those years, given wise leadership to the large team of people who enable the meetings of the General Assembly to pass off so smoothly. During his convenship a number of new innovations have been well received and are now an important parts of PCI's annual Assembly meeting. Both in the preparation for each General Assembly, and during the actual weeks themselves, Roy has given himself unstintingly to the work in hand. In doing so he has brought to the task much of own warm-hearted and people-centered graciousness that is a mark of all of his service to his Lord and this Church.

14. In conclusion the General Council has been well guided by the General Secretary, Rev Trevor Gribben, and the General Assembly is grateful for his diligent work and diplomacy as he represents the Presbyterian Church in the public square. The Deputy General Secretary, Rev Jim Stothers, retires following the 2020 Assembly and the Council is indebted to Jim for his wise council and the devotion to his work. The staff in the General Secretary's Office are also recognised for the ever efficient conducting of the administration on behalf of the Council.

The Clerk of Assembly writes:

15. At the General Assembly in June 2014, the Rev Jim Stothers was appointed Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Deputy General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland – one of the longest job titles and one of the hardest jobs in Assembly Buildings! In some senses, Jim came to the post in his 'senior years', having previously served as Minister in Ballylennon and St Johnston, Scrabo and Greenisland. However, he brought to the task an energy and zeal that has left many both in his wake and in genuine awe. Jim has an amazing capacity for work and has an almost zealous passion for detail. The job description gave him wide and varied responsibilities, ranging from the Council for Training in Ministry to the Linkage Commission and embracing oversight of several Support Services Departments in Assembly Buildings, active involvement in the Conciliation Panel and the undefined (and constantly expanding) 'assisting and deputising for the Clerk of Assembly in his duties' – this final task surely a challenge

for any person! Jim has carried out all of his work with great diligence and commitment and has proved himself not only to be a jack of all trades, but also to be a master of most. In all of this, Jim's love and commitment for the Lord Jesus Christ and for the Church that bears his name, has been so obvious to all. For those who have worked closely with him he has been a loyal colleague, a good friend and a dear brother in Christ. His work will be greatly missed in the different areas in which he has served, but the man who is Jim Stothers will be missed even more. Though perhaps, even in retirement, a few things can be found to keep him busy – he mightn't have gone away you know!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – APPENDIX 1

MINUTES of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Held Online, April, 2020

Saturday, 11 April, 2020

12pm

Online

The Right Rev Dr William J Henry, B.Sc., B.D., Moderator of the General Assembly, constituted the Assembly with prayer.

REPORT

The Clerk of Assembly, the Rev Trevor D Gribben, B.Sc., Dip. Th., reported as follows.

General Council resolutions and recommendations

The General Council met on Thursday 19 March 2020 in the circumstances of the spread of the COVID-19 Coronavirus, and the consequent impositions of restrictions on public gatherings by the governments of the United Kingdom and of the Republic of Ireland.

Resolutions

The General Council agreed the following resolutions.

1. That under Par 102(3) of the Code, the Moderator be requested to call a Special Meeting of the General Assembly to meet virtually, conducting its business by email.

2. That the necessary recommendations and resolution (listed in section B below) be circulated by the Clerk of Assembly to full voting members on the Roll of the 2019 General Assembly, along with Ministers ordained since the 2019 General Assembly, as follows:
 - (a) Directly by e-mail to all Ministers in congregations (and Vacancy Conveners), for both the Minister and the 2019 Commissioned Representative Elder(s) of their congregation(s);
 - (b) Directly by e-mail to all Ministers in Special Service and to Ministers Emeritus on the Roll of the 2019 General Assembly or who have become Minister Emeritus since the 2019 General Assembly;
 - (c) Directly by e-mail to Clerks of Presbytery with the instruction to pass onto all their Corresponding Elders, on the Roll of the 2019 General Assembly;
 - (d) Directly by e-mail to all Nomination Committee Nominated Elders and any other voting members, on the Roll of the 2019 General Assembly.
 - (e) With the proviso that only those in (a)–(d) with continuing entitlement to membership of the General Assembly shall have a vote.
3. That voting on the necessary resolutions shall be by electronic means by the groups listed in 2(a)-(d), as specified in the instructions circulated with the resolutions, with the normal quorum of 50.

Recommendations

The General Council at the same meeting agreed to recommend the following to the Special Meeting of the General Assembly:

That the General Council recommend to the virtual Special Meeting of the General Assembly, in the exceptional circumstances linked to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, that:

1. *The next Stated General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, convened to meet in Belfast, on Monday 1 June, 2020, be cancelled.*
2. *All necessary business of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, including any business needing to be conducted at a 2020 Annual Meeting of the General Assembly, be conducted through a '2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly', which shall meet, either in person or by electronic means, on one or more occasions as required.*
3. *The 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly shall have full authority and power to conduct all business that the General Assembly itself has full authority and power to conduct*

through powers given to the General Assembly by any and all sections of the Code.

4. *The 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly be requested to:*
 - (a) *Receive all reports and take all decisions that the Standing Commission itself deems necessary for the conduct of the business of the General Assembly, of its Commissions and Councils, and of the Church as a whole. Decisions taken shall have the standing of full and final decision of the General Assembly itself.*
 - (b) *Remit to a Special Meeting of the General Assembly, ideally to be held at a suitable time in the autumn of 2020:*
 - *all non-urgent business that the Standing Commission deems appropriate;*
 - *full reports from General Assembly Councils and Commissions;*
 - *a full report from the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly.*
5. *The membership of the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly (25 members and quorum of 7) shall be:*
 - (a) *Moderator, Moderator Designate, Clerk (Convener), Deputy Clerk, David Allen (5):*
 - *William Henry, David Bruce, Trevor Gribben, Jim Stothers, David Allen*
 - (b) *Conveners of Councils and Commissions (10):*
 - *Noble McNeely, Frank Sellar, Liz Hughes, Colin Morrison, Trevor McCormick, Nigel McCullough, Daniel Kane, James Livingstone, Norman Cameron, Charles McMullen*
 - (c) *Other Conveners and Officers (7):*
 - *David Thomson (Support Services Convener), Roy Patton (GA Business Convener), Martin Hampton (United Appeal Acting Convener), Uel Marrs (Global Mission Secretary), David Thompson (CCLW Secretary), Lindsay Conway (Social Witness Secretary), Stafford Carson (UTC Principal),*
 - (d) *Additional Members (3):*
 - *Trevor Long (Presbytery Clerk), Daryl Edwards (Presbytery Clerk), Jane Nelson (CCLW Coordination Convener).*
 - (e) *In attendance (2): Stephen Gowdy (GA Solicitor), Clive Knox (Financial Secretary)*

Arrangements for Special Meeting

Arrangements were made with the IT Department to enable what was agreed at Resolution 2 above to be carried out securely. This was done by emailing a link to people in the different categories through which votes could be registered. Ministers of congregations and vacancy conveners were asked to cast votes in accordance with the wishes of relevant representative elders. Clerks of Presbytery were asked to cast votes in accordance with the wishes of relevant corresponding elders.

Notice of the Special Meeting was given in the emails sent on Wednesday 1 April 2020, allowing ten clear days until closure of voting at 12 noon on Saturday 11 April.

DECISION OF SPECIAL MEETING

The Clerk reported that the following resolution had been put to the Special Assembly.

Resolution

That the report of the General Council be received and its recommendations adopted.

Decision

The Clerk reported that voting had been as follows:

Category	Total Votes	Votes For	Votes Against
Congregational Ministers and Representative Elders	506	456	50
Associate, Specified & Retired Ministers	119	112	7
Corresponding Elders etc.	24	23	1
Nominations Committee Elders	19	19	0
TOTAL VOTES CAST	668	610 91.3%	58 8.7%

610 members having voted in favour and 58 members having voted against, the Moderator declared the resolution to be passed.

Thereafter the Moderator declared the Assembly to be dissolved.

The Moderator offered prayer.

The Special Meeting came to a close at 12.05 p.m.

Attested by

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Clerk of Assembly

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – APPENDIX 2

STANDING COMMITTEES APPOINTED

GENERAL COUNCIL – THURSDAY 19 MARCH 2020

Implications of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic

CONTINGENCY PLAN TO ENABLE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COUNCILS TO FUNCTION

- A. Resolutions to enable Standing Committees of Councils (with delegated powers and authority) to be appointed:
1. That using powers granted to it by Par 272(3)&(4) of the Code, the General Council appoint the following ‘Standing Committees’ for the current Councils of the General Assembly:
 - (a) **General Council Standing Committee (9):**
Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Moderator Designate (or Immediate Past Moderator); Very Rev Dr Noble McNeely, Mr David Thomson, Mr Martin Hampton, Rev Jim Stothers, Financial Secretary, Deputy Clerk Designate,
 - (b) **Council for Mission in Ireland Standing Committee (5):**
Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Very Rev Dr Frank Sellar, Rev David Bruce (or Acting Secretary of the Council), Rev Ben Walker, Rev Robert Bell, Rev Johnston Lambe
 - (c) **Council for Global Mission Standing Committee (7):**
Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Rev Dr Liz Hughes, Rev Uel Marris, Rev Fiona Forbes, Mrs Heather Clements, Rev Stephen McCracken
 - (d) **Council for Social Witness Standing Committee (7):**
Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Rev Dr Trevor McCormick, Mr Lindsay Conway, Mr David Hooks, Dr Pamela Marshall, Rev Peter Dickinson
 - (e) **Council for Training in Ministry Standing Committee (7):**
Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Rev Nigel McCullough, Rev Jim Stothers, Principal Stafford Carson, Rev Andrew Falkner, Deputy Clerk Designate
 - (f) **Council for Congregational Life and Witness Standing Committee (8):**
Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Rev Colin Morrison, Rev David Thompson, Rev Philip McCrea, Rev Stephen Richmond, Rev Jane Nelson, Mr Trevor Long

- (g) **Council for Public Affairs Standing Committee (7):**
Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Rev Daniel Kane, Miss Karen Jardine, Dr Andy Brown, Rev Tony Davidson, Rev David J. Clarke.
2. That each Standing Committee shall have delegated to it the full authority and power to conduct all business that the Council itself (and each of its Committees, Panels and Task Groups) has authority and power to conduct through powers given to the Council by any and all sections of the Code and by decisions of the General Assembly, subject to resolution 3 below.
 3. That the General Council Standing Committee shall have authority and power to oversee and coordinate the work of all Council Standing Committees, as required.
 4. That the General Council Standing Committee shall have specific powers to take any necessary and exceptional decisions relating to finance and staffing, as it deems appropriate.

B. Other related Resolutions:

5. That the General Council request the Linkage Commission to appoint a Standing Commission, and delegate to it the full authority and power to conduct all business that the Linkage Commission itself (and each of its Panels) has authority and power to conduct through powers given to the Linkage Commission by any and all sections of the Code and by decisions of the General Assembly.
 - (a) That the recommended membership of the Standing Commission of the Linkage Commission be as follows (10):
Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Mr James Livingstone (Convener), Very Rev Dr Michael Barry, Rev Ker Graham, the Deputy Clerk, Rev David Bruce, Mr Kenny Belshaw, Rev Brian McManus, Mr Brian Knox.
 - (b) That the Standing Commission of the Linkage Commission be requested to coordinate any appropriate aspects of its work, with regard to finance and ‘ministerial staffing’ matters, in cooperation with the General Council Standing Committee.
6. That the General Council request the Judicial Commission to meet by electronic means, and appoint a Standing Commission, and delegate to it the full authority and power to conduct all business that the Judicial Commission itself has authority and power to conduct through powers given to the Judicial Commission by any and all sections of the Code and by decisions of the General Assembly.

- (a) That the recommended membership of the Standing Commission of the Judicial Commission be as follows (10):
Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Rev Norman Cameron (Convener), Mr Philip Gilpin, Mr Dawson McConkey, Rev Jane Nelson, Mr Howard McLean, Rev Tom Greer, Rev John Brackenridge, Rev Amanda Best.
7. That the General Council request the Trustees to appoint a Trustees Standing Committee, and delegate to it the full authority and power to conduct all business that the Trustees have authority and power to conduct through powers given to the Trustees by the relevant Acts of Parliament, by any and all sections of the Code and by decisions of the General Assembly.
 - (a) That the Trustees Standing Committee should have an appropriate balance of Ministers and non-Ministers, and ideally members should be under 70 years of age.
 - (b) 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.

NOTE: The resolutions 1-4 (in section A above) and the resolutions 5-7 (in section B above) were agreed.

GENERAL COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE

Convener: Very Rev Dr JNI McNEELY

Secretary: THE CLERK

INITIAL REPORT

1. The Committee was established by the General Council at its meeting on 19 March 2020. The Council took this decision to enable its business to be conducted during restrictions imposed by the UK Government as a result of the ongoing health emergency.
2. The membership of the Committee is: Rev Dr TD Allen, Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development, Revs DJ Bruce, Secretary to the Council for Mission in Ireland and Moderator Designate, and TD Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly; Mr Martin Hampton Acting Convener of the United Appeal Committee, Very Rev Dr JNI McNeely, Convener of the General Council, Rev TJ Stothers, Deputy Clerk, and Mr David Thomson, Convener of the Support Services Committee. Mr Clive Knox was appointed to sit and deliberate.
3. Part of the work of the Standing Committee has been to act as a ‘business committee’ to make necessary preparations for the June meeting of the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly. (Please note that the report on the remainder of the Standing Committee’s work is included in Section 5 of the General Council Report.)
4. The Standing Committee approved both the Order of Business for the Opening Session of the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly to be held on Monday 1 June 2020 (see Appendix 1) and of the Business Sessions, to be held on Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 June 2020 (see Appendices 2A and 2B).
5. In the current circumstances, the Committee gave permission for the Dublin & Munster Presbytery to withdraw the Memorial that had previously been submitted for consideration by the General Assembly. The Committee also decided to recommend that most General Assembly Convenerships should change on 1 July 2020, with a small number changing on 1 January 2021.
6. It was agreed that, while the new Deputy Clerk and Principal of College, would be appointed at the Standing Commission in June 2020, as they would not be taking up post until 1 January 2021, it would be more appropriate for them to ‘address the Assembly’ at a future meeting. Likewise, the formal resolutions expressing appreciation for both the current Deputy Clerk and current Principal (both of whom would now be retiring on 31 December 2020) would be better remitted to a future meeting.

APPENDIX 1**ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR THE OPENING SESSION
OF THE 2020 STANDING COMMISSION OF
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

7pm Monday, 1 June 2020

(Welcome screen broadcast with background music)

Welcome and Call to Worship – Outgoing Moderator, Rt Rev
Dr William Henry

* Prayer – Outgoing Moderator’s Chaplain

Outgoing Moderator’s Reflections – Dr Henry

* Scripture Reading – Outgoing Moderator’s Chaplain

Outgoing Moderator’s Address: Enjoying God – Dr Henry

* Song

Prayer constituting the 2020 Standing Commission of the
General Assembly - Dr Henry

The Clerk of the General Assembly - Rev Trevor Gribben

Election of the Moderator (by the members of the 2020
Standing Commission)

Prayer of Installation – Dr Henry

Incoming Moderator’s Initial Remarks – Rt Rev Dr David
Bruce

* Scripture Reading – Incoming Moderator’s Chaplain

Incoming Moderator’s Address – Dr Bruce

* Prayer – Incoming Moderator’s Chaplain

* Song

Benediction

(Farewell screen broadcast with background music)

*Note: All pre-recorded items (marked *)*

APPENDIX 2A**ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR THE 2020 STANDING
COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2020	WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE 2020
<p>9.30am Opening Worship – the Moderator Initial Report of the General Council Standing Committee (The Clerk and Very Rev Dr Roy Patton)</p> <p>Presbytery Reports (Clerk and Deputy Clerk)</p> <p>General Assembly Trustees (presented by the Financial Secretary)</p> <p>Council for Global Mission (Rev Dr Liz Hughes and Rev Uel Marrs)</p>	<p>9.30am Opening Worship – the Moderator</p> <p>General Council (Section 3) (Mr David Thomson and Mr Martin Hampton)</p> <p>Council for Congregational Life and Witness (Rev Colin Morrison and Rev David Thompson)</p> <p>General Council (Section 4) (Very Rev Dr Noble McNeely and Very Rev Dr Roy Patton)</p>
11.00am – Coffee Break	11.00am – Coffee Break

<p>11.30am General Council (Section 1) (Very Rev Dr Noble McNeely and the Clerk)</p> <p>Council for Social Witness (Rev Dr Trevor McCormick and Mr Lindsay Conway)</p> <p>Linkage Commission (Mr James Livingstone and the Deputy Clerk)</p>	<p>11.30am Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) (Very Rev Dr Charles McMullen and the Clerk)</p> <p>Council for Training in Ministry (Rev Nigel McCullough and Very Rev Dr Stafford Carson)</p>
<p>1.00pm – Lunch</p>	<p>1.00pm – Lunch</p>
<p>2.00pm General Council (Section 2) (Very Rev Alastair Dunlop* and Rev Daniel Kane)</p> <p>Council for Mission in Ireland (Very Rev Dr Frank Sellar and Rt Rev Dr David Bruce)</p> <p>Judicial Commission, Special Commission and Nominations Commission (Rev Norman Cameron and the Clerk)</p>	<p>2.00pm Council for Public Affairs (Rev Daniel Kane and Miss Karen Jardine*)</p> <p>Overtures (The Clerk and the Deputy Clerk)</p> <p>General Council (Section 5) The Clerk and the Deputy Clerk</p>
<p>3.00pm – Close of Business</p>	<p>Close of the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly</p>

* *Invited to ‘sit and deliberate’ for a particular report*

APPENDIX 2B

GENERAL COUNCIL REPORT

General Council Section 1:

- Executive Summary
- Initial Report of General Council Standing Committee
- Memorial Record
- Deputy Clerk Appointment Task Group
- General Assembly Business Committee
- Reports from other Assemblies
- Church Relations Committee
- Priorities Committee
- Doctrine Committee
- Theological Engagement Task Group

General Council Section 2:

- Implementation Task Group and Additional Booklet
- Human Identity Task Group and Additional Booklet
- Supporting Families Task Group
- Moderator's Advisory Committee
- Guysmere Development Panel

General Council Section 3:

- Support Services Committee
- United Appeal Committee
- Holding Trustees Task Group
- CRA Registration Task Group

General Council Section 4:

- Decision Making and Dissent Task Group
- Vows for Membership and Baptism Task Group
- Making the GA More Accessible Task Group

General Council Section 5:

- Nominations Committee
- General Council Standing Committee
- Ad-Hoc Business – PHSI Report

MEMORIAL RECORD

The Rev Brian Kennaway MA, Minister Emeritus, Crumlin, died on 14 October 2019, in the seventy-sixth year of his age and the forty-fourth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 10 January 1944 to George Kennaway, a boilerman, and his wife, Margaret, née Hyde. The family was connected with Argyle Place congregation on the Shankill Road, which amalgamated with Albert St to form West Kirk in 1971. Mr Kennaway was educated at Crumlin Road Junior School, Crumlin Road, 1949-1953, Carrs Glen Primary School, 1953-1955, and the Boys' Model Secondary School. On leaving school in 1959 at the age of fifteen, he worked in the catering industry. In the autumn of that year he gave his life to Christ following a conversation with his BB Captain. Convinced of a call of God to the ordained ministry he attended Shaftesbury House Tutorial College in 1963, to qualify himself for further study in tertiary education, which he undertook at the Magee University College, Londonderry, from 1967 and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1972. While at Magee, he served as President of the Students Representative Council, 1969-1970. During this period, he was introduced to Elizabeth Grace Curry whom he married 7 August 1971. They had three boys, Ian, Mark and David. Mr Kennaway served his assistantship in Glengormley congregation with the minister, the Rev Cowan Thompson, from 1973, and was licensed by the Presbytery of South Belfast on 15 June 1975. The following year he was ordained by the Presbytery of North Belfast on 1 January. The congregation of Crumlin issued a call early in 1977 and he was installed there by the Presbytery of Templepatrick on 15 March and remained as minister until his retirement on 10 January 2009. In his pulpit and pastoral work, Mr Kennaway preached Christ crucified for sinners and taught his people how to walk with Christ in faithfulness to Him. Beyond his congregational duties, he played an active part in the work of the Presbytery and of the wider Church, serving on, the General Board, the Church and Society Committee, the Judicial Commission, the Council for Public Affairs, and as a member of the Council of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland. Over the years he became involved increasingly in public affairs motivated by his belief that Christians should be salt and light in their communities, acting as 'agents of transforming engagement.' (Os Guinness) Locally, he was a member of the Board of Governors of Crumlin Primary School for twenty-eight years serving for twenty-five of those years as Chairman. He was also a member of the Board of Crumlin High School during the same period. The demography of Crumlin village changed dramatically from being 70% Protestant in 1977, to 80% Catholic in 2007, as many from West Belfast migrated to live in the area. Mr Kennaway worked to form, and to sustain, good relationships across the community. From 1990 to 2008 he served on the Crumlin Community Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) and was Chairman from 2001 to 2008. He also formed and served on Crumlin Community Forum from 1996 to 2006. He had joined the Orange

Order in 1964 and rose to become a prominent and senior figure, serving as Convenor of the Education Committee of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland from 1992 to 2000. It was in this capacity that he became the first Orangeman to officially visit Leinster House, Dublin, housing the Oireachtas. However, as community tensions in Ulster grew, he became increasingly uneasy with the direction the Order was taking, and was an outspoken critic of the leadership explaining his reasons in his book *The Orange Order: A Tradition Betrayed* published in 2006. In September 1998, he visited the United States under the International Visitors Programme (IVP) sponsored by the United States Information Agency (USIA). During this visit he examined the diverse nature of Education and Church Life, as well as examining various Conflict Resolution programmes. A visit to South Africa in February 2003 as part of a Parades Commission initiative funded jointly by the Parades Commission and the Institute for Democracy in South Africa enabled him to further develop his thinking and understanding. He is a contributor to the Dictionary of Irish Biography, and has written extensively on Orangeism and Unionism for newspapers and journals and wrote a blog in which he shared his views on a wide variety of topics. Along with the Very Rev Dr John Dunlop he was appointed to serve on the selection body for the appointment of church representatives to the Civic Forum which met 2000-2002. He was a member of the Council of The Irish Association, of which he acted as Chairman 2009-2014, and in which capacity he aimed ‘to make reason and goodwill take the place of passion and prejudice in Ireland, north and south.’ He served on the Irish Government’s Inter-Departmental Committee, for the development of the Boyne Site, and was a regular contributor at the Police College of the RUC/PSNI. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland appointed him as a member of the Parades Commission for a three-year term, 2011–2013, and he served on the Advisory Board of the Institute for British-Irish Studies at University College Dublin. To all these forums he brought considerable intellectual acuity, and spoke forthrightly with humour, conviction, and fluency, but also exercising grace and forbearance to all with whom he disagreed. We assure his wife, Elizabeth, sons, Ian, Mark and David, daughter-in-law Fran, and the wider family circle, of our prayers, as we thank God for the life and witness of our brother who now inhabits the New Jerusalem, the City of God.

The Rev Douglas Armstrong MA, Minister Emeritus, Greenisland, died on 5 October 2019 in the eighty-seventh year of his age and the sixtieth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 3 March 1933, the eldest of two children to Andrew Armstrong, a storeman, and his wife Violet, née Douglas. His sister, Vera, pre-deceased him in 2017. The family worshipped in Ballysillan congregation where Mr Armstrong was a member of The Boys’ Brigade and of the Christian Endeavour Society, through which he learned early to know and to follow Christ. He attended St Mark’s Primary School on the Ligoniel Road, followed by a

year at the Belfast College of Technology, 1946 to 1947. Aged fourteen, he began an apprenticeship at the Northern Printing Office. However, during this time he heard the call of God to the ordained ministry and took up study at Beattie's Academy on the Crumlin Road. From 1952 to 1955 he attended the Magee University College, Londonderry, and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1956. While at Magee, Mr Armstrong was captain of the soccer team. Returning to Belfast, he studied at the Assembly's College, from 1956 to 1958. He was assistant to the Rev James Sheppard Woods, Ebrington, Derry, 1956 to 1957, and then to the Rev Samuel Ernest Milliken Brown, minister of Seaview, on the Shore Road, Belfast. He was licensed by the Presbytery of North Belfast on 27 May 1958. Two years later, on receiving a call to Balteagh, he was ordained and installed by the Presbytery of Limavady on 11 February 1960. There, he formed a friendship with Eileen Chambers Martin, a teacher, which led to marriage on 7 December 1961. In the succeeding years, four children were born to them, John, Elizabeth, David, and Paul. In 1966, Mr Armstrong was called to the congregation of Strand, Belfast, where he was installed by the Presbytery of East Belfast, on 21 April 1966. During these years he oversaw the building of a new hall and the installation of electric heating in the church premises. Six years later, autumn 1972, he became Superintendent of the Irish Mission, before moving to Greenisland congregation, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on 6 September 1973. In these varied spheres of service, Mr Armstrong proved to be a much-loved pastor. Intelligent and warm-hearted, he had a gift for friendship. At Greenisland he became involved in the local community serving as a governor on the board of Silverstream Primary School, and making many friends as a member of Greenisland Golf Club. Mr Armstrong served the wider Church as Moderator of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine 1995-1996, Convener of the War Memorial Hostel Committee 1969-1977, and Convener of the Committee on Rural Problems 1972-1976. He also convened the Inter-Church Relations Board 1978-1985 during which time the Assembly voted to leave the World Council of Churches in 1980 after prolonged, and often heated, debate. Interested in history, Mr Armstrong was a member and Vice-President of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland. He published the history of *Greenisland Presbyterian Church: The first fifty years, 1934 to 1984*, *The Life and Work of the Rev Prof Thomas Witherow of Maghera and Magee College, Derry, 1824-1890*, and *Rev Sinclair Kelburn, 1754-1802, Preacher, Pastor, Patriot*. Mr Armstrong retired on 6 September 1998, though he continued to minister part-time in several contexts for the next number of years. During his ministry, Mr Armstrong was fully supported by his wife Eileen, who pre-deceased him on 28 July 2008. Mrs Armstrong also was very involved with the central work of the Presbyterian Women's Association (PWA) and served as Overseas Vice President 1991-1992, and as President 1991-1993. We extend our sympathy and prayers

to Mr Armstrong's family, John and Catherine, Elizabeth and Brian, David and Gillian, Paul and Helen, and to the wider family circle, sharing with them in thankfulness to God for the Christian faith and witness of one who now serves Christ in the courts of Heaven.

The **Rev John Lappin MA, DD**, Minister Emeritus (Released), Carndonagh and Malin, County Donegal, died on 1 October 2019 in the eighty-sixth year of his age and the fifty-fifth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 5 April 1934, one of four children, two of whom died young, to John Lappin, a plumber, and his wife Susan, née Galbraith. He was raised in the congregation of Megain Memorial on the Newtownards Road, and attended the Christian Endeavour at Cregagh Congregational Church. He was educated at Nettlefield Primary School and Grosvenor High School. On leaving school, he went to Stranmillis Teacher Training College and gained a certificate in Biblical Studies from the Queen's University, Belfast. A keen sportsman, he played football for Queen's, enjoyed golf, and, in later years, indoor bowls. He became a teacher at Mersey Street Primary School, where he met Mildred Elizabeth McClelland, a student teacher, whom he married at St Bartholomew's Church, Stranmillis, on 11 August 1958. Convinced of the call of God to the ordained ministry he studied for a BA at Trinity College, Dublin, and, following graduation, proceeded to the Assembly's College, Belfast, to study theology. He was assigned as assistant to the Rev Hugh Dermot McMorran in the congregation of Duncairn, Antrim Road, in the autumn of 1963, and was licensed by the Presbytery of East Belfast on 31 May 1964. On 20 January 1965 he was ordained by the Presbytery of North Belfast and, after three years of service at Duncairn, he was called to his first charge in the congregation of Belvoir, Belfast, where he was installed as minister on 16 November 1966. Mr Lappin was the second minister of this young congregation begun as a church extension work in 1963 meeting in a temporary hall, which was replaced in 1965 by a Church building and Minor hall. He continued the work of building up the congregation and consolidating its ministry and outreach. A larger church hall was opened on 19 October 1970 and the congregation was fully erected on 18 February 1973. The following year the congregation of First Ballymacarrett issued a call, which he accepted, and Mr Lappin was installed there on 19 June. These were difficult years when sectarian divisions and terrorism reached their height. Many moved out to quieter areas to live, and others were indifferent to the Church and the Gospel. Mr Lappin ministered in this city context until he was called to Carndonagh and Malin congregations, County Donegal, where he was installed on 20 April 1983. He loved this rural context and he and his wife, who was very involved in church life with him, quickly became part of the community. Mr Lappin had a particular interest in the ministry of healing which he exercised especially as a Chaplain in

Carndonagh Hospital where he became a friend to patients and staff alike. His quiet manner, and deep compassion, opened the door for pastoral ministry in many contexts in which he faithfully commended Jesus, Lord and Saviour. He continued to study during these years and graduated MA from Trinity, on 14 May 1992, and gained a Ph.D. from a South African educational institution. A faithful member of presbytery and the work of the central Church, he served as Moderator of the Derry Presbytery, 1987-1988. Mr Lappin retired on 31 January 2000 and he and Mrs Lappin remained in the community they had come to love so well. We extend our sympathy to Mrs Lappin, Mr Lappin's sister Irene, her husband Tom, their family, and a wide circle of friends, for one who '... loved mercy and walked humbly with his God' (Micah 6:8) who has now joined those '...who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb...and serve him day and night in his temple.' (Revelation 7:14,15)

The Rev Joseph Mooney, Minister Emeritus, Grange, Ballymena, died on 28 February 2020, in the one hundred and third year of his age, and the fifty-ninth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 2 June 1917, the second of four boys to John Mooney who worked in the linen industry, and his wife, Annie Elizabeth, née Duffie. The family worshipped in the congregation of Oldpark, North Belfast, under the ministries of the Rev James McCoach, and his successor, the Rev James Dunlop. Mr Mooney received his secondary education at the Belfast Boys' Model School. He was a member of The Boys' Brigade and through its influence committed his life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour at the age of sixteen. Keen to serve his Master, he became a Sunday School teacher two years later. He had moved to Belfast Technical College, and it was during this period that a sense of call to full-time missionary service in Africa developed. With this in mind, at the age of twenty, he went to Glasgow to study at the Bible Training Institute, followed by two years at the American Bible College, Oklahoma City, 1938-1940, graduating BTh. In the summer of 1940, he sailed in convoy on a Troop ship to West Africa, as the Second World War was then in progress. This was to be his sphere of service for the next twenty years working under the auspices of Serving In Mission (SIM). He learned the Hausa language and engaged in Pioneer Evangelism in remote areas travelling on foot, or by bicycle, or motor-bike, to preach and teach. He was a gifted evangelist and personal worker, at one point overcoming the determined resistance of twenty-eight members of the Manau Tribe to win them to Christ in the space of two months. Mr Mooney worked in remote areas, and life was often lonely, so letters were important and eagerly anticipated. Among those he particularly looked for were letters from Margaret Elizabeth Jameson whom he had met at Glasgow Bible Institute. Friendship

grew into love and Mr Mooney proposed in a letter to Margaret. Six weeks later the reply came back – ‘Yes’ – and they were married on 28 November 1945, at Jos, central Nigeria. SIM posted them to the north of Nigeria where they settled to missionary life. Margaret was a trained nurse and midwife and her medical and practical skills were invaluable to the witness of Christian compassion and evangelism. Animism was widespread and the Mooneys were troubled about the widespread practice of leaving new-born twins to die in the Bush because they were regarded as a bad omen. However, their teaching of the Gospel brought the practice to an end, so evidencing the power of the Gospel to transform darkened minds and cruel traditions. Their son, Gordon, and daughter, Eileen, were born in Africa, and it was to further their education that the family returned to Ireland in 1959. Mr Mooney then studied for the ordained ministry at the Assembly’s College, Belfast, 1959-1960. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 2 October 1960, and assigned as assistant to the minister of Bloomfield, the Rev John Whiteford Orr, ministering there until he was called to the congregation of Grange, Ballymena, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 28 July 1961. Over the twenty-one years of his ministry at Grange, he commended himself and his Saviour to his own people and to the wider community with his warm and outgoing personality. The congregation prospered spiritually and materially under his wise and energetic leadership, and with his sense of humour he was able often to defuse potentially divisive situations. A gifted story-teller, he was sought after as speaker and compere at countless functions throughout the countryside. Many of his stories were published in three volumes, entitled *Joe’s Jokes*, the proceeds of which went to support the work of the Irish Mission of our Church. On 6 December 1964 he was appointed Clerk to the Ballymena Presbytery which he served assiduously until 1982. In 1966, he was appointed Stated Supply to Craigmore, which meant he had three services every Sunday, and he undertook the work of pastoral assistant in High Kirk, and First Ballymena, congregations, for seven and a half years and four and a half years, respectively. Mr Mooney retired on 1 November 1983. He and his wife acted as wardens to Lowry Court for some years and he served as pastoral visitor to the senior members of St John’s, Newtownbreda, working alongside the Rev Wilfred Orr, son of his former boss, Very Rev Dr John Orr. In 2009 he lost his beloved wife who had served alongside him with devotion. To his son, Gordon, his daughter Eileen, and the wider family circle, we extend our sympathy as, with them, we give thanks for the long life and faithful service of our brother and friend, who now enjoys the riches of eternal life and the glory of the Saviour whom he uplifted and commended to so many.

The Rev Samuel Watson McClintock, BA, BD, Minister Emeritus (Released) Kilbride, died on 19 February 2020, in the ninety-first year of his age and the fifty-second year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 16 April 1929, one of five children to Samuel McClintock and his wife, Mary Isabella, née Watson. He attended

school successively at Everton Primary School, Percy Street Junior Model School, Waringstown (while evacuated), Boys' Model then Belfast High 1942-1946. On leaving school he started working life in the insurance business, with the firm of R Martin Son & Co Limited, Belfast, and, over the next number of years, qualified A.C.I.T. and A.M.C.I.B. Having attended Crumlin Road Presbyterian Church as a child, he later became heavily involved in Ballysillan Presbyterian Church, especially through The Boys' Brigade. Convinced of the call of God to the ordained ministry he studied at the Queen's University, Belfast, 1961-1964, graduating BA. This was followed by three years of theological education at the Assembly's College, Belfast, graduating BD. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 29 May 1967, and assigned as assistant to the Rev Ronald Gavin Craig, then minister of Woodvale congregation, Belfast, where he was ordained on 29 November, 1967. The 'Troubles' broke out in 1968, and there was fierce inter-communal violence in North Belfast during which homes were burnt out. Mr McClintock and a fellow assistant minister, Ron Savage, toured the area on Mr Savage's motor-bike to hang posters with scriptural messages of peace, such as - "love thy neighbour" and "overcome evil with good" - on many of these buildings, acutely aware they could become targets themselves. Mr McClintock also helped to organise a refugee shelter in Woodvale Presbyterian Church Hall. In 1969 he was called to the joint charge of Boveedy and Second Kilrea, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Coleraine on 20 November. His experience of the Troubles in Belfast prepared him to minister to at least two families in the area who lost loved ones in the ongoing and widespread violence. His friendly, outgoing personality and ready sense of humour, commended him to the people of the area. After ten years of steady ministry he moved to Kilbride where he was installed by the Presbytery of Templepatrick on 24 April 1979. During his ministry the congregation grew both numerically and spiritually. The number of families increased from three hundred to five hundred and seventy. Over the years he held five evangelistic missions and personally led several to faith in Christ. A church bus was purchased which enabled outings to be organised across the Province. He showed practical concern for people's employment difficulties by promoting the "Action, Community Employment" (ACE) Scheme, designed to reduce unemployment and offer assistance to needy members of the local community. Mr McClintock was an active member of his presbytery of which he was Moderator, 1985-1986. He served as convener to two General Assembly committees, the Arrangements Committee, 1976-1983, and the Church House and Assembly Hall Committee, 1987-1994, in which capacities his gifting and experience in finance and administration were fully utilised, especially in a major renovation of Assembly Buildings, re-opened in 1992 and soon afterwards visited by HRH the Princess of Wales. Mr McClintock married Mavis Morrison on 20 April 1965 at Ballysillan Presbyterian Church and they had three daughters, Brenda,

Rosemary and Alison. He retired on 31 January 1996, and joined Saintfield Road congregation, Belfast, where, for almost twenty years, he and Mrs McClintock ran the seniors' fortnightly meeting, Tuesday Break. Their loving partnership was sundered by the passing of Mrs McClintock in 2008. Mr McClintock assisted the minister of Saintfield Road, the Rev Alistair Bill, in various ways, as well as exercising a pastoral ministry to seniors in the congregation of Malone. He is survived by his daughters and their families, and his sister, Elizabeth. To them and the wider family circle we extend our sympathy and prayers in 'the full assurance of hope' that the 'things not seen' are now enjoyed in the Father's House.

The Rev John Mann, BA, BD, Minister Emeritus (Released), Ballina, Killala and Ballymote, died on 4 April 2020 in the eighty-sixth year of his age and the fifty-ninth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 6 March 1935, the second of three children to John Mann, a sea captain, and his wife, Annie Elizabeth (Elsie), née Megarry. He was brought up in Bangor, County Down, and attended Hamilton Road, under the ministries of the Revs James Millar Craig and Eric Moses Borland. He was educated at one of the Bangor primary schools, followed by Bangor Grammar School. He then studied at the Queen's University, Belfast, for three years, 1952-1955, graduating BA. By this time, he had been accepted as a student for the ordained ministry, and he began his theological studies at New College, Edinburgh, 1955-1957, followed by a year at Union Seminary, Richmond, Virginia, 1957-1958, and finishing at the Assembly's College, Belfast, 1958-1959. It was during his student time at New College that he met Elizabeth (Betsy) Mary Brittain from Brevard, North Carolina. They were married on 23 August 1958. Mr Mann was licensed by the Presbytery of Ards on 6 September 1959, and assigned as assistant to the Rev James Rowland Boyd, Great Victoria Street, Belfast, who was appointed Professor of Practical Theology at the Assembly's College, in 1963. In 1961 Mr Mann was called to the joint charge of First Ballybay, Cahans, Derryvalley and Drumkeen, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Monaghan on 6 April 1961. For four years he ministered conscientiously to his people, but during this time he and Mrs Mann were increasingly drawn to serve overseas. Accepted by the Overseas Board in 1965, they moved to Edinburgh for preparatory studies and in 1966 he was accepted and appointed to serve in Beirut, Lebanon, to which he and his young family moved. There they worked with the Mission to the Jews, in which our Church has had an interest since 1842, when our first missionary, the Rev William Graham, Dundonald, went to Damascus. Mr Mann studied Arabic and became proficient in the language. He visited homes and businesses, and ran a centre for young people in the evenings, teaching Muslims, Jews and Christians, and providing recreational activities. Their time in Lebanon

was brought to a close in 1975 by the civil war and, on returning home, they settled in the vacant Clones manse until he was called and then installed in the joint charge of Clones, Stonebridge, Ballyhobridge, and Newbliss by the Presbytery of Monaghan on 15 September 1976. Over the ensuing years, the call to overseas mission remained strong, and so, in 1988, they travelled to Malawi to work with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod. From 1988, Mrs Mann taught, and Mr Mann had a ministry with, young people in schools and in the Church of Central Africa congregation of St Michael and all Angels, Blantyre. They returned to Ireland in 1998 and Mr Mann was installed in the congregations of Ballina, Killala and Ballymote, on 27 May 1999, by the Presbytery of Dublin & Munster, pastoring his people until his retirement on 6 June 2005. He and his wife lived at Whitehead for some years until moving to Blairgowrie, Scotland, to be near their daughter, Beth. We give thanks to God for the ministry of our brother and assure his wife Betsy, son John Thomas (Ian), daughters Beth and Judy, his sister Isma, and their families, of our sympathy and prayers in their loss, looking to Jesus Christ who is our hope and salvation.

The Rev Charles Ivan McKnight, BA, Minister without charge, died on 6 April 2020, in the seventy-second year of his age and the thirty-seventh year of his ministry. He was born at Rosetta, Belfast, on 11 April 1948, the elder of two sons, to Charles George McKnight, then minister of Croaghmore, and his wife, Patricia Rodie Armstrong, née Dickey. Mr McKnight was raised in connection with the congregation of Ballyalbany, Monaghan, to which his father moved in February 1949. He was educated at the Model School, Monaghan, 1952-1959, and Methodist College, Belfast, 1959-1965. After some years working in banking, then with Inglis Bakery, and later at Isaac Agnew's car showroom, he attended the Belfast College of Business Studies, 1972-1975, and the Northern Ireland Polytechnic, 1977-1980, from which he graduated BA. On 8 July 1970 he married Yvonne Louisa Smiley, and they had three sons, Charles, Alan and Stephen. It was through the sad loss of Alan at ten months of age that Mr McKnight sensed the call of God into the ordained ministry and set him on his course of study which took him to the Assembly's College, Belfast, to read theology, 1980-1983. The Presbytery of Monaghan licensed him at Ballyalbany on 5 June 1983, and he was assigned assistant to the Rev Thomas Vincent Craig in the congregation of Ballysillan, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of North Belfast on 18 January 1984. In 1985 he was called to the joint charge of Garvaghy and Anaghlonge where he was installed by the Presbytery of Iveagh on 21 March 1985. Two years later he moved to the linked charge of First and Second Ray and Newtowncunningham and he was installed there by the Presbytery of Donegal on 9 August 1987. After another four years he was installed in Ballygomartin, Belfast, on 26 February 1991, from where he retired in 1993. Throughout these years Mr McKnight exercised a kindly,

compassionate, pastoral ministry, both in the pulpit and among his people, through the varied experiences of life and of congregational activity. To Mrs McKnight, sons Charles and Stephen, Mr McKnight's brother, Desmond, and their wider family circle, we offer our sincere sympathy and prayerful support.

The Rev Desmond Shaw, BA, Minister Emeritus (Released), Edenderry and Seskinore, died on 10 April 2020, in the ninety-seventh year of his age and the seventy-first year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 3 March 1924, the youngest of two children, to Martin White Shaw, civil servant, and his wife, Nellie Caroline Freda, née Adams. The family moved to Bangor and worshipped in Trinity congregation under the notable preaching ministry of the Rev George William Wimperis. He was educated at Bangor Grammar and Sullivan Upper secondary schools, and continued into tertiary level education, attending Magee College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, 1941 to 1945, graduating BA. Following the call of God to the ordained ministry, he studied at New College, Edinburgh, where he was student assistant to the Rev Dr White Anderson at St Cuthbert's, and completed his studies at the Assembly's College, Belfast, in the session 1947 to 1948. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Ards on 1 August 1948, and served his assistantship in Fitzroy Avenue congregation, Belfast, to the Rev Robert Ernest Alexander, until he was called to Wellington Street, Ballymena, and ordained there by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 27 July 1949. Mr Shaw's warm personality, thoughtful preaching and strong work ethic commended his ministry, and the congregation grew substantially over the years. During his time, a Children's Church, a Girls' Brigade company and a Sunday evening Youth Fellowship were started. A new church hall was erected and opened in September 1955, and adaptations made to the church itself. After a ministry of fourteen years he moved to Waterside, Londonderry, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Derry on 30 April 1963. Derry became a hotspot of inter-community troubles in 1969 where the Battle of the Bogside was fought in August of that year, and which bequeathed a heritage of bitter political and sectarian division. Mr Shaw's involvement in wider community ministry led him to apply to work with the Community Relations Commission for Northern Ireland, which was established in 1969 along with a Ministry for Community Relations at Stormont. In 1970 he was appointed an Officer with the Commission. The work involved liaising with, and encouraging, bodies engaged in stimulating harmonious cross-community relations, providing educational programmes, and advising government on allied issues. Mr Shaw remained with the Commission until 1979 when he returned to full-time church-based ministry and was installed as minister in Dundalk with Castlebellingham and Carlingford, by the Presbytery of Newry on 11 October 1979, until he moved to Edenderry and Seskinore and was installed in this linked charge by the Presbytery of Omagh on 2 September 1983. Mr Shaw was an erudite and approachable man who

cared for his people in the several congregations that he served. His gifts were made available to the wider Church through his membership of several central boards and committees - Christian Training and Evangelism; Christian Stewardship and Lay Evangelism; Training of Church Members; and the Churches Industrial Council. He retired on 13 March 1989. Throughout these years Mr Shaw was supported by his wife Mildred (Milly) Wallace Shaw, née Jackson, a daughter of the Rev Culbertson Jackson of the Crescent, Belfast, and sister to the Rev Bill Jackson, Shankill Road Mission, and also to Edward (Teddy) Jackson, who worked for the Overseas Board as Treasurer of the Church in Gujarat, India. Mr and Mrs Shaw were married on 14 June 1956, and Mrs Shaw predeceased her husband on 26 January 2019. We extend our sympathy to their sons Michael and Peter, daughters Rosalind and Caroline, and the wider family circle, as together we give thanks to God for the ministry of our brother.

The Rev **John Craig Teeney**, Minister without charge, died on 28 April 2020, in the fifty-first year of his age, and the twenty-first year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 19 June 1968, the youngest of four children to John Teeney, an electrician at Harland and Wolff and his wife Sarah, née Robinson. He was brought up in the congregation of Bethany, which amalgamated with Agnes Street in 1971 and was erected as Immanuel. Within the fellowship and ministry of the church he came to faith in Christ as Lord and Saviour and showed his dedication through service with The Boys' Brigade, Sunday School, Junior C.E., Youth Club and Youth Fellowship. He was educated at Cliftonville Primary and the Boys' Model 1979-1984. On leaving school, he worked as a draughtsman in Harland and Wolff's shipyard. Being convinced of God's calling to the ordained ministry, in 1989 he went to the University of Ulster to study Transport Technology, and graduated BSc in 1992. The previous year he married Caroline Gillespie in Woodvale Presbyterian Church on 25 July 1991. On completing his primary degree, he studied theology at the Union Theological College, Belfast, between 1992 and 1995, graduating BTh. He was licensed on 14 June 1995 and served his assistantship in Carnmoney congregation to the Rev J Stafford Carson, where he ministered with energy and enthusiasm, displaying a passion for the Gospel in his preaching and exercising a compassionate, pastoral ministry. During these years Mr and Mrs Teeney's daughters, Beth and Rebecca, were born, and the first signs of MS disease began to show in Mr Teeney. In 1998 he was called to the joint charge of Carlisle Road, Londonderry, and Crossroads, where he was ordained and installed by the Presbytery of Derry on 1 May. Their son, Joel, was born there in 2000. Mr Teeney showed great commitment to his people and to an outreach ministry on the west bank of the River Foyle. His warmth of personality and sincerity commended him to all ages. He was chaplain to both the 3rd Londonderry Boys' Brigade Company and the 94th Girls' Brigade Company. By September 1999, a rapid deterioration in his health

was making working life more difficult and he was obliged to seek early retirement on medical grounds on 31 July 2000. He moved to Ballyclare where his family cared for him with great devotion over the ensuing years. Only a few weeks ago he was admitted to Antrim Area hospital where he passed away. Throughout these years he showed great courage, faith and good nature. To Mrs Teeney, their children Beth, Rebecca and Joel, Mr Teeney's brother, Fred, sisters Joyce and Ivis, and the wider family circle, we extend our sincere sympathy and pray for them the assurance that 'neither death nor life...nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

The Rev John McConnell (Con) Auld, MA, Emeritus: RE teacher, died on 28 April 2020, in the ninety-first year of his age and the sixty-sixth year of his ministry. He was born at Holywood, on 15 September 1929, the younger of two brothers, (Roderick predeceased him), to John Auld, a Master Mariner, and his wife, Margaret McConnell, née Morrow. Raised in connection with First Holywood, he was educated at Sullivan Upper Preparatory school and Belfast Royal Academy. He attended Magee University College, Londonderry, from 1948, and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1952, gaining his MA, also from Trinity, in 1955. In preparation for the ordained ministry, he studied theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey, USA, 1952-1953, and the Assembly's College Belfast, 1953-1954. While in America, he spent some time as an entertainer to the American Forces in Korea and Japan. During his student years, he assisted in First Derry and in Cregagh, Belfast. He was licensed and ordained on 2 June 1954 by the Presbytery of Ards, and went to Australia, under the auspices of the Commonwealth Mission of our Church, to minister in the congregation of Goodwood, Adelaide, part of the Presbyterian Church, South Australia. He found the congregation in debt and the people dispirited, but gave such leadership, that, when he returned home four years later, he left them with renewed energy and drive. On returning to Ireland in 1958, he was appointed a Classics and Divinity teacher in the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, where he remained for the next thirty years until his retirement in 1988. During his teaching career he was appointed a senior housemaster and Head of Divinity. Mr Auld retained his standing within the Church by serving as an assistant in Crescent Church, Belfast, 1958-1962, and he was inducted into recognised service under the Church's Education Board in 1972. He kept up his connection with America as a member of the American Youth Foundation, Michigan, to which he travelled every second summer to teach sailing and to lecture at the summer camps. Mr Auld was a man of wide interests. He was a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and was interested in architecture. He bought a property at Port Bradden on the north coast and restored an old calf house which was dedicated as an ecumenical worship centre

called St Gobbans. It was referred to as the smallest church building in Ireland and some weddings were celebrated in it. Visitors from all over the world left donations which amounted to more than £100,000 which was given to various charities. The structure was demolished some years ago after Mr Auld sold the house and property. He told the story of the church in *Letters to a Causeway Coast Millhouse*. He further shared his interest in buildings in two more published books – *Forgotten Houses of Holywood*, and, *Holywood Then and Now: Essays by an Old Resident at the Beginning of a New Millennium*. Between 1973 and 1988 he was active in politics as a member of the Ulster Unionist Party and he was an elected member for Holywood to North Down Borough Council. On four occasions, in the early 1980s, he served as Deputy-Mayor and Mayor of North Down. We record our thanks to God for his life in ministry and teaching, and express our sympathy to his family circle, especially his sister-in-law Claire, nephews and nieces, Clifford, Caroline, Helen, cousin Janet, and the wider family circle.

DEPUTY CLERK APPOINTMENT TASK GROUP

1. The 2019 General Assembly, having been notified by the Deputy Clerk, the Rev Jim Stothers, of his intention to retire in the autumn of 2020, approved a revised Job Description and Personnel Specification for the post of Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Deputy General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The 2019 Assembly also passed the following resolution:
 - (a) *That the General Council be instructed to take all steps necessary to bring the name of a sole nominee to the 2020 General Assembly, for appointment as Deputy Clerk and Deputy General Secretary.*
2. The General Council, at its meeting on 10 October 2019, appointed the following Task Group to take forward the process:
 - Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly (Convener);
 - Relevant Conveners: General Council Convener, Support Services Committee Convener, Linkage Commission Convener, Council for Training in Ministry Convener, Conciliation Panel Convener;
 - Clerks of Presbytery: Rev Robert Herron and Rev Dr Trevor McCormick (Presbytery Clerks)
 - Head of Personnel

The Moderator and Clerk were authorised to appoint appropriate alternates if required.
3. The post was advertised and the Task Group met to draw up questions for interview and then to short-list the applications received. Interviews were held and a successful candidate unanimously agreed.

4. The Task Group reported the outcome of the interviews to the meeting of the General Council on Thursday 19 March 2020, when the following resolution was passed:

That the name of the Rev Dr David Allen be forwarded to the General Assembly for appointment as Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Deputy General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. The Business Committee has continued to review the work and arrangements of the General Assembly, meeting three times since the previous General Assembly.
2. It was noted that the 2019 General Assembly had passed the following resolution:

That the experimental evening sessions be continued in 2020 and that a task group be appointed to further consult and explore ways to make the General Assembly even more accessible for those who have found attending difficult.

3. Accordingly, the ‘Making the General Assembly More Accessible’ Task Group was so appointed and its report is included as a separate item for discussion and decision at the 2020 General Assembly.
4. **A Draft Order of Business for 2020** was agreed and approved by the committee. This includes the following:
 - (a) Again there will be two evening business sessions, Tuesday and Thursday as well as the Evening Celebration on the Wednesday. The assembly business will start at 10.30 am on the Tuesday morning and at 11.00am from Wednesday to Friday.
 - (b) There will be ‘alternative presentations’ on Tuesday evening and Thursday afternoon featuring respectively, the Council for Social Witness and, jointly, the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) and the Council for Training in Ministry.
 - (c) ‘Listening to the Global Church’ will again feature on Wednesday afternoon.
 - (d) Communion at the Tuesday communion service will again, in addition to the ground floor, be served in the central section of the gallery.

- (e) There will be a trial of displaying the words of all resolutions on screen and in the live-stream.
 - (f) Material from the Implementation Task Group and the Human Identity Task Group will be distributed to the Assembly as separate printed booklets
 - (g) Permission was given for the distribution as a printed booklet (A5 format) to the 2020 General Assembly of:
 - (i) the draft pastoral guidelines on same sex attraction together with the draft resource on 'credible profession of faith'; and
 - (ii) the draft guidelines for pastoral care of people who struggle with gender identity, and their families.
5. **The Arrangements Panel** has appropriate matters in hand, and a budget of £20,000 has been agreed for recommendation to the Assembly.
6. **Appointment of Delegations to other Assemblies etc:** delegates have been appointed to other church assemblies and meetings:
- (a) Church of Ireland Synod in May 2020: the Very Rev Dr Charles McMullen and a local elder.
 - (b) The Methodist Conference in June 2020: the Rt Rev Dr William Henry and a local elder.
 - (c) The Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Wales: the Rev David Bruce and Mrs Zoë Bruce.
 - (d) The annual meeting of the Society of Friends: the Very Rev Dr Ian McNie.
7. The Committee reviewed the contents of a Memorial from the Dublin & Munster Presbytery concerning holding an Assembly in Dublin on a regular basis. The General Council accepted the Committee's recommendations that:
- (a) holding the Assembly in Dublin once in every four years is not practicable and should be resisted at the Assembly.
 - (b) holding the Assembly in Dublin in the near future be encouraged and that a small Task Group be appointed to consult on this and report back to the Council through the Committee.

[NOTE: Implementation of most of what is reported above has been prevented by the circumstances surrounding the Coronavirus health emergency].

ROY PATTON, Convener

REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND

The Very Rev Dr Charles McMullen reports:

1. The 250th Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland was held in Cork (12 – 16 June 2019). Surprisingly, there was very little emphasis on what appeared to be such a significant milestone in the history of Irish Methodism. Instead the Conference struck a more contemporary note of business as usual, combining worship and prayer with good listening and discussion. Some profound administrative and structural changes were consolidated, but above all, many encouraging stories were shared of God at work.
2. We met in the bright and spacious church premises at Ardfallen which were officially opened in 1989 and where, in the surrounding three acre grounds, there is provision for twenty-eight units of sheltered housing. Sunday morning worship here was vibrant and, reflective of so many congregations throughout the Irish Republic, brought together many different nationalities.
3. The new Methodist President, Rev Samuel McGuffin, set out his theme, “God is our Adventure”, at an impressive service of installation held in the Church of the Incarnation, Frankfield. He reminded us that in every generation there were issues to overcome, but the same grace and power of God were available to us today that had enabled Paul and his mission team to take the Gospel to at least forty cities of strategic importance. The President highlighted various people in Romans 16 who “trusted the Lord completely and because they lived with him in the truest and fullest sense their lives were an adventure with God.” As he preached, I appreciated the wonderful devotional insights that flowed from his pastoral heart. He chaired subsequent meetings with characteristic warmth, gentleness and good humour.
4. An interesting feature of the Conference is the manner in which the Lay Leader presides at some of the sessions. That role was graciously and competently fulfilled this year by Mrs Lynda Neilands. The Secretary of the Conference, Rev Dr Thomas McKnight, was elected as President Designate and Hazel Loney as the new Lay Leader. Other appointments included Rev Dr Heather Morris as the new Conference Secretary and Rev Dr Janet Unsworth as the new Principal of Edgehill College.
5. Last year it was agreed to reduce the number of districts from eight to three. Revs Andrew Dougherty, Stephen Skuce and Philip Agnew were prayed for as they prepared to take up their full-time posts as District Superintendents for the Southern, North Western and North Eastern Districts respectively. This exciting new role is designed to provide overall vision, leadership, oversight and support for the Church with considerable emphasis being placed on mission and outreach.

6. A significant change at this year's conference was the decision to lift the eight-year maximum placement term for ministers. While wanting to emphasise that the Methodist Church remains a "sending church", stationing on a year to year basis, the District Superintendent will now carry out a formal review every three years with the minister and the Circuit officials. Although this is to retain the value of itinerancy, it will also now allow for continuity and the completion of particular plans for congregations.
7. There are innovative developments when it comes to the training of students offering themselves for the Methodist ministry. A greater emphasis is emerging on the combination of theology and praxis, as students are placed in different contexts and learn by experience. In addition to traditional theological and academic learning, there is a healthy concentration on the formation of the student's Christian character.
8. When it came to the day-to-day reports of the Conference, there were two interesting aspects. The first was the taking of resolutions on non-controversial matters *en bloc* which seemed to give more time for discussion of more pressing matters. Prior notification had to be given for specific discussion on any of the resolutions which would otherwise be taken corporately. Secondly, the General Committee authorised a trial of a "Collaborative Decision Making" process, which meant each member being given two cards – one green and the other blue. From time to time the President tested the mind of Conference by a show of cards - green indicating a favourable reaction and blue a somewhat cooler response!
9. There are many similarities between our two denominations. A renewed call was made to give one per cent of income to world development and relief. It is almost fifty years since the first Methodist World Development Appeal was launched. Rather than fluctuating from place to place and cause to cause on an annual basis, there has been a long-term commitment to people and building relationships. During this past year, for example, £263 000/€307,710 was shared with partners including Bina Silwal in Nepal, Pooja Rajiv in India and Joseph Dunkoh in Ghana. Methodist families are encouraged to give on a monthly basis by standing order and 2018 was the third year of the alternative Christmas Gifts catalogue.
10. "God's our mission" discipleship cards were introduced for the 2019-2020 session. The strapline is "warm hearts; tough hands; wet feet". It is worth repeating the contents of the card:
"We will be warm-hearted, rejoicing and confident in the gospel. To enable this, we will:
 - (a) Commit to Prayer
 - (b) Expect that at least five hundred children, young people and adults around the Connexion will bear witness that their faith came alive this year

- (c) We will develop tough hands as we help each other to be more like Jesus. To enable this, we will:
 - (d) Ensure at least 50% of each of our gathered communities are committed to intentional discipleship; growing together and being sent out as followers of Jesus in everyday life
 - (e) Gather for dynamic, creative, participatory and spirit-filled worship preparing us for mission and endearing God to others
 - (f) Live as if we want young people and children to be part of the church family even if that means making hard choices
 - (g) We will get our feet wet as we step out into the world. To enable this, we will:
 - (h) Start or renew ten communities of faith in Ireland
 - (i) Obey God’s call to get to know and love our communities – both local and global
 - (j) Be communities of learning and training: telling the stories and learning from what God is doing here and around the world.”
11. It was a pleasure to bring the greetings of our General Assembly and to reflect on my personal links with the Methodist Church, going back to the late 1970s and the two years I spent in student accommodation at Wesley House when I was at Trinity College, Dublin, and the friendships subsequently formed when students at Edgehill and Union Theological College trained together. It was a particular joy to reflect on the close association I had enjoyed during my Moderatorial year with the Methodist President, Rev Billy Davison.
12. Overall I found the Conference inspiring, encouraging and challenging. Several times I heard members speak of Methodism in terms of family and the warmth of close relationships that had sustained them during difficult times. Similar to PCI, there are indeed many daunting challenges facing the Church, but there were many stories of God at work in people’s lives and making a real difference. “God is our Adventure”.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WALES

The Rt Rev Dr William Henry writes:

Eglwys Bresbyteriaidd Cmyru,

1. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Wales met in the comfortable surroundings of the Wrexham Glyndwr University from 8 – 10 July 2019. Immediately the benefits of a residential based Assembly became apparent in the genuine and fulsome welcome we received upon arrival. There is ample time for making connections with all the delegates and space to converse and consider the happenings of

the Assembly itself. I am deeply appreciative of the friendship in the Gospel I received during my time in Wales.

2. The bulk of the Assembly business and the periods of informal rest over mealtimes are centred upon the University and is very conducive to real reflection and fellowship. The peculiarity (at least from our perspective!) of having bilingual business sessions is extremely well organised and seamless in operation. The importance of Welsh speaking to PCW is evident as the vast majority of the denomination's congregations are within Welsh speaking districts. Translation into English of the reports (ahead of the Assembly) and the real-time translation of speeches and everything else is a huge task but deeply appreciated!
3. It is hard to get to grips with the statistics of the denomination because they seem so foreign to our context in Ireland. The Presbyterian Church of Wales accounts for around 20, 000 members in 600 congregations but with less than 40 ministers. 20% of churches actually have fewer than 10 persons. A great amount of time at the Assembly had to do with the reality of maintaining a much-loved institution but with dwindling resources.
4. Issues of identity as a Christian people generally, but more specifically within a framework of the importance of the Welsh language, and that identity, surely encourages believers everywhere to reflect about how to engage in culturally relevant mission work in the twenty first century.
5. The outgoing Moderator of the Assembly, Rev Brian Matthews, touched upon aspects of this in his valedictory address which was a sermon developed from his theme for his Moderatorial year – Christ before Chapel, Cross before Country, Confession before Culture. Unusually the change of Moderator does not occur until the penultimate evening of the Assembly. What this means in practice is that the outgoing Moderator conducts nearly all of the business of the Assembly – one of the positives of this is that the Moderator has spent a lot of the previous year being very acquainted with much of the work of the Assembly and is familiar with it.
6. The incoming Moderator of the Assembly was installed on that same evening – the Rev Marcus Robinson. Rev Robinson has enjoyed a great deal of experience as a parish minister and many years serving as a chaplain with the Royal Navy. He is a man with a large voice and a large presence and I wish him well in his year of Office. I valued the time he spent with me and my family in Wales – as our son Connor was the youngest “almost delegate” at the Assembly!
7. The blessing of the Welsh Assembly is that such a great deal of time is spent in corporate worship. Each morning, there is a time of devotion led by a minister of the Moderator's choosing and on the opening evening there is an Assembly gathering for communion in a local church. At this latter event, the Rev Neil Kikham of Llandundno challenged the church to consider the foundations upon which it builds basing his thoughts from 1 Cor 3. Again, all very relevant to a church witnessing in rapidly changing contexts.

8. My abiding memory will always be of the amazing singing of these Welsh saints – even if it is a strange simultaneous mixture of Welsh and English.
9. Much of the business during the week was routine and dealing with matters of maintenance. I was, however, struck by the report from the Youth Department which, although picking up on a work dealing with small numbers, was brimming full of optimism and energy. The denomination still has a youth centre at Bala which has been used exceedingly well and creatively for the continuing good of the local church. There had been some debate in the recent past to sell the centre but it was evident that the work emanating from Bala was positive for the denomination.
10. The real debate and point of contention during the Assembly did not arise until the very last moment, indeed during deferred business. It was under a debate on whether the church should accept Lottery Funding money for church projects. This had been under discussion several times in previous years. Each time apparently there had been a resounding “No.” The decision of the 2018 Assembly was to send the matter out for consideration by the congregations and return to the matter at the 2019 Assembly. Even at that point it was suggested that the decision not to accept such money was a defining mark of the Welsh Presbyterian Church (the Connexion.)
11. But all that changed in the final moments of the debate as a decision was recorded - 35 ‘For’ and 33 ‘Against’. This was for applications for building projects where the church itself is a Grade1 Listed building. Many were deeply unhappy at the monumental change of direction of the church, in view of the small majority and, more significantly, where it might lead to in the future.
12. It is a reminder to us all in these days of change and referenda – that significant developments can result from slim margins. As ever, it speaks to us about how we deal with disagreement.

CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met twice since the 2019 General Assembly.

Irish Council of Churches (ICC) and Irish Inter Church Committee (IICC)

2. The General Secretary, Dr Brady, was a participant in the prestigious Eisenhower Fellowship May-June 2019, completing a fellowship project in the area of overcoming societal division with an emphasis on leadership in the faith sector. An extensive programme was arranged with events in Ireland, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, Nashville, San Antonio, New York and San Antonio. The ICC and IICM have

access to a wide range of matters relating to collaborative working and faith integration through Dr Brady's interaction with a variety of projects both nationally and internationally. Dr Damian Jackson continues to work with local inter-church groups and migrant churches. The churches are served by a very effective General Secretary and Programme Officer and their team.

3. The Joint Management Committee (JMC) has welcomed Rebecca Schwindt to the ICC staff team as Finance Assistant.
4. The ICC AGM, which was to be held in April, was cancelled. The Very Rev Dr IJ Patterson is President for 2020-22.
5. With great sadness, the Committee noted the passing of Rev Fr Godfrey O'Donnell on Friday 14 February, in his home in Swords. Fr Godfrey served as President of the Irish Council of Churches and co-chair of the Irish Inter-Church Meeting from 2012–2014. He was the first representative from the Orthodox traditions to do so.

IICC

6. The IICC has provided a welcome space for leaders of Orthodox Churches to meet and interact, both with representatives from their own communities and with the various Christian denominations in Ireland.
7. The IICC organised a conference on the Churches of Sanctuary movement in April. The Churches of Sanctuary movement is a network for churches seeking to be places of welcome and sanctuary to newcomers, immigrants and refugees. It provides a model that churches could use to work out according to the unique context of their own area. Due to the health emergency, the conference did not take place.

New resource on homelessness

8. The Council reviewed material on homelessness available at:
<https://irishchurches.org/cmsfiles/homeless>
9. Nearly 10,000 people are homeless in the Republic of Ireland and about 80,000 households are awaiting social housing.
In Northern Ireland, between 2012 and 2017, there was a 32% increase in statutory homelessness. At least 6,000 children in Northern Ireland are living in unsuitable, unstable housing.
10. However, this is not just the result of political decisions, but also moral failings. The causes and decisions behind the problems need to be identified and ways found towards a more just system where the home, as a fundamental requirement for fruitful and fulfilling lives of both individuals and communities, is given the priority and resources it deserves.

11. This will demand a willingness to look critically at ourselves as Christians and church communities, as well as society as a whole, and to examine whether our behaviour is consistent with our espoused values.
12. In order to begin this process the Irish Inter-Church Committee has developed a number of resources to equip churches and Christians to engage in this issue, including a joint statement of pastoral concern; a small group study resource; a one-page resource with questions on homelessness and housing insecurity to ask politicians canvassing at election time.
13. The material is all of a very high standard, available for downloading and has a hard-copy Bible Study booklet. These resources lend themselves to small group study and congregational action groups. The Council commends them to the whole church.

Irish Inter-Church Meeting

14. A PCI delegation attended the Irish Inter-Church Meeting (IICM), Thursday 21 - Friday 22 November, at Dromantine. The theme was 'Church in a Changing Public Square'. Participants included Prof Adam Dinham, Director of the Faiths and Civil Society Social Unit at Goldsmiths University of London, Sam McBride, Newsletter, Jude Hill, UTV, Dr Mary Aiken, Cyberpsychologist and academic advisor to the European Cyber Crime Centre at Europol.
15. A submission was made as part of the NIO Consultation on 'Addressing the Legacy of the Past'. Dr Jackson's work on homelessness is also progressing and it is hoped that high quality materials on the topic will soon be available. It will be a rich resource for all the member churches. An annual meeting was held with The Russian Orthodox Church and contact was made with other Orthodox churches in April 2019.

Council of European Churches (CEC)

16. The implementation of the Strategic Plan agreed at the 2018 General Assembly in Serbia continues with nominations to six Thematic Work Groups 2019-2023.
17. The Rev Alison McDonald (Church of Scotland) continues to represent the churches of the UK on CEC.

World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC)

18. The Clerk continues to have a role in the WCRC and has attended the 2019 conference in Edinburgh. This work enables us to cement our relationships within the wider Christian family in Europe.
19. A delegation from the Greek Evangelical Church plans to visit Northern Ireland from 1-5 October 2020 under the auspices of WCRC.

Focolare Movement

20. The Very Dr IJ Patterson and the Convener were appointed to represent PCI at the 38th International Gathering of Bishops Friends of the Focolare Movement, which met in Larne in October. Founded in Italy during the Second World War, it seeks to contribute to world peace. This is the first meeting in Ireland since the early 1970s.

JOHN BRACKENRIDGE, Convener

PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

1. The Priorities Committee met once during the past year.
2. It discussed how the General Assembly Councils can best support congregations through the provision of resources etc, focusing in the meeting on:
 - (a) a presentation by the Convener and Secretary of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness on that council's new structures and how these were designed to assist in identifying the best areas of support and resourcing that would benefit congregations in their life and witness;
 - (b) consideration of how we 'land well' resources in congregations;
 - (c) being made aware of examples of good practice in regard to joint initiatives between Councils in developing resources etc for congregations.
3. The Priorities Reference Panel met to conduct some routine business and put a number of necessary approvals in place.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

1. The Doctrine Committee was not required to meet, as no matters were remitted to it by either the General Assembly or the General Council.
2. Officers of the Committee were available to the Clerk of Assembly to give advice through the year.

J. STAFFORD CARSON, Convener

THEOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENT TASK GROUP

1. The Theological Engagement Task Group has met with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church twice in the past year: 29 September 2019 and 11 January 2020. A further meeting is planned for May 2020.
2. Presbyterian representatives are: Very Rev Principal Stafford Carson, Rev Prof Michael McClenahan, Rev Dr Martyn Cowan, Prof John Gillespie, Rev John Faris, Ms Zoe O'Neill, Dr Patrick Mitchell, Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow, Rev John Seawright, Rev Joanne Smith.
3. Roman Catholic representatives are : Dom Mark Ephrem Nolan, Dr Joan Back, Rev Dr Terence Crotty OP, Rev Dr Conor McDonagh OP, Rev Dr Noel Sullivan, Rev Prof Gabriel Flynn, Rev Dr Niall Coll.
4. The discussions have continued to consider issues arising from *The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* approved by Lutherans and Catholics. They continue to be informative, animated and enlightening. Both delegations have appreciated the cordial spirit in which the conversations have progressed and the genuine attempts to understand each other's position. The Presbyterian delegation wishes to express thanks to the Irish Roman Catholic delegation for the enthusiastic and helpful way in which they have contributed to these discussions.
5. The work of the group has been varied and has included engagement with the work of a number of different modern theologians (Anglican, Lutheran, Reformed, and Roman Catholic). This has led to significant discussion ranging across a number of important areas of doctrine:
 - theological anthropology, including the image of God, the fall, and the relationship of nature and grace;
 - the nature of the person and work of Jesus Christ;
 - justification by faith and related questions such as the nature of faith, union with Christ, and the nature and place of good works; and
 - the Church and its ministry, including the priesthood of all believers, sacramental theology, the ministry of the Word, and the task of evangelism.
6. Our next meeting in May will include the presentation of two papers, one on the Westminster Confession of Faith's understanding of justification and one on the understanding of justification in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.
7. A number of possible tasks have been considered for the future including a conference on the doctrine of Justification, a statement of affirmations and denials, and the possibility of publishing some of the papers delivered at our meetings.

8. The General Council at its March 2020 meeting agreed to the Task Group's request that this significant dialogue continues.

J. STAFFORD CARSON, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 2

IMPLEMENTATION TASK GROUP

1. The Implementation Task Group was formed by the General Council in response to the 2018 General Assembly resolution: “That appropriate training be offered to Kirk Sessions on the theology and practice of the Church’s understanding of ‘a credible profession of faith’ and the pastoral guidelines on homosexuality.” The remit approved by the General Council was to put together “a resource to be used at Kirk Session level, with a clear pastoral tone.” Subsequently the General Council agreed that the remit be broadened to include training on a general approach to ‘a credible profession of faith’ as well as lifestyle issues.
2. Two sub-groups were formed – one to work on a resource on ‘a credible profession of faith’ and the other to work on updating the 2007 pastoral guidelines on homosexuality.
3. To inform the work, the Task Group organised a Presbytery Consultation Day held in January 2019 to which six representatives from each presbytery were invited. Other invitees included members of the General Council (including 38 members coming directly from presbyteries), the Implementation Task Group, the Overview and Co-ordination Task Group, the Doctrine Committee, the Dialogue and Resources Task Group and the Human Identity Task Group. Approximately 200 were invited of whom approximately 150 were directly from presbyteries. Approximately 190 attended on the day. Papers were presented on PCI’s position re ‘the question of homosexuality’, ‘credible profession’ and ‘pastoral guidelines’, with each presentation followed by round table discussion. This feedback in turn was forwarded to the Task Group and was used to inform the group’s discussions and further shape the resources.
4. The Task Group has continued its work throughout the rest of 2019 and into 2020, and the current phase of its work is now complete. At the 2019 General Assembly, when the Task Group reported on progress it told the Assembly that it planned to request that the 2020 General Assembly receive final drafts of both the ‘credible profession’ resource and the pastoral guidelines and send these to presbyteries for comment, with final consideration being given to the resource and guidelines at the 2021 General Assembly. The reason for sending both documents to presbyteries is to facilitate continuing discussion that will assist the Task Group in shaping its final report. So it is envisaged that some further work remains to be done in due course. In addition the Task

Group will consider the issues of (a) provision of support for those giving congregational pastoral care and (b) referring on.

5. It is important to state that the two draft documents belong together. They must not be considered in isolation from each other, as they are like two sides of one coin. Each informs the other. Theological matters must be considered pastorally, while pastoral matters must be considered theologically.
6. Both draft documents are published together in the accompanying separate booklet. The first section sets out the draft resource on 'credible profession'.
 - 6.1 In preparing the draft resource, the Task Group has been acutely aware of the very different profile and context of PCI congregations – rural/urban, southern/northern, small/large, border/inner city, housing estate/suburban. The aim of the resource is to assist and facilitate kirk sessions in every congregation, wherever located, of whatever size and hue, and whatever current practice, to improve the process of admission to the sacraments in their own context and within the policy of the General Assembly. This might seem ambitious, but there has been a deliberate attempt to simplify language and to produce a resource that will work in one hour and thirty minutes, including space for discussion. The Task Group hopes that the material is accessible and manageable for the 'normal' kirk session - if there is such a thing!
 - 6.2 The draft resource uses the words 'lifestyle' and 'values', recognising that more than one lifestyle is sinful and that 'values' broaden the discussion beyond one particular area to the importance of discipleship in general. The temptation to identify a list of sins or sinful behaviours has been steadfastly avoided. It is for the minister and kirk session to explore with those preparing for admission to the sacraments what it means to make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, including their understanding of the basics of the Christian faith and their general consistency of life with that profession. It is also for the minister and kirk Session, in exceptional cases, to address any particular issues in which an area of life seems openly and obviously at odds with Christian belief, lifestyle or values.
 - 6.3 The resource is designed to facilitate constructive discussion within kirk sessions. While in most cases it will be the minister who introduces the material, its value will depend on elders working through and discussing the material together.
 - 6.4 As the draft resource is to be sent to presbyteries for discussion and comment prior to being finalised for use by kirk sessions, it remains a draft until final consideration and approval by the 2021 General Assembly.
7. The second section sets out the draft updated pastoral guidelines.
 - 7.1 The 2007 Guidelines were drawn up in response to the recognition of homophobic attitudes within the church and the need to

approach matters of human sexuality with a greater degree of pastoral understanding and concern. The draft updated guidelines, while remaining true to the original concept, are significantly revised. They take account both of changes within wider society and of PCI discussions in the intervening years, encourage a deeper degree of pastoral understanding and concern, and are consistent with the policy of the General Assembly. In particular, there is a broader section on pastoral care aimed at ministers, elders, leaders and others with responsibility for pastoral care within our church. There is also an extended section on ‘biblical foundations’ explaining the biblical basis for PCI’s position, along with a more extensive suggested resources section.

- 7.2 The draft guidelines are not designed or intended to sit on a shelf. They are designed to assist ministers, kirk sessions, and others with pastoral responsibilities within a congregation to implement good quality pastoral care in the area of same sex attraction. They are also designed to assist minister and kirk sessions in their understanding and use of the draft resource on ‘credible profession.’
8. It is the prayer of the Task Group that both the resource and the pastoral guidelines assist the church to deal with the issues sensitively, pastorally, constructively and faithfully.

H A DUNLOP, Convener

HUMAN IDENTITY TASK GROUP

1. The Human Identity Task Group was formed by the General Council in autumn 2017 to provide a biblical and pastoral response to the complex and difficult issues facing PCI congregations and wider society relating to gender identity. In 2018 and 2019, the task group pointed the wider church to two resources which engage with this subject, the book, Talking Points: Transgender by Vaughan Roberts which was made available as a special edition for PCI with a forward by Very Rev Dr Charles McMullen and the ‘Transformed’ resource from the Evangelical Alliance.
2. The task group has now produced draft pastoral guidelines (see additional General Assembly report booklet) specifically for PCI congregations which are the result of over one year’s work involving expert input from experienced pastoral practitioners and medical professionals involved in this field.
3. The draft pastoral guidelines include a section on the biblical background. This section makes reference to the Westminster Confession of Faith which states on this particular subject that: ‘After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female’

(WCF 4.2). Reference is also made to the fall of humanity and the need to have compassion on those who struggle in this fallen world. The resource provides practical guidance on how compassion can be shown in the particular case of those who struggle with their gender identity. Various scenarios are provided to point to best practice. There are also some suggested further resources.

4. In parallel with the work of the Implementation Task Group, it is proposed that these pastoral guidelines be sent to presbyteries for comment following the same process as the pastoral guidelines for pastoral care of those who struggle with same sex attraction. It should be noted that there are some differences between these two areas of pastoral concern, the most obvious being the medical dimension for those who seek to transition to a different gender identity. In addition, there is currently much debate on the implications of people seeking to change their gender identity for wider society especially related to women's rights. These issues are important but in congregational life, what matters most is not the wider debate but that those who struggle, and those close to them, receive good quality pastoral care that is full of God's love, grace and truth. It is to this end that these pastoral guidelines are presented.

DANIEL KANE, Convener

SUPPORTING FAMILIES IN CHALLENGING TIMES TASK GROUP

1. Arising from a recommendation to the 2018 General Assembly, a Task Group was established by the General Council 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'.
2. 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.
3. The Task Group has met on four occasions to date: 1 June 2019, 7 September 2019, 8 November 2019 and 1 February 2020.
4. The Task Group has considered the contextual framing for its remit given:

- (a) The constitutional and legislative changes regarding abortion in Ireland and the developing situation in Northern Ireland.
 - (b) The current provision of education offered to those training for pastoral ministry.
 - (c) The gaps in educational and pastoral resources available to congregations and pastoral care givers who are seeking to provide sensitive and constructive ways to engage with families and individuals who are in crisis situations.
5. Identifying three priority areas of (i) training in ministry, (ii) education in congregations, and (iii) resourcing for pastoral care, the Task Group made the following recommendations to the meeting of General Council in March 2020, which were subsequently adopted:
- (a) That the Task Group engage with the relevant departments in Union Theological College to discuss the provision and development of education for students who are training for pastoral ministry in a new ethical and moral context.
 - (b) That the Task Group liaise with the appropriate council(s) to ensure 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.

RICHARD HOUSTON, Convener

MODERATOR’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. During the past year, the Moderator’s Advisory Committee met on one occasion.
2. A number of Moderator’s Advisory Assessors were appointed to assist presbyteries in their work. The Committee is thankful to those senior ministers and elders who so willingly give of their time to assist presbyteries in often sensitive and challenging situations.
3. Consideration was given to changes in available funding from the Education Authority (Northern Ireland).
4. In view of the fact that little of its work is relevant to Northern Ireland, membership of the London-based Churches Legislative Advisory Service was not renewed.
5. The Committee considered appropriate ‘retirement age’ for ministers, in view of changes to the state pension age in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and concluded that the normal retirement age of ministers from their charges should be increased from 65 to 66.

It also concluded that the reference in Code Par 223(3) to those who have reached 64 years of age adds nothing of substance, is confusing and should be removed. A resolution is appended and appropriate overtures are in the overtures section of these reports.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

GUYSMERE DEVELOPMENT PANEL

1. The 2019 General Assembly agreed that the proposed redevelopment of Guysmere (as outlined by the Guysmere Committee of the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady) “be permitted to proceed to the next stage i.e. capital project development (technical and funding), which allows an appointed group sufficient time to work through all of the activities required to refine and define its preferred option, secure both planning consent and also the required capital funding to effectively deliver the project”. (2019 Minutes of the General Assembly p45 Resolution 12)
2. **The Guysmere Development Panel** was appointed by the General Council on 10 October, 2019 to carry out this task.

The membership of the panel is

Ex-officio: Moderator, Clerk, Convener of the General Council

Nominees of the General Council: Frank Sellar, Jonathan Kelly, Graham Patterson, Lynne Herbison

Nominees of the Presbytery of Coleraine and Limavady: Trevor McCormick, Jim McCaughan, James Smyth, Basil McCorrison, Pat Hunter, James Hyndman, Richard Russell, Jeremy Knox, David Stewart, Heather McSparran, Billy Pollock, Ellvena Graham, Norman Hamilton, David McClarin.

3. The Panel engaged Venture International (Venture) as the Project Consultant and created two working groups, the Procurement and Capital Works group and the Funding and Business Plan group.
4. The Panel and working groups have had 12 meetings and concentrated on the following issues:-
 - (a) contacting precedent projects and seeking to learn from them;
 - (b) refining and defining the Guysmere Project and preparing a Vision Statement;
 - (c) researching potential sources of funding;
 - (d) establishing a business model for the operation of the project.
- 4(a) Learning from precedent projects
 - (i) On 22 October 2019 the two working groups had a joint meeting at the Torrent Complex, Donaghmore, Co. Tyrone.

The complex provides for a very wide range of users, from a local drama group, to small business offices, to NI wheelchair basketball etc. Primarily, it focuses on Gaelic sports and its central vision is to develop young players for the county team. It is closely integrated into the local community but retains a very clear, central vision.

- (ii) On 31 October 2019 the Panel had a video conference with Paul Bayton. Paul is on the Board of Scripture Union, Scotland and works as the Director of the Altnacriche Centre, Aberdeenshire. In recent years he led the team establishing ‘Gowanbank’, a new residential centre for SU Scotland near Girvan, Ayrshire.

This was a very wide ranging discussion. One vital factor for the financial viability of Altnacriche is that the Scottish school curriculum requires every school to deliver moral and spiritual education and also to deliver a proportion of education outside the classroom environment. Altnacriche has the staff and facilities to cater for all of these and is regularly booked up on schooldays.

The first question which Paul asked the Guysmere Development Panel was:-

“What is the vision? What is the primary purpose that you are trying to achieve? This will be key for attracting funding, as well as ensuring you are focused on delivering the right facility.”

- (iii) On 10 February 2020 the two working groups visited the Drumalis Retreat Centre in Larne, Co.Antrim. This centre did not provide for users outside of their core vision, nor did it seek to establish links with the local community. The leadership maintained a very clear focus on their ‘raison d’être’.
- (iv) Arrangements were underway to visit Whitepark Bay Youth Hostel, Castlewellan Castle, the Lucan Centre and The Courthouse, Kesh and to interview the chairman of CEF Ireland about their project to build a new centre at Seaview, Kilkeel. These had to be postponed due to the lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

- 4(b) Refining and defining the Guysmere Project and drawing up a vision statement.

The precedent projects with which we interacted are very different from each other. The single common factor is that each has a crystal-clear vision.

Drawing up a vision statement for the Guysmere Project has been central to our work this year. We have been aware that a clarity of vision for the project and an ability to present an aspect which would make the proposed centre unique will not only define

the planning of the centre, but are essential when approaching potential funders and will also help to determine which funders to approach. We realise that our vision will continue to develop and change as the project progresses.

The current Vision Statement was approved by the General Council on 19 March 2020 and is attached (see Appendix A).

4(c) Researching potential sources of funding.

David McLarin researched a wide range of possible sources of funding and presented his findings to the Panel. Many of these are channels for National Lottery funding, while others do not give grants to any religious organisation. However, at our meeting on 19 December he highlighted two potential sources which could prove successful and confirmed that there may be others.

- (i) Paul Bayton (SU Scotland) suggested that, in his experience, “direct approaches to Christians, who are known for their generous support of Christian ministries, is one part of the funding strategy of SU Scotland. . . there may be individuals or others who have private/charitable trust funds that would be open to supporting this initiative. . . . If you do take this route, the clear and compelling vision of what you are hoping to achieve will be key.”
- (ii) Another potential source is ‘Peace Plus’. This is “a new EU cross-border programme that will contribute to a more prosperous and stable society in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland.”

A series of Peace Plus stakeholder events were held this winter and Norman Hamilton attended one on our behalf on 10 December 2019. The purpose of these events was to give interested parties the opportunity to provide input which would “help to shape the content of the programme.” This is a very different approach from previous ‘Peace’ funding programmes. We have submitted a response and intend to follow this up.

4(d) Establishing a business model for the operation of the project.

Following advice from the General Assembly Solicitor, Mr Stephen Gowdy, the following arrangements were made to set up a bespoke, separate, charitable company.

The purpose of making such arrangements is four-fold:

- (i) to ensure Guysmere Centre is well run;
- (ii) to expedite funding applications;
- (iii) to be legally secure;
- (iv) to protect the principles and ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

For Guysmere to be a charity it would have to be a non-profit company limited by guarantee. This company will be called ‘Guysmere Trust’. We are advised that, initially, Guysmere Trust would have two members/guarantors. The Members/Guarantors set up the rules for the appointment of Directors and can revise the rules at any time. These rules are called ‘The Articles of Association’.

The Board of Directors would be responsible for managing the centre, producing annual accounts and planning the future.

Guysmere Trust would lease the site from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and thus become the ‘beneficial owner’ of the site. The Directors would establish indemnity insurance through the PCI insurance scheme.

Guysmere Trust would be a charity by virtue of its governance, but would have to apply for charitable status from the Charities Commission.

The General Council approved these arrangements for “Guysmere Trust” on 19 March 2020 and the General Council Standing Committee subsequently appointed the Rev Trevor Gribben (Clerk of Assembly) and Mr Clive Knox as the two ‘members/guarantors’ for Guysmere Trust.

The General Council also agreed that the following, who are full communicant members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and serve on the Guysmere Development Panel, be appointed as initial directors for the capital project development phase: Norman Hamilton, Pat Hunter, James Hyndman, James McCaughan, Heather McSparran, William Pollock, Richard Russell, James Smyth.

The General Council agreed that the Directors be included in the cover provided by the PCI indemnity insurance scheme.

5. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused massive international disruption. The work of the Guysmere Development Panel was suspended following the government lock down. As a result, it has not been possible to maintain our proposed schedule and additional time will be required to work through all of the activities required to deliver the project. Due to uncertainty about when and how the present lock down will be brought to a conclusion, and whether there may be further times of lock down, it is not possible to plan a new schedule at present. The panel and working groups will use remote conferencing to obviate any future social distancing restrictions to progress the project and review the post Covid-19 impact and any revised challenges. A plan for proceeding with our work in this situation is attached at Appendix B.

JIM McCAUGHAN, Convener

APPENDIX A

GUYSMERE – THE 2020 VISION

A world class residential and conference centre

Our Desired Outcomes

- The Centre, situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), will be financially sustainable and will model environmental excellence in design and management.
- 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 local and international faith and secular groups.
- 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.

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.
- 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 beside a Blue Flag beach and 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;
- Kitchen and dining facilities;
- Coffee dock / informal areas;
- Space for study / mentoring / counselling;
- All ability access to principal areas and activities including the beach.

APPENDIX B

GUYSMERE FEASIBILITY STUDY AND BUSINESS CASE

**Approach to Consultation and Information Gathering
April 2020**

Introduction

This paper has been developed by Venture International Ltd (Venture) which has been commissioned by the Guysmere Development Panel (GDP) to support it in a second stage feasibility study/business case process focused on the development of a world-class residential centre on the site of the former Guysmere Centre in Castlerock.

Recognising that the current Covid-19 Pandemic constrains the conventional approach to direct consultations (face to face) with potential users or site visits to precedent projects, this paper sets out an approach which continues to build on the work to date given the social distancing and travel restrictions.

Capturing Learning from Precedent Projects

A number of precedent projects were identified, and some have been visited or contacted. However, it was agreed that the final engagement would focus on those where learning could be captured in line with the vision and the spaces/activities/services that might be provided from the proposed residential centre. The following actions are required:

Revisit the list of potential precedent projects setting them against the vision and sifting this to a shortlist of meaningful precedent projects.

Use the agreed proforma to engage with these through telephone/email/Zoom/Skype/MS Teams. Venture is comfortable to progress these engagements within the existing contract.

The following table sets out the list of potential precedent residential centres:

No	Name
1	The Lucan Centre
2	Whitepark Bay Youth Hostel
3	Seaview Centre Kilkeel (CEF Ireland)
4	The Courthouse Centre Kesh
5	Castlewellaan Castle

Venture is currently identifying a number of residential centres outside the UK and ROI which could also provide meaningful learning. It will circulate and seek agreement with the GDP on which ones it will add to the list above.

Examine Potential Funders

Part of the decision by the Presbyterian General Assembly to progress with the second stage of the feasibility study and the business case was set in the following context:

- The Guysmere Development Panel should seek opportunities to secure technical funding which might meet all/part of the second stage feasibility study process costs.
- It would not be a capital investor in the overall project.

As a result, Guysmere Development Panel has a responsibility to examine other funding opportunities.

It has already submitted a consultation response to SEUPB's Peace Plus Consultation and Programme Development process. The following funds have been identified which might offer some opportunities:

- The Ardbarron Trust
- Maclellan Foundation
- World Charitable Foundation of Ireland
- TBF Thompson Trust (Garvagh)
- Department of Foreign Affairs

It is proposed that contact should be made with each of these to examine the opportunities to make an application to them for either a technical assistance contribution (as a contribution to the costs of the current phase, which is a priority) or to examine the potential for a larger capital application should this capital project development phase prove positive.

Venture is willing to do so and provide a report back to the GDP on the potential for any of these funders to invest in the proposed project.

Consultation with Potential Users

It was agreed by the Guysmere Development Panel that a second stage engagement with potential users would only take place when a vision for the project had been developed.

This is essential in order to provide potential users with a succinct description of what the proposed centre is about (vision) and what it will contain (specification and services), thus enabling them to assess how well such a world class residential centre would meet their requirements.

The current version of the Vision Statement has been agreed and is available to support the next phase of the consultation process (on the understanding that the consultation outputs will help to challenge and evolve the vision). The following actions are required to progress the consultations:

- To agree the list of consultees (revisit those engaged through the first feasibility study) and potential users for the proposed world class residential centre. Venture will develop a consultee list on foot of this paper and circulate it to get sign off and progress to consulting with the potential users.
- Venture will carry out direct engagement with potential users via; telephone, email, Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams.

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 3

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduction

1. The Support Services Committee met on a number of occasions and considered reports from its respective Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Property and Creative Production Panels. The Panel with the most business is the Finance Panel, but this report summarises the key issues considered by each of them.
2. In March 2019, the General Council agreed that a task group be set up to consider the structure and resources of the IT Department and bring forward definitive proposals. However, a number of other staffing pressures across each of the Support Services Departments were identified and an exercise to review and assess these was carried out in late summer 2019. Detailed reports were considered by the Committee and proposals agreed. These were subsequently sent to the Priorities Reference Panel of the General Council, which has responsibility for the approval of any new posts or projects, and approved. The main changes were an additional personnel officer with responsibilities for particular aspects of work with the Council for Social Witness and an additional IT officer to support the increasing demands being placed on that department.

FINANCE PANEL

3. At its October meeting, the Committee agreed the recommendations from the Finance Panel relating to assessments for 2020. In determining the appropriate assessment rates, consideration was given to the budgets for the respective funds, the balances in those funds and the impact on congregations of any changes. The Finance Panel presented the Committee with a paper which highlighted some issues with the nil rate band, including the complexities of operating it and the permanent nature of the adjustments which have to be made to ensure congregations only benefited to the extent of their increased stipend cost. Following extensive discussion, it was agreed to retain the nil rate band but stop making the adjustments, even though this would result in an overall loss of income. The Committee decided that keeping the Assessments for 2020 at the current level would mean that, with some adjustments to other funds, the loss of income could be covered. The

Committee agreed that the assessment rates should continue at the same aggregate level as 2019, with some variations in individual funds, as shown in Appendix 1.

4. The Committee reviewed the levels of minimum stipend and staff salary increases for 2020, based on proposals from both the Finance Panel and the HR Panels and agreed that the basic ministerial minimum be increased by 2% in Northern Ireland and 1% in the Republic of Ireland, with staff salaries increasing by the same amounts.
5. The Financial Secretary reported that he had received £57,000 in backdated royalties in relation to the Church Hymnbook. The Committee decided that this should be allocated to the Incidental Fund.
6. A task group was established, under the General Council, to assist congregations in the Republic of Ireland to register with the Charities Regulatory Authority.
7. The Support Services report to the 2019 General Assembly commented on the considerable work by congregations in complying with charity legislation but noted a number of concerns, especially regarding annual accounts and financial reporting. The Committee has continued to monitor progress and, in particular, the year-end accounts processes. The Support Services Committee report to the October General Council referred to the need for each congregation to have only one set of church accounts, rather than one set for the congregation and one for the Charity Commission. The discussion at General Council was followed up by a meeting of presbytery representatives in December, after which the Financial Secretary wrote to treasurers confirming the position and agreeing a later date (31 May) for the submission of the annual statistical returns to presbytery.
8. One issue which was raised, and which the Finance Panel has been considering since, is the appropriate amount of financial information to provide to members of the congregation. The Panel agreed that the accounts for the congregation should be in the format that they are presented to the charity regulator but that these could be supplemented by additional information giving a more detailed breakdown of figures. Another issue considered was the presentation of accounts at an AGM. The Code currently states that accounts may be sent to the congregation for “adoption”. This essentially means to be ‘received’ but it does not mean a formal approval, as that is the legal responsibility of the kirk session. The Committee considered that it would be more practical and meaningful if members were provided with summarised financial information, rather than the formal set of ‘the Church Accounts’, together with any agreed supplementary information. This summarised financial information could take any shape or form but, if this were to happen, it is very important that such information should not, in any fashion, be approved or adopted.
9. The Committee also considered that the appointment of an auditor or independent examiner should be the responsibility of a kirk session, as charity trustees, and not the congregation and, therefore, the

calling of a congregational meeting to make such appointments is not necessary. Changes to the Code need to be made to remove the need for congregations to adopt accounts and appoint auditors: these will be found within the section on overtures.

10. At its February 2020 meeting, the Committee reviewed and approved the annual accounts for the assessment funds (other than the Students' Bursary Fund which is the responsibility of the Council for Training in Ministry) for the year ended 31 December 2019, and also the accounts for the Finance, IT, HR, Payroll and General Secretary's Offices/Departments. The financial position for each of the funds was considered satisfactory and there were no significant issues to highlight. The Committee agreed the budgets for Support Services and the Incidental Fund for 2020.
11. The Committee also considered a number of issues arising in relation to the Prolonged Disability Fund, including the ongoing annual cost and date when benefits from the Fund should cease. It was agreed that, in line with other pension changes, the age to which payments under the Fund are made be increased from 65 to 66 and that this should be recommended to the General Council. It was also agreed that new entrants to the scheme should normally be subject to an annual occupational health review.
12. Since the last Assembly, the following were granted leave to retire at or over the age of 65; Rev Dr G Connor (Second Saintfield), Very Rev Dr JNI McNeely (First Holywood), Rev JM Wade (Portavogie), Rev WG Cameron (Glastry and Kirkcubbin), Rev WH Higgins (First and Second Killyleagh), Rev Dr D Latimer (First Derry and Monreagh) and Rev JH Hanson (Dromore and Drumquin).
13. In accordance with the requirements of the Code Par 223(3), the Committee agreed that Revs JR Lambe (Mountpottinger) and JM Browne (First Donaghadee) be granted permission to retire before their 65 birthdays on the basis that their benefits from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Pension Scheme (2009) are actuarially reduced to reflect early retirement.
14. The Financial Secretary reported directly to the General Council Standing Committee on 4 April 2020 concerning the direct debit collections from congregations for Quarter 2 of 2020. The report was in the following terms (Pars 15-17).
15. In light of the current Coronavirus pandemic it is uncertain when congregations will be able to meet again, but it may not be before the end of June 2020. This is likely to impact on a congregation's regular income. It is hoped that congregations will encourage members, if they are able, to continue with their regular giving e.g. through standing order or making electronic transfers. If this is not possible, members should be asked to continue to fill up their envelopes on a regular basis and put these on the offering plate when the current restrictions are lifted.

16. The next Direct Debit Collection is for Quarter 2, 2020 and covers the months of April, May and June. This is due to be collected on 15 May 2020. For the vast majority of congregations, the quarterly Direct Debit collects amounts due for:
 - (a) Stipend and related costs (i.e. national insurance, pension and allowances) and
 - (b) Assessments
(In a few cases, amounts are also collected for Associate Ministers, Licentiates or Deaconesses.)
17. Ministers are continuing to receive their stipend and other allowances through the central payroll (although it is expected locally paid mileage allowances will reduce) and many of the financial commitments of the various assessment funds remain.
18. The Quarter 2 of 2020 (i.e. covering April, May and June), Direct Debit Assessment Notices will be prepared in the normal manner and issued to congregations in April along with an accompanying letter asking each congregation to choose one of the following options:
 - (a) Option 1: Those congregations which are able to pay the full amount of their quarterly Direct Debit (stipend related costs + assessments) are encouraged to do so.
 - (b) Option 2: Those congregations that do not have sufficient funds to meet their quarterly Direct Debit in full should meet the stipend related costs but request that the amount due for Assessments be deferred.

All congregations will be asked to email finance@presbyterianireland.org to confirm which of the two options they wish to choose.

The amount collected will reflect the option chosen by the congregation. Where a congregation does not respond to the request the direct debit collection will be processed in full.

HR PANEL

1. The Panel has not had a convener throughout 2019, but work continues in this important area.
2. The Committee noted that the Panel had reviewed employment statistics and Fair Employment monitoring returns. At the end of 2019 there were 594 members of staff and, during the year, 69 new starters, 77 leavers and 117 recruitment exercises.
3. The Committee agreed the policy for the Safe Handling, Storage and Retention of Information in relation to Access NI data.
4. The Committee was advised that, following a procurement exercise, Peninsula had been selected to provide HR and Health and Safety advice to congregations.

PROPERTY PANEL

1. The Committee reviewed the accounts of the Property Panel and was pleased to note a 38% increase in conference business and a surplus of £61,529 for the year. The Committee considered the level of business planned for 2020 and, so that it can facilitate conference business in a professional manner, the Committee agreed to the replacement of the three projectors in the Assembly Hall, which are eight years old and supported by old technology.
2. The Committee also reviewed the accounts for the Retired Ministers' House Fund and noted the advice of the General Assembly Solicitor that, in the light of current financial regulations, the Fund should suspend the granting of any new loans. At the time of writing this report, further legal advice is being sought on this matter by the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland who have responsibility for signing the relevant loan documents.

IT PANEL

1. The Committee was updated on a range of activities and projects undertaken by the IT Department. Much of the work of the IT staff is, by necessity, reactive, but a number of priorities for the year were agreed.
2. The Committee agreed the Panel's proposals to continue to maintain PCI's storage network in house, which is the most cost effective option despite some necessary upgrade costs. The Committee was assured that these had been factored in to the budgets for the current year.
3. In 2019, a Task Group was set up to look at staffing issues. A new structure has been agreed and a recruitment exercise is underway, although the Committee noted concerns expressed that the salary scales may not be attractive in what is a very competitive IT labour market.

CREATIVE PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT (CPD)

1. The Committee considered the conclusions of the report of a Task Group, set up by the General Council in March 2019, and the Committee was supportive of the recommendations.
2. The Committee was given an update on a range of matters. In particular, it noted that, following approval from the Priorities Reference Panel, and some consultation both within PCI and with consultants, CPD will be approaching several organisations to assist with updating the PCI website. It is planned to have the upgrades completed by the end of August.

3. The Council agreed with a proposal that the Editorial Advisory Panel should be chaired by the Convener of the Creative Production Panel.

DAVID THOMSON, Convener

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 1

2020 ASSESSMENT RATES AND ALLOCATIONS

Assessment Band	Assessable Income (£)		Assessment Rate
	From	To	
1	0	10,999	0.00%
2	11,000	64,999	14.50%
3	65,000	129,999	10.75%
4	130,000	194,999	7.25%
5	195,000	259,999	3.50%
6	260,000	and above	0.00%

Assessment Fund	Projected Allocation for 2020 £	Projected Allocation for 2020 %	Projected Allocation for 2019	Actual Allocation for 2019 %
Central Ministry Fund	£1,600,000	37.60%	£1,861,000	41.20%
Retired Ministers Fund	£330,000	7.76%	£438,700	9.73%
Widows of Ministers Fund	£375,000	8.81%	412,600	9.15%
Prolonged Disability Fund	£150,000	3.53%	104,800	2.29%
Incidental Fund	£950,000	22.32%	850,000	18.88%
Church House Repairs Fund	£525,000	12.34%	540,500	12.01%
Special Assembly	–	–	–	–
Ministerial Development Fund	£130,000	3.06%	135,500	2.97%
Sick Supply Fund	£20,000	0.47%	15,300	0.34%
Students Bursary Fund	£175,000	4.11%	154,700	3.43%
TOTAL	£4,255,000	100.00%	4,513,100	100.00%

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

APPENDIX 2

2020 RATES AND ALLOWANCES

1. Basic Ministerial and Appropriate Ministerial Minimum

	Northern Ireland		Republic of Ireland	
	2020 £	2019 £	2020 €	2019 €
Basic Ministerial Minimum	27,229	26,695	40,353	39,953
After 1 year's service	27,501	26,962	40,757	40,353
After 2 years' service	27,773	27,229	41,161	40,753
After 3 years' service	28,045	27,496	41,565	41,153
After 4 years' service	28,317	27,763	41,969	41,553
After 5 years' service	28,589	28,030	42,373	41,953
After 6 years' service	28,861	28,297	42,777	42,353
After 7 years' service	29,133	28,564	43,181	42,753
After 8 years' service	29,405	28,831	43,585	43,153
After 9 years' service	29,677	29,098	43,989	43,553
After 10 years' service	29,949	29,365	44,393	43,953
After 11 years' service	30,221	29,632	44,797	44,353
After 12 years' service	30,493	29,899	45,201	44,753
After 13 years' service	30,765	30,166	45,605	45,153
After 14 years' service	31,037	30,433	46,009	45,553
After 15 years' service	31,309	30,700	46,413	45,953
After 16 years' service	31,581	30,967	46,817	46,353
After 17 years' service	31,853	31,234	47,221	46,753
After 18 years' service	32,125	31,501	47,625	47,153
After 19 years' service	32,397	31,768	48,029	47,553
After 20 years' service	32,669	32,035	48,433	47,953

2. Retired Ministers, Widows of Ministers and Prolonged Disability Funds

Retired Ministers Fund: maximum retirement pension for 2020 is £12,992.

Widows of Ministers Fund: maximum retirement pension for 2020 is £7,145.

Prolonged Disability Fund: maximum grants for 2020 is £13,065.

3. Regium Donum

Regium Donum: £30 per month

4. Family Grants

The following grants are payable for the academic year 2019/20.

Grant Category	Northern Ireland	Republic Of Ireland
Birth to final year Primary School	Child Allowance £383 PLUS Tuition Grant £Nil	Child Allowance €581 PLUS Tuition Grant up to €480
Secondary School	Child Allowance £561 PLUS Tuition Grant £Nil	Child Allowance €859 PLUS Tuition Grant up to €808
Further and Higher Education (claimable up to and including the academic year in which the student becomes 24)	Child Allowance £842 PLUS Tuition Grant up to £2,040	Child Allowance €1,263 PLUS Tuition Grant up to €4,040

SUPPORT SERVICES

APPENDIX 3

2020 INCIDENTAL FUND BUDGET

	£	£
(i) General Council		
General Work	5,000	
Assembly Arrangements	20,000	
Church Relations Committee		
– Irish Council of Churches	22,166	
– Irish Inter-Church Meeting	10,918	
– Conference of European Churches	6,000	
– Comm Protestant Churches Europe	1,300	
– World Comm Reformed Churches	13,000	
– General Church Relations (expenses)	2,000	
Guysmere Development Panel	<u>25,000</u>	105,384
(ii) Council for Public Affairs		
General Work incl conferences	–	
Education Grants	<u>10,000</u>	10,000
(iii) Linkage Commission		
General Work	6,750	
Church Architecture Committee	<u>9,000</u>	15,750
Moderator expenses allowance		25,000
Printing for General Assembly		11,000
Postage, admin and other		17,500
Insurance		8,000
Travel General Assembly and Councils etc.		14,000
Allowance to Congregations re Conveners		6,500
Legal fees		25,000
Costs of General Secretary's Department		429,168
Support Services Charges		140,000
Presbyterian Historical Society		23,000
Youth Link		11,000
Churches Legislation Advisory		2,750
Peninsula Employment Law, Health and Safety		20,000
UTC Support Service Rebate		20,000
TOTAL		<u><u>884,052</u></u>

SUPPORT SERVICES

APPENDIX 4

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT STAFFING

Sterling Salary Scales of posts in Assembly Buildings on 1 January 2020

EXECUTIVE POSTS

Scale 1 (£25,745 - £30,587)

- IT Support Manager (ITD)
- Presbyterian Women Support Officer (CLW)
- Operations and Maintenance Officer (PSD)

Scale 2 (£29,074 - £34,974)

- 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)
- Creative Production Support Officer (Press and Web)
- Payroll and Assessment Manager (FSD)
- Personnel Support Officer (PD)
- Youth Development Officer (CLW)
- Discipleship Development Officer (CLW)
- Mission Support Officer (Partnership) (MD)

Scale 3 (£32,530 - £39,647)

- 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 Development Officer (CLW)
- Facilities and Conference Manager (PSD)

Scale 4 (£35,854 - £44,793)

Senior Finance Manager (FSD)
 Head of Personnel (PD)
 IT Development and Support Manager (ITD)
 Head of Safeguarding (CSW)
 Head of Disability Services (CSW)
 Head of Older People Services (CSW)

Scale 6 (£42,582 - £51,876)

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 (£48,314 - £62,147)

Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary
 Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS**Scale 2 (£15,766 - £18,235)**

Administrative Assistant (0.54 post) (CLW)
 Personnel Assistant (1.14 post) (PD)
 Administrative Assistant, PW (CLW)
 Administrative Assistant (Job Share) (MD)
 Administrative Assistant (0.68 post) (Purchase Ledger) (FSD)
 Operations and Maintenance Assistant (PSD)
 Assistant Receptionist & Telephonist (PSD) (higher salary protected)

Scale 3 (£17,692 - £20,457)

Administrative Assistant (GSD)
 Administrative Assistant (Sales Ledger) (job share 0.4 post)
 Senior Personnel Assistant (Job Share) (PD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (job share 1.2 post) (CSW)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (0.5 post) (MD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant, PW (CLW)
 Reception & Information Officer (PSD)
 Taking Care Administrator (CSW)

Scale 4 (£20,046 - £23,086)

Senior Administrative Assistant (Partnerships) (MD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (Member Care) (MD)
 Payroll and Administrative Assistant (1.77 posts) (FSD)
 Senior Administrative Assistants (x 2 job share) (CLW)
 Senior Communications Assistant (0.8 post) (CPD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (0.6 post) (FSD)
 Senior Communications Assistant (Pub) (2 x 0.6 post) (CPD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (CLW)

Scale 5 (£21,933 - £25,322)

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 2 (ITD)
 Financial and Administrative Assistant (0.74 post) (FSD)
 IT Support & Development Officer (0.8 post) (ITD)

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£24,223- £27,690)

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

Scale 5 (Enhanced pt 25-34) (£24,223 - £29,853)

Senior Personal Assistant and Office Supervisor (GSD)

Sterling Salary Scales of posts in other locations on 1 January 2020**EXECUTIVE POSTS****Scale 2 (£29,074 - £34,974)**

College Registrar/Bursar, Union College
 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
 Chaplain NI Prison Service and Co-ordinating Chaplain (Maghaberry)

Scale 4 (£35,854 - £44,793)

Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development (Union College)

Scale 5 (£39,647 - £48,314)

Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Director of Post-Graduate Studies (Union College)

Scale 6 (£42,582 - £51,876)

Professor of New Testament Studies, Union College

Professor of Practical Theology, Union College

Professor of Systematic Theology, Union College

Scale 7 (£48,314 - £62,147)

Principal of Union Theological College

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS**Scale 1 (£14,653 - £16,923)**

Clerical Officer (3 p/t) OPS (CSW)

Scale 2 (£15,766 - £18,235)

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

Clerical Officer, (4 f/t and 1 p/t) (CSW)

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

Custodian, Union College

Library Assistant (part time), Union College

Scale 3 (£17,692 - £20,457)

Marriage and Guidance Co-ordinator (CLW)

Administrative Assistant (part time), Union College

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

Senior Secretary, Union College (0.6 post)

Senior Secretary, Union College

Scale 4 (£20,046 - £23,086)

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

Senior Secretary, Union College

Deputy Librarian, Union College

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£24,223 - £27,690)

Assistant Chaplain, QUB (MD)

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

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE

1. The Committee met once during the year. Two further planned meetings, including interviews with councils, were unable to take place due to the circumstances surrounding the Coronavirus health emergency. It was unable to present its report in April to the General Council, and presented it instead to the General Council Standing Committee.

The 2019 Appeal

2. The Committee wishes to express its thanks to the congregations that supported the United Appeal in 2019. When contributions for the 2019 Appeal were closed at the end of January 2020, £3,302,058 (2019: £3,291,684) had been received from congregations towards the Appeal Target of £3,550,000, a shortfall of £247,942. The total budgeted income as presented to the General Assembly for 2019 which takes account of late contributions for the 2018 Appeal, trust fund income and donations was £3,498,000. The total income received for 2019 as shown in the year-end accounts was £3,566,949 and includes bequests of £95,700 that were not anticipated.
3. The Committee notes that by the closing date of the Appeal 14 congregations (2018: 38) had not contributed to it and that approximately 57% (2018: 60%) of the income for the 2019 appeal was received in December 2019 and January 2020. Since the closing date for the Appeal, a further £148,399 (2019: £173,220) (at the date of this report) has been received and this will be reflected in the 2020 accounts.
4. The Committee was pleased to be able to pay in full the proposed allocation of grants of £3,700,000 to councils for 2019.
5. A number of years ago the United Appeal Board took the decision to introduce a phased reduction in the use of reserves but this was deferred pending the restructuring of boards to councils. Reserves have reduced by around £1.0m in the last 10 years. In 2019 they were reduced by £151,455 (2018: £106,769), which was less than the budgeted release of £212,000. At 31 December 2019, reserves were £1,958,277 but these are required to fund monthly grants to councils, given that most congregations contribute to the Appeal at the end of the year rather than during it.
6. The Committee conveys its position that it will not be possible to continue to use reserves at this rate or to depend on councils returning grants previously allocated and therefore remains of the view that the level of the Appeal and grants to councils needs to be brought into line over the next few years. The Committee's strategy in this regard has been to restrict any increase in the proposed grants to councils but proposing a modest inflationary increase to the amount of the Appeal each year.

The 2020 Appeal

7. The General Assembly has already agreed to an Appeal of £3,600,000 for 2020 with agreed grants to councils of £3,700,000. Details of these 2020 grants are included in the second column of Schedule 1 of this report and details of the agreed allocation of the appeal to presbyteries is included in Schedule 2.
8. Due to the restrictions on congregations meeting consequent on the Coronavirus pandemic, the response to the 2020 Appeal is uncertain. It is hoped that members will continue to contribute where possible, but it will not be until end of January 2021 before the level of response is known.
9. A number of councils have scaled back their ongoing work during the period of restriction and a number of staff have been placed on furlough under the UK Government Job Retention Scheme. This will reduce the ongoing cost to councils for the initial period of the scheme, which may be subject to further extension.

The 2021 Appeal

10. At the meeting of the United Appeal Committee on 7 February it was agreed to indicate to councils that they should not anticipate any increase in the grant they might be awarded compared to 2020 and that they should prepare their budgets accordingly. The Committee also agreed to propose a modest increase in the 2020 Appeal of £3,600,000 to £3,650,000 for 2021 i.e. a 1.4% increase.
11. As indicated, the United Appeal Committee had planned to meet on 27 March to complete some preparatory work, and again on 30 March to meet with the councils and consider their 2021 budget requests submitted, but this proved not to be possible. Despite this, councils were still asked to respond by email to a series of questions on their budgets. Having considered the budget requests and each council's response to the questions, the General Council Standing Committee, acting for the United Appeal Committee, has drawn up two options for the 2021 Appeal as outlined below.
12. The Committee is grateful for the hard work and dedication of every council, not least from their secretaries and conveners in preparing their annual requests and for the ongoing management of their council's finances. The support from finance personnel to each council is a crucial link in ensuring the ongoing monitoring of budgets and spending and preparation of financial projections.

Response to recent Appeals

13. The closing date for the Appeal each year is normally 31 January. Any contributions received after this date are treated as late contributions and reflected in the following year's accounts accordingly. If these late contributions are added to the amount received during the appeal year, and compared to the Appeal Target, this shows the level of response to the Appeal. This can be summarised as follows with regard to the last five years.

	2019 £	2018 £	2017 £	2016 £	2015 £
Amount received	3,302,058	3,291,684	3,301,533	3,218,252	3,170,683
Late contributions (Note1)	175,000	166,044	118,943	158,847	104,617
Total received	3,477,058	3,457,728	3,420,476	3,377,099	3,275,300
Appeal Target	3,550,000	3,500,000	3,460,000	3,400,000	3,325,000
% of Appeal Target received	97.9%	98.8%	98.9%	99.3%	98.5%

Note 1 - the late contributions for the 2019 Appeal are estimated

14. If the five years above are considered in total, the percentage of the Appeal received is on average 98.7%.
15. It is recognised that, despite an ongoing fall in membership, the overall level of giving in the denomination has continued to show modest growth in recent years and deep appreciation is expressed for the ongoing support for the Appeal. However, the Committee is concerned that a time may be coming, with a continuing decline in overall membership, when the denomination may not be able to support an ongoing rise in the level of the Appeal. It is also concerned at the ongoing use of reserves to fund the shortfall between the amount received through the Appeal and the annual grants to councils. The General Council Standing Committee has therefore decided to present two options to the General Assembly Standing Commission / General Assembly for consideration.

Requests from Councils and Proposed Appeal and Grants for 2021

	Request received	2021 Option 1	2021 Option 2	2020	2019
Appeal	–	3,650,000	3,600,000	3,600,000	3,550,000
Global Mission	1,065,000	1,065,000	1,040,000	1,065,000	1,065,000
Mission in Ireland	1,065,000	1,065,000	1,040,000	1,065,000	1,065,000
Training in Ministry	375,000	375,000	365,000	375,000	375,000
Congregational Life and Witness	720,000	720,000	700,000	720,000	720,000
Council for Social Witness	280,957	245,000	240,000	245,000	245,000
General Council - Creative Production Department	225,000	225,000	220,000	230,000	230,000
Total Grants	3,730,957	3,695,000	3,605,000	3,700,000	3,700,000

16. Therefore, the General Council Standing Committee presents the following two options for the 2021 Appeal:

Option 1 – An Appeal of £3,650,000 and grants to councils of 3,695,000

or

Option 2 – An Appeal of £3,600,000 and grants to councils of £3,605,000

17. The proposed grants in Option 2 assume an approximate 2.5% reduction in each council's grant. If Option 2 is agreed, councils will be asked to identify possible savings in their budgets. It is, however, not the role of the United Appeal Committee to prioritise the allocation of grants: that is a role for the General Council's Priorities Reference Panel and it will have to be consulted accordingly. This may result in a different allocation of grants, rather the general reduction shown in Option 2.

MARTIN HAMPTON, Acting Convener

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE

SCHEDULE 1 – PROPOSED 2020 APPEAL AND COMPARATIVE FIGURES FOR PREVIOUS YEARS

	Proposed 2020 £	Budget 2019 £	Actual 2018 £
APPEAL	3,600,000	3,550,000	3,500,000
PROJECTED ACCOUNTS			
INCOME			
Congregations (current year)	3,350,000	3,300,000	3,291,684
Congregations (prior years)	150,000	150,000	118,943
Income from Trust Funds	28,000	28,000	28,698
Donations and Bequests	10,000	10,000	39,292
Bank Interest	10,000	10,000	6,487
TOTAL INCOME	3,548,000	3,498,000	3,485,104
EXPENDITURE			
Promotional Costs	10,000	10,000	16,874
GRANTS			
Mission in Ireland	1,065,000	1,065,000	1,050,000
Global Mission	1,065,000	1,065,000	1,050,000
Training in Ministry	375,000	375,000	370,000
Congregational Life & Witness	720,000	720,000	720,000
Social Witness	245,000	245,000	245,000
General - Creative Production	230,000	230,000	230,000
TOTAL GRANTS	3,700,000	3,700,000	3,665,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,710,000	3,710,000	3,681,874
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	-162,000	-212,000	-196,770
Grants Returned - CCLW	0		90,000
Added/(Deducted) to/(from) reserves	-162,000	-212,000	-106,770
Reserves at start of year	1,867,408	2,079,408	2,186,178
Reserves at end of year	1,705,408	1,867,408	2,079,408

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE

ALLOCATION OF THE 2020 UNITED APPEAL TO PRESBYTERIES

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2018	Assessable Income 2018 £	United Appeal 2020 £
Ards	6,476	3,800,650	335,680
Armagh	3,529	2,283,534	192,385
Ballymena	6,424	3,613,826	326,024
Belfast North	3,715	2,076,771	187,957
Belfast South	2,452	1,825,589	144,314
Belfast East	4,752	3,333,448	270,570
Carrickfergus	4,020	2,025,312	193,503
Coleraine and Limavady	4,826	2,691,859	243,899
Derry and Donegal	4,539	2,188,312	214,099
Down	4,007	1,926,899	188,786
Dromore	4,226	2,297,296	210,909
Dublin and Munster	1,168	1,800,825	110,214
Iveagh	3,151	1,672,889	155,476
Monaghan	1,076	855,235	65,739
Newry	2,688	1,365,378	129,883
Omagh	3,166	1,612,759	153,184
Route	3,102	1,536,785	148,156
Templepatrick	3,438	1,711,979	164,592
Tyrone	3,289	1,798,804	164,630
	70,044	40,418,150	3,600,000

50% of the allocation for 2020 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Assessable Income. Assessable Income for congregations in the Republic of Ireland has been converted to sterling as GB£1 - €1.1301

HOLDING TRUSTEES TASK GROUP

1. The Holding Trustees Task Group met on five occasions during the year.
2. Following the resolutions agreed by the 2018 and 2019 General Assemblies, and the advice of the General Assembly Solicitor, the proposal of the Holding Trustee Task Group is:

Proposal

3. That the Presbytery Education Boards should cease to act as holding trustees for congregational property. Instead, two bodies should be set up, one would act as holding trustee for congregations within Northern Ireland, and the second would act as holding trustee for congregations in the Republic of Ireland.
4. These bodies would be limited companies, limited by guarantee and their function would be expressed to be that of acting as holding trustees for congregations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
5. A company limited by guarantee is the appropriate structure for a company which is not going to trade and is not incorporated to make a profit. This is different from the usual type of limited company which is set up to trade. Such a company is one limited by shares. The reporting and accounting obligations for a company limited by guarantee are much less onerous than for one limited by shares.
6. A company limited by guarantee requires the ‘member(s)’ of the company to give a guarantee to contribute a defined sum of money (usually £1) to the Company if it is being wound up because of insolvency. It is difficult to see how a company of this nature, carrying on the particular function for which it comes into existence, would face insolvency. In Northern Ireland, it is sufficient for the company to have just one member giving a guarantee.
7. The person to give the guarantee and be the member of the company might be nominated by the General Council.
8. Each Company would have two directors, perhaps the Clerk of the General Assembly and the Financial Secretary. These would be identified by their names, and not their office, but on the understanding that on leaving office they would retire as directors and be replaced by their successors. The constitutions of the Companies will provide that this is how the identity of the directors will be ascertained.
9. Each Company would appoint five or six persons in Assembly Buildings (authorised signatories) to have power to execute deeds on behalf of the Company. There would be a provision in the Constitution that a deed would 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 sufficient to execute any necessary deeds.

Action Plan (for Presbyteries and Congregations)

10. The Task Group is finalising a detailed action plan outlining the practical steps that need to be taken by congregations that have the Presbytery Education Board as the holding trustee for any part of the lands and buildings owned by the congregation: it is recommended that, when finalised, this document be distributed to congregations, presbyteries and Educations Boards.
11. It is recommended that a briefing seminar be held for clerks of presbytery, should the General Assembly approve the proposals.

Cost to congregations

12. The objective of the Task Group is to keep costs to a minimum, however, there will be legal costs involved in the registration process.
13. It is recommended by the Task Group that in cases of extreme difficulty, and with the recommendation of the appropriate clerk of presbytery, application may be made to the Incidental Fund to meeting, at its discretion, the costs of appointing one of the new companies as holding trustee. The acquisition of title is the responsibility of the congregation.

Guidance regarding property transactions

14. As a consequence of the Task Group's work, it has been realised that step-by-step guidance in connection with property transactions will be helpful for congregations and holding trustees; an appropriate guidance document is being drawn up: it is recommended that, when finalised, this document be distributed to congregations, presbyteries and Educations Boards.
15. It has also come to the attention of the Task Group that guidance on congregational borrowing may be helpful for congregations; it is recommended that the Task Group be requested to draw up guidance on congregational borrowing.
16. Following the approval of the General Assembly, the Holding Trustee Task Group will progress the proposal and recommendations outlined in the report.

PLEASE NOTE: The Holding Trustee Task Group is not proposing any changes to the Code regarding the decision-making processes concerning congregational property.

The Code is clear regarding the decision-making process:

“it shall be the duty of congregational trustees to carry out the lawful directions given to them on behalf of the congregation by the **Congregational Committee.**” (Code para 57(1))

“transactions creating, transferring or affecting any estate or interest in congregational property shall not be entered into without the **authorisation of the congregation and the sanction of the Presbytery** being first obtained.” (Code para 57(2))

ROBERT HERRON, Convener

CHARITY REGULATORY AUTHORITY REGISTRATION TASK GROUP

1. Following several years of delay, the Charity Regulatory Authority (CRA) in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) moved forward during the last year in beginning to register formally individual congregations and Presbyteries in RoI. When this began, there were 85 such congregations (known as ‘Section 39’ congregations, referring to the section of the legislation) along with three presbyteries requiring to be registered. There were a further ten congregations that had already registered, having previously had an individual charity number (these are known as ‘Section 40’ congregations.)
2. Over the summer of 2019, a representative task group was brought together (later formally ratified by the General Council in October 2019) to plan for PCI’s registration process, as follows:
Moderator, Clerk (Convener), Financial Secretary, Deputy Clerk and General Assembly Solicitor; General Council Convener and Support Services Convener; Clerks of Presbyteries of Dublin and Munster, Monaghan and Derry and Donegal; three additional members (one from each Presbytery) – Ken Gillanders, Alan McAdoo and the Rev Colin McKibbin.
3. Papers, largely drawn up by the Financial Secretary in consultation with the Clerk of Assembly, were considered by the Task Group and a draft time-line for registration was agreed along with a set of draft guidance notes.
4. The Clerk, Financial Secretary and the Clerks of Dublin and Munster and Monaghan Presbyteries, met with officials from the CRA on Monday 16 September 2019. The meeting was very positive and, amongst a range of issues, the time-line and process for registration were agreed.
5. Detailed guidance notes were finalised and a successful pilot carried out. This involved training representatives from six congregations (two from each Presbytery in RoI) and those congregations proceeding to register with the CRA.
6. Training has now been completed with representatives of all congregations in RoI as follows:
 - Dublin & Munster Presbytery – Tuesday 15 January 2020 in Lucan
 - Monaghan Presbytery – Monday 10 February in Cootehill
 - Derry & Donegal Presbytery – Tuesday 10 March 2020 in Letterkenny
7. Over the next period it is hoped that all congregations will successfully complete their registration. The three RoI presbyteries will also be completing their registration with the CRA. (The anticipated time-line is likely to slip because of the restrictions related to the Covid-19

Pandemic.)

8. Discussions are ongoing with the Revenue Commissioners to assist congregations in obtaining the necessary recognition for tax purposes.

TREVOR D. GRIBBEN, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 4

DECISION MAKING AND DISSENT WITHIN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TASK GROUP

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly in 2019 agreed that the report of the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group be sent down to presbyteries for discussion and comment. The presbyteries approached the request for comments in a number of ways. Some asked a task group to form a report which was debated at presbytery. Others considered the response over two presbytery meetings and a few arranged special meetings of presbytery and had round-table discussion inviting interested elders from congregations to take part.
2. The Task Group was pleased to have received responses from all 19 presbyteries and was encouraged by the manner in which the report was received, and by the constructive contributions that were offered in the replies.
3. The Task Group had suggested some relevant background papers in the 2019 report. The feedback from presbyteries highlighted some additional papers in particular which the Task Group noted.
 - (a) Papers listed in 2019 report:
 - 1974 Report re ‘A Brief Statement concerning Faith and Order’
 - 1981 Doctrine Committee Report re ‘Subscription to Creeds and Confessions’
 - 1990 Report of the Judicial Commission re ‘Liberty of Conscience’
 - 2014 Report of the General Board re ‘Freedom of Individuals to Express Opinions’
 - 2018 General Council Report (extracts)
 - (b) Additional papers highlighted by Presbyteries:
 - The 1979 Judicial Commission report re ‘Formula of Subscription’
 - The 1982 Judicial Commission Report re ‘Memorial of the Rev W.W. Porter’
 - The 1988 General Assembly Minutes re Westminster Confession of Faith (the interpretation of the Pope as the Antichrist)

4. The presbyteries were asked some focused questions on section (C) of the 2019 report, which referred to 'Areas in which greater clarity is needed and where there is room for improvement'. The presbytery responses highlighted some main issues for further consideration by the Task Group, namely:
 - (i) The need to improve how significant issues come to the General Assembly for decision – support was indicated for the introduction of a 'Green Paper' process.
 - (ii) The need to re-examine how the General Assembly conducts its business - including the role of retired ministers in General Assembly decision making.
 - (iii) The need to bring greater clarity regarding the standing of General Assembly decisions and the meaning and scope of dissent.
 - (iv) The need to improve how General Assembly decisions/policies are communicated.
 - (v) The need to clarify how General Assembly decisions/policies can be changed.

B. TOWARDS A NEW PROCESS FOR BRINGING REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5. It was noted that there was significant support for wider consultation prior to important decisions being made or policies finalised. More 'conference style' meetings to help shape policy were commended, as was a compulsory 'Green Paper Consultation Stage' prior to significant new policies being decided by the General Assembly. It was also noted that the volume of routine business, generated on an annual basis by Assembly bodies, leaves little space or time for strategic thinking and significant debate at the General Assembly each year.
6. 'Conference style' meetings could take a number of forms:
 - One large conference in the Assembly Hall with, say, 6-8 representatives from each presbytery, involving input from 'experts', facilitated discussion round tables and structured feedback.
 - A number of similar regional conferences, combining four or five presbyteries, allowing for a greater number of participants.
 - Presbytery-based conferences, with each congregation having a number of representatives. 'Expert' input could be by coordinated video presentations or even 'live streamed' input and interaction.
7. In light of this feedback from presbyteries, the Task Group considered a number of options regarding how the General Assembly receives reports and makes decisions and brings the following four recommendations for consideration by the General Council and, if agreed, by the 2020 General Assembly:

Recommendation 1:

That from the 2021 General Assembly onwards, subsequent to each General Assembly, up to two sets of regional or presbytery ‘conference style’ meetings be held – a first set could be held in the summer/autumn after the General Assembly and a second set could be held during the late winter/spring preceding the next General Assembly. These regional conferences could, in any particular year:

- (a) reflect on specific matters remitted by the General Assembly and/or on the implementation of new policies decided by the General Assembly (first set of conferences);
- (b) give preliminary consideration to strategic and significant policies and issues (first set of conferences);
- (c) be forums for discussion and giving guidance regarding matters coming to the General Assembly prior to recommendations being finalised (second set of conferences);
- (d) be an opportunity to be informed about and consider significant issues prior to decision-making at the General Assembly (second set of conferences).

Recommendation 2:

That from the 2021 General Assembly onwards, where a significant change of policy is being considered, or a new policy being proposed (especially where the matter is strategic or potentially controversial), there should be a formal ‘Green Paper Consultation Stage’ prior to recommendations for decision coming to the General Assembly. A ‘Green Paper Consultation Stage’ would:

- (a) be triggered by the General Assembly (or by the General Council), following recommendation from a newly constituted General Assembly Advisory Committee;
- (b) include the drafting of a ‘Green Paper Consultation Document’ outlining the background to the matter, the reasons necessitating new policy/decisions, an analysis of options that could be considered, etc.;
- (c) involve consideration of the ‘Green Paper Consultation Document’ at one or more of the following levels – regional, presbytery, kirk session;
- (d) result in a ‘Green Paper Report’ to the General Assembly, which itself would authorise the drawing up of a full policy report for consideration and decision at the subsequent Assembly.

Recommendation 3:

That from 2022, the General Assembly should continue to meet annually, but for a shortened period, to:

- (a) together meet with the Lord – listening to his Word, coming to him in prayer and gathering at his Table;
 - (b) consider strategic and significant policies and decisions (including formal ‘Green Paper Reports’);
 - (c) receive reports on a rotation basis from selected councils and commissions (mostly on a biennial basis);
 - (d) deal with essential annual business;
 - (e) greet and hear from representatives of partner Churches.
8. It was noted that even when the General Assembly sets a remit for a piece of work, a council or a dedicated task group carrying forward that remit may need guidance between meetings of the Assembly. This could include a need to consider adjusting the remit, guidance as to the scope of the recommendations to be brought to the General Assembly, or to find ways to address unforeseen consequences that have arisen during the process. This would require reflection by a body independent of the group taking forward the original remit. Such monitoring is especially important when issues are being considered that are potentially controversial, or may have significant impact on the Church.
9. The Task Group therefore concludes that a new General Assembly Committee is required, under the General Council, to fulfil this important role of monitoring and advising as outlined. This senior committee could also usefully encompass the roles currently carried out by the current Moderator’s Advisory Committee. The Task Group therefore brings the following recommendation for consideration by the General Council and, if agreed, by the 2020 General Assembly:

Recommendation 4:

That a new ‘General Assembly Advisory Committee’ be constituted:

- (a) to take on the current remit of the Moderator’s Advisory Committee;
- (b) to recommend to the General Assembly (or General Council) that a ‘Green Paper Consultation Stage’ be triggered (as outlined above);
- (c) to monitor the progress of remits set by the General Assembly;
- (d) to recommend to the General Council that a remit be adjusted, with the General Council having authority so to do;
- (e) to give guidance as to the scope of the recommendations to be brought to the General Assembly from a remit;
- (f) to address unforeseen consequences that have arisen during the process of carrying forward a remit.

C. TOWARDS A NEW PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING REPORTS AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

10. It was agreed by presbyteries, and is unquestionably desirable, that every opportunity should be taken to enable wider and fuller participation by representatives during the General Assembly. The question of increased involvement by elders, women and younger people during the assembly is being considered by the ‘Making the General Assembly More Accessible’ Task Group and it is expected that an agreed strategy to assist their participation will be recommended at the 2020 Assembly.
11. The question of business being done in private was given little support by presbyteries, and it was agreed that there should be no change in the present arrangement of all proceedings being conducted in public except for the business of the Judicial Commission or where issues relating to a specific individual are being addressed.
12. Many presbyteries suggested that there should be a greater use of electronic facilitation of Assembly business. For example, all reports, along with supplementary reports and minutes, should be provided in full electronic/digital format. The Task Group agreed that this is the direction of travel for the future, and brings a suitable recommendation below for consideration by the General Council and, if agreed, by the 2020 General Assembly.
13. It is recognised that Christ is always present in his Church and governs it by God’s Word and Spirit. The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church and, in humble obedience to Christ, it discharges its authority and governance responsibilities. It is imperative that the members of the General Assembly acknowledge the authority of the Assembly and fully respect the procedures and practice of the court. All members of the Assembly should be equally valued and feel their presence is significant and recognised. All those participating should be treated with proper regard and dignity.
14. Retired ministers are recognised for their experience and expertise and are of exceptional value to the Church. The pastoral work carried out in retirement, and the preaching ministry they continue to conduct is widely recognised. Many presbyteries depend on the availability of retired ministers to oversee vacancies and fulfil presbytery responsibilities. The contributions of retired ministers to the debates of the General Assembly are also recognised. Their wisdom and experience are invaluable and acclaimed. The question of their right to vote was the main issue that concerned presbyteries. The Task Group suggests a change regarding the voting rights of retired ministers and brings a suitable recommendation below for consideration by the General Council and, if agreed, by the 2020 General Assembly.
15. For the sake of good decision-making, all ordained ministers actively serving the Church, along with all representative elders, are reminded that they have an obligation to attend the courts of the Church and participate, as appropriate, in their presbytery and in the General Assembly.

16. In light of above points, the Task Group brings the following recommendations for consideration by the General Council and, if agreed, by the 2020 General Assembly:

Recommendation 5:

That the General Assembly Business Committee appoint a dedicated Task Group to consider cost and, with the approval of the General Council, implement a system for the provision of full electronic/digital reports for the General Assembly.

Recommendation 6:

That, going into the future, 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.

D. TOWARDS GREATER CLARITY REGARDING THE STANDING OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISIONS AND THE MEANING AND SCOPE OF DISSENT.

17. Overwhelmingly presbyteries concurred with the emphasis the Task Group gave to two key points which were noted in its report to the 2019 General Assembly, namely that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is both a confessional Church and a Presbyterian Church.
18. PCI is a confessional Church:
- (a) The Rule of Faith (Code Pars 10-14) states:
 - (i) *10. The Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the supreme standard of the Church.*
 - (ii) *11. It is the privilege, right and duty of every person to examine the Scriptures, and each individual is bound to submit to their authority. Having formed a definite conviction as to what the will of God is upon any subject, it is each person's duty to accept and obey it. 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. In the words of the Westminster Confession "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship."*

- (iii) *12. 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.*
- (iv) *13. The Confession of Faith (as approved by the Church of Scotland in her Act of 1647), and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, prepared by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, are the subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Accepting these subordinate standards, the Church holds that civil rulers must be obedient to Christ in their own area of authority, yet they ought not to attempt, in any way, to constrain any person's religious beliefs or intrude upon their rights of conscience.*
- (v) *14. The Church alone has the right to interpret and explain her standards, under the guidance of the Spirit of God.*
- (b) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, though a democratic Church in its decision-making processes, is not at liberty to simply change its core principles and policies as ‘demanded’ by the ever-changing culture in which it seeks to witness. Rather, the Church stands firm on the foundation of its supreme standard, with its primary loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ, the sole King and Head of the Church.
- (c) PCI’s subordinate standards are “a testimony for truth and against error, and serve as a bond of union for members of the Church.” Policies are developed and decisions taken within that doctrinal framework.
- (d) In the light of both feedback from presbyteries and further discussion, the Task Group has come to the view that there is a need for the 1974 report “A Brief Statement concerning Faith and Order”, to be updated with a contemporary statement on faith and order. The Task Group therefore brings the following recommendation for consideration by the General Council and, if agreed, by the 2020 General Assembly:

Recommendation 7:

That the Doctrine Committee be instructed to draw up an updated and contemporary “Brief Statement concerning Faith and Order”, for consideration and adoption by the General Assembly, by 2022.

19. PCI is a Presbyterian Church

- (a) Key decisions are made by ministers and elders meeting together in 'representative gatherings' (Code Par 19):

19(1) The Presbyterian Church in Ireland shall be governed by presbyters in representative assemblies, otherwise known as the courts of the Church. These courts comprise Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and the General Assembly.

- (b) The General Assembly is a coming together of ministers and representative elders from every PCI congregation (Code Par 104):

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.

- (c) The General Assembly is not simply a meeting, but rather it is the Presbyterian Church coming together to make decisions together - with every congregation represented by its minister and representative elder, both of whom have full and equal voting rights in that decision-making process.

20. The fact that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is both a Confessional Church and a Presbyterian Church has certain clear implications. Chief among these are:

- the fact that “The Church alone has the right to interpret and explain her standards, under the guidance of the Spirit of God” (Code Par 14);
- the fact that “Decisions of the Assembly are final and binding upon the whole Church.....” (Code Par 104(3))

21. However, not every policy or every doctrinal statement, has the same standing. Some matters are part of PCI's subordinate standards; some matters are set out in PCI's constitution (the Code); and some matters are policy or statements agreed by the General Assembly, often following on from a detailed report and debate on the underlying biblical principles involved. Some policy matters or doctrinal positions may be outlined in all three of these ways – a sort of 'triple lock' of reference in the subordinate standards, inclusion in the Code and the subject of a detailed Assembly report and related decision.

22. The Task Group agreed that there is a need to be clear regarding the nature of specific decisions made by the General Assembly, therefore it brings two suitable recommendations below for consideration by the General Council and, if agreed, by the 2020 General Assembly.

THE MEANING AND SCOPE OF DISSENT

23. It was agreed by the Task Group that the term dissent is misunderstood. The common use of dissent in the public square and in the media, as a difference of opinion or disagreement with a majority position or opposition to the policies of a governing body, is different from how dissent is defined in the courts of the Church. There is the need for education and clarification in regard to what it means to dissent within the General Assembly and other courts of the Church. Members of the General Assembly can dissent from a decision and express their dissent by recording their disagreement, but are obliged to implement the policy of the Church.
24. It was agreed that this be termed ‘formal dissent’ from decisions of the General Assembly and that this should be clarified by small amendments to the Code, and the insertion of the relevant sections of the Code in the guide to Assembly Procedure, the yellow pages of the Assembly Reports, as follows:
- Code Para 104(3)*
“Decisions of the Assembly are final and binding upon the whole Church, but a member of the Assembly who dissents from a decision may require a statement of the fact of his formal dissent to be recorded in the minutes, although he shall not thereby free himself from obligation loyally to implement the decision so long as it stands unaltered.”
- Code Para 147(6)*
“Any member of the court may object to the adoption of any resolution by the court and, in the case of an inferior court, if the objection be not sustained may formally dissent and appeal to a superior court.”
- Code Para 160(2)*
“Formal dissent relieves of all responsibility for the taking of the decision incurred, but does not exempt members from obedience to any law or injunction of the Church, nor from the obligation to implement the decisions of Church courts, until these may have been reversed or altered by the processes of complaint or appeal, or other due consideration by the court.”
25. To be clear, a presbytery or kirk session cannot formally dissent from a decision of the General Assembly. Indeed, the Code states that, *“no inferior court has a right to review the proceedings of a superior or co-ordinate court.”* (Code Par 21(4)). However, when generally discussing a decision of the General Assembly, a presbytery or kirk session could (for instance) resolve, without challenging that decision, to express its concern regarding the implementation of the decision and also seek guidance to assist in that regard.

26. The issue of more general dissent, especially in light of today's culture, and how dissatisfaction with, or opposition to a policy can be expressed, is different for members of the Church and for those who are in the ordained leadership of the Church (both ministers and elders).
- (a) Those who are in the wider membership of the Church have greater freedom to hold/promote views at variance with the formal position of the Church. They are not bound by subscription to PCI's subordinate standards, nor have they taken on the responsibility and constraints of leadership. However, all members of the Church should seek in debate and discussion to "*continue in the peace and fellowship of the people of God*" (Code Par 6).
 - (b) For ministers and elders, debate and discussion can of course also take place outside the formal structures of the Church, both in private discussions and in more organised ways. However, ministers and elders have 'subscribed' and, through ordination vows, have taken on the responsibility and constraints of leadership. This has implications in relation to the freedom of ministers and elders to hold/promote certain views at variance with the clear position of the General Assembly.
 - (c) There are, however, some areas regarding which the PCI has decided that its ministers and elders can hold a different belief than that stated in the WCF, e.g. the role of civil magistrates (in the Code); the view of the Pope (by GA resolution); and a certain liberty of conscience regarding the ordination of women (Judicial Commission report and GA resolutions).
 - (d) Generally speaking, any public debate involving ministers and elders of the Church should seek to avoid discourse that "*gives rise, or may give rise, to scandal injurious to the purity or peace of the Church*" (Code Par 132(1)(b)). Ministers and elders of the Church should ensure that by their public comments they do not bring the church and its agencies into disrepute. Ministers and elders should also ensure that their public statements do not equate to an open declaration of their intention to take actions that would lead to defiance of, or disobedience to, the courts of the Church - contumacy as defined in Par 132(b) of the Code.
 - (e) In the light of both feedback from presbyteries and further discussion, the Task Group concluded that the principles enunciated in this report should replace the more limited 2014 report "Freedom of Individuals to Express Opinions".
 - (f) Some presbyteries have raised the specific issue of the confidentiality of private sessions of presbytery and General Assembly. It should be noted that when a Church court sits in private, the only thing that can be communicated outside of that meeting is the decision arrived at during the private session. For any member, minister or elder, to break the confidence of a private session of presbytery or General Assembly is a direct defiance or disobedience to the courts of the Church.

27. In light of above points, the Task Group brings the following recommendations for consideration by the General Council and, if agreed, by the 2020 General Assembly:

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:

- (i) 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).
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) Decisions that are in the form of guidance, that is, good advice that should be taken into consideration.

Recommendation 9:

That once Recommendation 8 is implemented, the General Assembly Business Committee shall ensure that there is clarity regarding the standing of all resolutions coming to the General Assembly for decision.

Recommendation 10:

That on the basis of par 26(e) above, the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group be instructed to draw up a comprehensive report, for consideration by the 2021 General Assembly, on the “Freedom of those in Ordained Leadership to Promote Opinions at variance with the clear position of the General Assembly”.

E. TOWARDS IMPROVING HOW GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISIONS/POLICIES ARE COMMUNICATED

28. While it is recognised that this is an urgent matter, there is a need for the improved communication of General Assembly decisions and policies to be considered as part (albeit an important part) of an overall review of PCI’s communications strategy. Therefore, the matter is referred to the Communications and Strategy Task Group under the General Council.

Recommendation 11:

That the Communications and Strategy Task Group should aim to bring a comprehensive report on a communications strategy for PCI (including how General Assembly decisions and policies are communicated) to the 2021 General Assembly, with the General Council being authorised to take any necessary interim decisions.

F. TOWARDS CLARIFYING HOW GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISIONS/POLICIES CAN BE CHANGED

29. It is of the essence of church government within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland that members of the General Assembly be free to debate reports presented to the Assembly, oppose the conclusions of those reports and seek to have those conclusions rejected. Likewise, though obliged to loyally implement the decisions and policies of the General Assembly so long as they stand unaltered, members of Assembly are free to seek to overturn or alter those decisions or policies. Such debate and efforts to overturn or alter the policies of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should, however, primarily take place within the General Assembly itself and through the procedures laid down in the constitution of the Church.
30. While through a competent memorial to the General Assembly a kirk session or presbytery can seek a change in the policy of the Church, that process can seem opaque to many, if not somewhat antiquated in its form. There is also a lack of clarity as to how members of the General Assembly can table additional resolutions to a particular Assembly report and exactly what issues these can and cannot address. Therefore, the Task Group brings the following recommendation for consideration by the General Council and, if agreed, by the 2020 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 2021 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.

NOBLE McNEELY, Convener

VOWS FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP AND BAPTISM TASK GROUP

1. In the report to the 2019 General Assembly the Implementation Task Group referred to the variety of vows that appeared to be used within the PCI at admission both to baptism and to full membership. The Implementation Task Group asked that steps be taken to clarify the vows to be used at admission to baptism and to full membership.
2. The General Assembly agreed the following resolution: The General Assembly instruct the General Council to appoint a task group to recommend how best to clarify the vows taken at admission to full membership and at baptism, with a report coming to the 2020 General Assembly.
3. At the meeting of the General Council on 10 October 2019 the ‘Vows for Full Membership and Baptism Task Group’ was appointed, with the following membership:

Moderator and Clerk; Convener of General Council (Convener); Rev Dr David Cupples and Mr Tom Finnegan (Council for Congregation Life and Witness); Very Rev Principal Stafford Carson, Prof John Gillespie, Rev Mairisine Stanfield (Doctrine Committee); Prof Drew Gibson (Professor of Practical Theology); Rev David Bruce (Secretary to a former revision group).
4. The task group met on four occasions, on 11 November and 9 December 2019, 27 January and 24 February 2020. It was agreed that the issue of various vows being used was prevalent in the church, and it was apparent that ministers were using a variety of resource material for the administration of baptism and for a service of admission of new communicants.
5. The task group consulted some recognised resources that are commonly used by ministers:
 - Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland (1940)
 - Book of Public Worship of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (1965)
 - Public Worship, an Experimental Revision (Public Worship Committee, PCI, 1989)
 - Book of Public Worship (Board of Mission in Ireland Worship Panel, 2011)
 - Book of Public Worship (Council of Mission in Ireland, 2016, on PCI website).

6. In addressing how best to clarify the vows taken at admission to communicant membership and at baptism the task group agreed to compose vows which expressed:
 - belief in the triune God
 - commitments made were dependent on the grace of God
 - the prayerful support of the congregation for those making the vows
7. The task group presents in the three appendices below the vows to be taken at admission to communicant membership, the baptism of infants and the baptism of believers, and recommends the use of these vows at services of admission to communicant membership and baptism.

APPENDIX A

VOWS TAKEN AT ADMISSION TO COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP

1. Introduction. What is the purpose of making vows at the time of membership?
 - 1.1. These vows are an expression of God's covenant with his people. This is an important milepost on a person's journey as a disciple of Christ, signifying both their commitment to God, and His to them. These vows mark the progress from baptism to full communicant membership of Christ's church.
 - 1.2. These vows are an individual's statement of belief in the triune God, and include commitments they will wish to make in His service. As such, they are not to be made without careful consideration, counting the cost.
 - 1.3. The taking of these vows marks a moment when a person publicly identifies as a follower of Jesus Christ. They confirm a person's membership of the church of Jesus Christ more widely, and this local congregation in particular.
2. The Vows

In becoming a communicant member of the congregation:

 1. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit? (I do)
 2. Depending on the grace of God:
 - Do you trust in Jesus Christ alone, as your Saviour from sin and as Lord of your life? (I do)
 - Do you promise to live as a follower of Jesus Christ, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit? (I do)

- Do you commit as a communicant member of this congregation, to worship, serve, give and participate fully in its life and witness? (I do)

Affirmation by the congregation to new communicant members.

(This could be read out by the minister, an elder or the entire congregation together.)

As a community ruled by God the Father, redeemed by God the Son and led by God the Spirit, and in welcoming you as new members to this church, we too make these affirmations:

We affirm the apostles' faith and the covenant calling of our baptism to be the people of God.

To you we say, "Join us as we worship Him together".

We humbly share our commitment to live together as a community seeking to be obedient to Jesus in everything. There is no part of our life together which we refuse to submit to his Lordship.

To you we say, "Join us as we live for Him together".

We confidently declare our intention to be witnesses to Christ's transforming presence in our community and beyond, and commit to supporting this mission by praying, giving and working.

To you we say, "Join us as we serve Him together".

APPENDIX B

VOWS TAKEN AT THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS

In presenting this child for baptism;

1. Are you affirming your belief in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit? (I am)
2. Depending on the grace of God;
 - Are you trusting in Jesus Christ alone, as your Saviour from sin and as Lord of your life? (I am)
 - Are you committed to living as a follower of Jesus Christ, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit? (I am)
 - Are you willing to provide a Christian home, and bring up your child in the worship and teaching of the church, so that he/she may come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (I am)

Commitment by the congregation:

As we receive (name) into the fellowship of the Church, do you promise with God's help, to be faithful in prayer, spiritual nurture, Christian example and influence, for him/her and his/her family? (We do).

APPENDIX C

VOWS TAKEN AT THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS

In presenting yourself for baptism:

1. Do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit? (I do)
2. Depending on the grace of God
 - Do you trust in Jesus Christ alone, as your Saviour from sin and as Lord of your life? (I do)
 - Do you promise to live as a follower of Jesus Christ, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit? (I do)
 - Do you commit as a baptised member of the Church, to worship, serve, give and participate fully in its life and witness? (I do)
3. Commitment by the congregation;

As we receive (name) into the fellowship of the Church, do you promise to join with him/her in the life of prayer, worship and service that we, together, offer to God? (We do)

NOBLE McNEELY, Convener

MAKING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MORE ACCESSIBLE TASK GROUP

1. The remit of the task group was given in the amended resolution 30 of the General Council at the 2019 General Assembly, ‘That the experimental evening session be continued in 2020 and that a task group be appointed to further consult and explore ways to make the General Assembly even more accessible for those who have found attending difficult.’
2. Changes to the Assembly should not inhibit its function as supreme court of the Church or hinder its voting membership of ministers and ruling elders from attending and making decisions, but the courts of the Church also make room for other voices such as young people and women and even among voting members of the court there are imbalances in attendance and participation. For example, it is easier for retired elders to attend than working elders; ministers speak considerably more often than elders; and it is harder for people outside the Greater Belfast area to attend. To ensure a range of voices were listened to, the Task Group included an elder and minister from the Republic of Ireland and from Northern Ireland outside the Greater Belfast area, two under 30s representatives, and the proposer of the amendment to resolution 30. To facilitate their attendance the Task Group met on three Saturday mornings in Portadown. Consideration was given to feedback received from presbyteries, a congregation, and individuals, about the proposals brought to the 2019 Assembly, correspondence from ministers outside the Greater Belfast area, feedback from council conveners and secretaries, and ideas discussed at the General Council and the General Assembly Business Committee since 2015.
3. This report will be considered at the Assembly by people who are already able to attend because the present arrangements suit them. It is important to “look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:4). Taking this attitude himself, Christ has richly blessed us through his sacrifice; how richly might the Church now be blessed if all at the Assembly adopted this attitude, seeking the benefit of others even when we might personally be inconvenienced, promoting a greater breadth of participation in the courts of the Church?
4. The task group identified several areas where accessibility could be improved:
 - (a) **Enabling attendance** by people who find it difficult to come because they work or study in the daytime on weekdays, particularly those who have to travel a large distance (para 5–6).
 - (b) **Encouraging attendance** when people are able but lack motivation (para 7).

- (c) **Enabling participation** in the Assembly by people who are unfamiliar with the business or the procedures (para 8–11), and by a greater range of people than it is possible to have speaking at the front (para 12).
- (d) **Encouraging participation** when people are not confident that their voice will be listened to (para 13).
5. Several models for enabling attendance by those who can't come in the daytime on weekdays were considered:
- (a) **Pre-2018 model** with all business during the day.
- (b) **Four evenings** with one item of business each. On the basis of feedback from 2019, evening business would have to start later than 7pm so that people outside Belfast have time to arrive, but not finish any later 9pm, so that there is time to get home, leaving room for only one item of business.
- (c) **Business on Saturdays.** To maximise the value of taking a day off as well as coming on Saturday, this model includes two items of evening business on the Friday. In contrast to model (b), the timing of these sessions is aimed at maximising the business that can be attended on a single day rather than increasing accessibility for people coming after work. This model also reduces the number of alternative presentations to two (one of which would be Listening to the Global Church). This enables the Assembly to be shortened, with the opening night on Wednesday evening, the midweek celebration on Thursday evening, the Lord's Supper on Friday morning, and the close of business taking place on Saturday afternoon. An example timetable is shown in Appendix 1.
6. To compare these models, 13 business items were counted (11 for councils, 1 each for Linkage Commission and Private Business). The number of sessions accessible by different groups of people under each model is shown in the following table (white shading indicates the model which provides the greatest accessibility for that group; black indicates the least). Saturday business clearly benefits the widest range of people while having the fewest drawbacks – all groups can attend at least five items of business – whereas in the pre-2018 model only one group can attend more than four sessions of business.

Model	Can attend only in the day	Can attend evenings and Saturday only	Can attend one weekday + Saturday	Can attend Saturday only
(a) Pre-2018	13	0	4	0
(b) Four evenings	10	4	3	0
(c) Saturday business	11	6	10	5

7. Each minister and elder vows at their ordination that they “accept the Presbyterian form of Church government to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and ... promise to yield submission in the Lord to the courts of this Church and to take your due part in the administration of its affairs” (The Code, 205(4)V and 212(5)(vi)). Congregations benefit when those called by God sacrifice their time in order to serve on kirk session. The higher courts of the church also call for sacrifice of time, but through this the wider church is blessed. The alternative, personally neglecting the courts or discouraging participation by others, would be a violation of ordination vows and a form of unfaithfulness to the Lord that weakens the Church. Ministers should encourage elders to attend, by instruction and example, and both should encourage other attendees. Informing the congregation and kirk session soon after the Assembly about the relevance and significance of the business, with comments from those who attend, could also help with this.
8. Those who do attend the Assembly may nevertheless find it difficult to participate because the publication of the Annual Reports in May leaves little time to become familiar with ~300 pages of reports and resolutions. Earlier publication is not possible, but the Assembly could be moved later, to the 3rd week of June, providing more time for reading and preparation.
9. Even with added time, the reports may be difficult to understand for those who have not been involved in the work of the councils during the year or at the previous Assembly. To equip attendees, presbyteries could hold a meeting after publication of the Annual Reports, allowing attendees to ask questions about reports and procedures. Direct Presbytery Nominees should be able to explain the business of their council. There are already opportunities to do this in a limited way at meetings of presbytery. If the Presbytery Representative Elder from a kirk session was also their General Assembly Representative Elder then that elder should be better informed, both to participate at the Assembly and implement decisions at the Presbytery level.
10. Understanding of issues could also be improved if councils ran local events during the year throughout Ireland, briefing attendees about their work and soliciting feedback. Changing terminology such as ‘memorials’ and ‘overtures’ to plainer language could also help. Further thinking along these lines would best be carried out by the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group and the Code Republishing Panel.
11. A well-prepared attendee may nevertheless find it difficult to speak at the Assembly. The Moderator promotes balanced debate with input from a range of people and range of views, but may have difficulty distinguishing between a young elder and an under 30s representative, or a voting member and an attendee with power to deliberate. Visual aids could help with this. Lanyards consisting of a coloured neck strap and a name badge, similar to the ones used for staff and visitors in Assembly Buildings, could indicate who people are, e.g. blue strap for

voting members, red for non-voting. This could also help with greeting people at coffee times and could provide a storage pouch on the back of the badge for voting cards.

12. There will always be a limited number of people who can speak to an issue. To facilitate broader participation, especially from those who are nervous about speaking at the front, coloured cards could be provided as a way for attendees to express their views in an indicative manner while debate is still ongoing. Some other assemblies and conferences provide cards coloured red on one side and blue on the other which attendees hold at chest level (not up in the air like voting cards) during a discussion to indicate whether they are warming to the motion (red) or cool to it (blue). This would provide another way for people to participate and help the Moderator to judge whether more speeches are needed for or against a motion.
13. Struggles at the Assembly to facilitate and encourage more representative attendance and participation are a symptom of broader cultural issues in the Church that cannot be addressed solely at the Assembly. People will be more confident that it is worth participating during the week of the Assembly if they are confident that they have a meaningful say in the work that happens during the year through councils, commissions, and committees. Conveners and council secretaries have an important role in encouraging people to speak up at meetings, sharing out responsibilities, and allowing contributions meaningfully to shape the work. People will also be more confident that it is worth participating in the supreme court of the Church if they are confident that they have a meaningful say in the work of lower courts. Moderators of presbytery (and clerks) need to be proactive in encouraging people to contribute and giving them responsibilities. Ultimately this begins in congregations where ministers need to encourage and equip elders to participate at kirk session and shape the life of the local congregation, and provide ways for others to express their views for consideration by the kirk session.
14. **In the light of the above, the Task Group presented the following to the General Council on 19 March 2020 and these were agreed as Recommendations to the General Assembly:**
 - (a) That business be scheduled on Saturdays, along with the other changes to facilitate this, as described in paragraph 5(c).
 - (b) That ministers and elders carefully consider their moral obligation to participate in the General Assembly, and encourage attendance by example and instruction.
 - (c) That the General Assembly start on the third Wednesday of June.
 - (d) That each presbytery run an event each year between the publication of the Annual Reports and the start of the General Assembly to help attendees understand the content of the reports

and the procedures of the Assembly, and that the Arrangements Panel of the General Assembly Business Committee work with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness to create a short video for use at this event, explaining Assembly procedures.

- (e) That each kirk session consider appointing the same person to be their representative elder at both presbytery and the General Assembly.
- (f) That the Arrangements Panel provide visual aids as described in paragraphs 11 and 12.
- (g) That conveners, moderators, and clerks at all levels reflect on how they encourage people to participate in the courts of the Church.
- (h) That these changes be trialled for a five-year period, beginning with the 2021 Assembly and a full review be carried out at the 2025 Assembly.

JONATHAN BOYD, Convener

APPENDIX 1:

EXAMPLE MODEL OF THE ASSEMBLY WITH SATURDAY BUSINESS

	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:00		10.00 GABC 1, Report of Presbyteries, Reception of Delegates	10.00 Linkage Commission	10.00 Private business
10:30				10.30 Coffee
11:00		11.00 General Council 1	10.45 Trustees, Nominations, Memorials	11.00 General Council 4
11:30			11.15 Intermission	
12:00		12.00 Worship	11.30 Worship incl. The Lord's Supper	
12:30				12.00 Council for Congregational Life & Witness
13:00		12.45 Lunch	12.45 Lunch	1.00 Lunch
13:30				
14:00		1.45 Alternative presentation: Listening to the Global Church	1.45 Alternative presentation	2.00 Council for Mission in Ireland
14:30		2.45 Coffee	2.45 Coffee	
15:00				3.00 Coffee
15:30		3.15 Council for Training in Ministry	3.15 Council for Global Mission	3.30 General Council 5
16:00				
16:30		4.15 Council for Social Witness	4.15 General Council 2	4.30 <i>Lapsed business</i>
17:00				
17:30		5.15 Dinner	5.15 <i>Lapsed business</i>	5.15 GABC 2
18:00			5.30 Dinner	5.30 Closing worship
18:30				5.45 Finish
19:00	7.00 Opening Night with worship		7.00 Council for Public Affairs	
19:30				
20:00		7.45 Evening Celebration with worship	8.00 General Council 3	
20:30	8.30 Finish			
21:00			9.00 Finish	
		9.15 Finish		

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 5

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Nominations Committee has met once since the last General Assembly.

New Committee Structure under the Council for Global Mission

2. A new committee structure for the Council for Global Mission (CGM) was approved by the 2019 Assembly (2019 General Assembly Reports, pages 101-109). The Committee consulted with the Convener and Secretary of the Council as it considered how to populate the new committees. As well as taking account of their requests, the Committee gave first preference to the members of the existing CGM structures but also looked at geographical spread, balance in gender, in minister/non-minister, and in age representation.
3. In light of the forthcoming restructuring, a request has been made that, despite having served five years, the Rev Dr Liz Hughes be nominated to the 2020 General Assembly as Convener of the Council for Global Mission for one further year. The Committee agreed so to nominate.
4. In line with encouraging smooth handover of council conveners it is planned that appropriate steps be taken to agree a nomination for Convener of the Council for Global Mission to the 2021 General Assembly by the end of June 2020.

Membership of Councils and Committees

5. When a Direct Presbytery Nominee leaves a council, if that person has been serving on a committee of that council as a council member, they also automatically leave that council and cannot be replaced until the next General Assembly, even if the presbytery appoints a new Direct Presbytery Nominee. In light of that, the General Council agreed that the 2020 General Assembly be asked to give permission that, in future:
 - (a) when a Direct Presbytery Nominee leaves a council he/she is permitted to continue in membership of any committees of that council until the next General Assembly;
 - (b) when a Direct Presbytery Nominee leaves a council and also leaves a vacancy in the membership of any of that council's committees, the Nominations Committee may appoint a replacement from the membership of the council to fill that vacancy (which may include any new Direct Presbytery Nominee).

Refreshing the Pool

6. The Committee seeks to maintain a sufficient pool of people with skills, experience and interest in the work of the various General Assembly councils and committees. While the general exercise to refresh the pool undertaken last year was successful, there were some specialist areas where a shortfall was identified. Accordingly, the Committee undertook a modified survey which was designed to be targeted by clerks of presbytery and ministers at members who have appropriate skills, experience and interest in those specialist areas. This produced some helpful results.

Nominations

7. Normally the Committee would meet in the spring and bring a report to the General Council in April. That was not possible this year. Instead, after consultation with the Committee Convener, the Secretary, Rev Jim Stothers, presented a report and recommendations to the General Council Standing Committee. The Standing Committee agreed the recommendations.
8. Nominations to convenerships are contained in an appended resolution while nominations to membership of councils etc. are contained in the Nominations Booklet. For the first time this includes nominations as Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
9. A formal request was received from the Council for Public Affairs that Dr Andy Brown, who would at the 2020 Assembly finish his normal five-year term as convener of the State Education Committee, continue to be nominated as convener in 2020 and 2021. Consideration was given to this request and the reasons for it. The Standing Committee agreed to the request subject to the proviso that the Council for Public Affairs seek, in consultation with the Nominations Committee, to find someone who can shadow Dr Brown over the next two years and be in a position to be nominated as convener in 2022.
10. At the time of writing, there are, for the first time, no vacancies remaining without definite nominations from the Nominations Committee to the General Assembly. The Assembly is reminded that 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.
11. There are, however, some other vacancies which remain. Two are Direct Presbytery Nominations: ironically, they are to the Nominations Committee itself! One further vacancy is for a nominee of the Council for Social Witness to the Church Relations Committee of the General Council. This is the third Assembly in a row where no nomination has been made for this position.

JONATHAN CURRY, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE

Convener: Very Rev Dr JNI McNEELY

Secretary: THE CLERK

1. The Initial Report of the General Council Standing Committee (dealing with the establishment and membership of the committee and the arrangements for the June meeting of the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly) can be found in Section 1 of the General Council Report.
2. The Committee has met on 3 occasions and carried out the business outlined in Section 1 of the General Council Report and the business described in the following paragraphs.
3. The Committee received ongoing updates from the Clerk of Assembly on the situation regarding the Coronavirus outbreak. This included formal advice issued to ministers and clerks of presbytery, and information from meetings with government and other officials and with church leaders. The Clerk and Financial Secretary also kept the Committee informed about the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland ‘Furlough Schemes’, and how they might apply to the church both centrally and in congregations. Necessary decisions were noted or taken, as appropriate, regarding this and other staffing matters.

United Appeal

4. The Committee received a report in connection with the remit of the United Appeal Committee. See the United Appeal section of the General Council report for further detail.

Nominations

5. The Committee received reports in connection with the remit of the Nominations Committee.
6. Nominations to convenerships and to membership of commissions, councils, and committees of the General Assembly, as well as nominations as Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland were approved for transmission to the General Assembly. See the Nominations Committee section of the General Council report, relevant resolutions, and the Nominations Booklet for further detail.

Support Services

7. The Committee received reports in connection with the remit of the Support Services Committee.
8. The Committee received and approved the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 and authorised the Clerk of the General Assembly,

the Rev TD Gribben and the Convener of the Support Services Committee Convener, Mr David Thomson, to sign these subject to any necessary disclosure or presentational changes agreed with the auditors, Ernst & Young. It also agreed that Rev T D Gribben and Mr David Thomson be given authority to date the signing of the accounts at an appropriate date as agreed with the auditors and to sign their Letter of Representation.

9. The Committee received a report from the Financial Secretary on 'Deferral of Assessments'. This arose out of the fact that current government restrictions mean that congregations are not able to meet for worship and may suffer a drop in income. See the Support Services Committee section of the General Council report, paragraphs 14-18 for further detail.
10. The Committee received a report from the Financial Secretary concerning commercial rents payable from tenants. It agreed that rents for the period April, May and June can be deferred (but remain payable).

World Development

11. After consultation with the Rev Uel Marrs, Secretary of the Council for Global Mission, the Committee agreed that the World Development Committee should not proceed with plans in place for a 2020 World Development appeal and that the General Assembly be asked to take a decision on the nature of a 2020 WDA and/or Moderator's Appeal as appropriate at a later date.

Task Groups

12. The Committee received the report of the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group and agreed to forward it to the General Assembly.
13. The Committee received the report of the Vows Task group and agreed an amendment to the wording. It agreed that the report, as amended, be forwarded to the General Assembly, with the recommendation that the vows contained in Appendices A, B and C be approved as the authorised vows for use within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for:
A: admission to communicant membership on profession of faith;
B: use for the baptism of infants;
C: use for the baptism of believers.

New Posts

14. The Committee agreed that applications for new posts would not proceed, unless on exceptional grounds, until the General Council Standing Committee or the General Assembly Standing Commission decides otherwise.
15. An additional Supplementary Report from the Standing Committee will be tabled.

For Information: The following body is not under the control of the General Assembly. The report is included for information only.

THE PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2019

Very Rev Dr John Lockington writes:

The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland reports that throughout 2019 it has continued to promote the study of the historic Churches of the Presbyterian order in Ireland, and the contributions they have made to Irish Society and the wider world. We have sought to achieve this through the Society's programme of talks, lectures, visits and through our publications and website.

1. We have continued to operate in line with the requirements of the Charity Commission, both in how our accounts are presented and also in meeting other requirements as they are notified to us. We have tried to do this carefully and we believe we have been able to operate as a responsible charity.
2. The relocation of the Society from College Green to Assembly Buildings was the major factor affecting our finances over the past two years. A total expenditure of some £17,000 was incurred in the move – this covered the physical relocation of all items, transfer and re-erection of the mobile shelving, installation of a water detection system, the installation of new entrance windows and the purchase of minor furniture items. Against this, we are indebted to the Ulster Scots Agency who contributed some £13,400 towards the relocation leaving a cost of about £3,600 to be met by the Society. The disruption of the relocation had a slight knock-on impact on income because of the necessary closure during the move.
3. The annual grant from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland remains the main source of income for the Society, augmented by donations from individuals, and the other Churches of the Presbyterian order, together with membership fees. Most of the expenditure items were of the same order as in the previous year, 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. We have not been able to do everything we would have liked to do, and the Society will still need to seek additional sources of funding in order to build upon what we have been given, and to achieve things which we cannot as yet afford, and especially the provision of additional

mobile shelving for our growing archive material. The new location at the main entrance to the Assembly Buildings will, we believe, increase our contact with the members of the Presbyterian Church who come to the Church offices or the Assembly Hall, as well as those who use its excellent Conference Centre, students living in local residences, and with the thousands of visitors to Belfast who stay in the increasing number of local hotels.

5. In spite of our major preoccupation with relocation, we have managed to sustain an excellent programme of lectures, and other less formal events. Attendances have been most encouraging, and it has been good to see a number of younger scholars featuring in our events. Our Annual Field trip focused this year on part of the Ards peninsula, and proved most enjoyable and informative.
6. During the year, we produced our annual Bulletin, and in the second half of the year, Salter Sterling's excellent booklet on Dr Tom Barker. We have also launched Dr Donald Patton's major work on Dr William Campbell, which includes the full text of his Sketches of the History of 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 a wider public. Other publications are planned hopefully for the coming year.
7. The move to Assembly Buildings enables the Society to co-operate with the new Reception Area, our immediate neighbour. We have worked closely with the Task Group identifying suitable material for display in the new Exhibition Area at Reception. The first such exhibition has evoked much favourable comment, and we look forward to what is planned for the future. The highlight of our year was on Wednesday 27 March with the Official Opening of the new Exhibition Centre, followed by lunch, and then by the opening and dedication of our new headquarters by the Moderator. The programme concluded with an excellent talk by Valerie Adams, our Librarian and Archivist, entitled, 'What's in those rooms?'
8. The Society welcomes donations or bequests, including gifts of books, pamphlets, congregational histories and suitable artefacts, minute books and oldstyle communion tokens. These may be deposited with the Society either as a gift or as an indefinite loan. We hold many Synod and Presbytery records, and are delighted that an increasing number of Congregational records are also being entrusted to our care.
9. The Society continues to share information with other organisations, agencies and blogs, which help us 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.
10. The Society's website continues to be one of our principal 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 2014 can now be viewed on the website.

11. The Society continues working through our Action Plan though inevitably the aftermath of relocation has slowed progress somewhat. This is a suitable point to record our gratitude to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of Assembly who have given so much time and thought to our concerns, to the working committee set up by Council, and to our volunteers, who help 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 assist us in any way. Most of all we place on record our continued appreciation of our Librarian and Archivist, Valerie Adams, for all that she does for the Society.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions – General Council Standing Committee (Initial Report)

Tuesday 2 June 2020 – 9.30am

1. That the Draft Order of Business for the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly be approved.

Resolutions – General Council

(Section 1 – 9.30am Tuesday 2 June 2020)

2. That the Rev Dr David Allen be appointed as Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Deputy General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, taking up post on 1 January 2021 (or other appropriate date).
3. *That the General Assembly express their appreciation of the Rev Jim Stothers for his work as Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Deputy General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and wish him a long and happy retirement.**
4. That Section 1 of the Report of the General Council be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

Resolutions – General Council

(Section 2 – 2.00pm Tuesday 2 June 2020)

5. That the draft resource on ‘credible profession’ and the draft updated pastoral guidelines on same sex attraction (as contained in the separate report booklet to the General Assembly) be published separately, and that sufficient copies be printed (as a charge on the Incidental Fund) to be sent to presbyteries for discussion and comment, with responses sent to the Convener, the Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop, by 31 January 2021.
6. That the draft pastoral guidelines for pastoral care of those who struggle with gender identity, and their families (as contained in the separate report booklet to the General Assembly) be published separately, and that sufficient copies be printed (as a charge on the Incidental Fund) to be sent to presbyteries for discussion and comment, with responses sent to the Convener, the Rev Daniel Kane, by 31 January 2021.
7. That the ‘normal’ retirement age for a PCI Minister be changed to 66 (i.e. to match the new UK state retirement age from 1 October 2020).
8. That Section 2 of the Report of the General Council be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

Resolutions – General Council

(Section 3 – 9.30am Wednesday 3 June 2020)

9. That for 2020, the Assessment Rates, along with the related allocation of funds, be as set out in Support Services Appendix 1 and that the rate of assessment for the Pension Fund be set at 24% of stipend paid in the year.
10. That the 2020 budgeted expenditure of the Incidental Fund be as set out in Support Services Appendix 3.
11. That under Par 223(3) of the Code, leave is given to the pre-65 retirement of the Revs JR Lambe (Mountpottinger) and JM Browne (First Donaghadee).
12. *That the United Appeal for 2021 be as set out in the report of the United Appeal Committee:*
 - a. *Option 1. An Appeal of £3,650,000 and grants to councils of 3,695,000*
OR
 - b. *Option 2. An Appeal of £3,600,000 and grants to councils of £3,605,000.**
13. *That the proposal outlined in paragraphs 3-9 and the recommendations in paragraphs 10, 11 and 13-15, of the Holding Trustee Task Group be approved.**
14. That Section 3 of the Report of the General Council be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

Resolutions – General Council**(Section 4 – 9.30am Wednesday 3 June 2020)**

15. *That the recommendations of the Report of the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group be adopted.**
16. *That the vows contained in Appendices A, B and C of the Report of the Vows for Full Membership and Baptism Task Group be approved as the authorised vows for use within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for respectively:*
 - *admission to communicant membership on profession of faith;*
 - *use for the baptism of infants;*
 - *use for the baptism of believers.**
17. *That the recommendations of the Making the General Assembly More Accessible Task Group be adopted.**
18. That Section 4 of the Report of the General Council be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

Resolutions – General Council**(Section 5 – 2.00pm Wednesday 3 June 2020)**

19. That, subsequent to the Council for Global Mission committee restructuring, the following are thanked for their past service:
 - (a) as Convener of the Leadership Development Committee – the Rev J.G. Faris;
 - (b) as Convener of the Outreach Ministries Committee – the Rev D.J. Steele;
 - (c) as Convener of the World Development Committee – the Rev F.M.A. Forbes;
 - (d) as Convener of the Global Concerns Committee – the Rev R.C. Kerr;
20. That the following resignations be accepted and appointments made, effective from 1 July 2020:
 - (a) the resignation of the Rev John Brackenridge, as Convener of the Church Relations Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev N.D. Craig be appointed in his place.
 - (b) the resignation of the Very Rev Dr R.A. Patton, as Convener of the General Assembly Business Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev R.McM. Mackay be appointed in his place.
 - (c) the resignation of Dr M.E.J. Bennett, as Convener of the Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy Committee, that she be thanked for her services, and that Rev C.N. Lynn be appointed in her place.

- (d) that the Rev Dr SE Hughes be re-appointed as Convener of the Council for Global Mission for one further year.
 - (e) that Dr Andy Brown be re-appointed as Convener of the State Education Committee for a maximum of two years and, subject to the proviso that the Council for Public Affairs seek, in consultation with the Nominations Committee, to find someone who can shadow Dr Brown for a suitable period of the next two years and be in a position to be nominated as Convener in 2022.
 - (f) that Mrs Heather Clements be appointed as Convener of the Global Mission Committee.
 - (g) that the Rev F.M.A. Forbes be appointed as Convener of the Global Development Committee.
21. That the following resignations be accepted and appointments made, effective from 1 January 2021:
- (a) the resignation of the Rev Dr T.J. McCormick, as Convener of the Council for Social Witness, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev D.W. Brice be appointed in his place.
 - (b) the resignation of the Rev P.E. Dickinson, as Convener of the Disability Services Committee, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev S.J. Lowry be appointed in his place.
 - (c) the resignation of Dr Pamela Marshall, as Convener of the Taking Care Committee, that she be thanked for her services, and that the Rev K.H. Hibbert be appointed in her place.
22. That the following appointments of General Assembly Trustees be made, effective from 1 July 2020:
- (a) That the Rev T.J. Stothers (Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly) be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of the Very Rev Dr S. Hutchinson, retired, and the appointment of the Rev T.J. Stothers 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 the Rev T.W.D. Johnston (Minister Emeritus, Hamilton Road, Bangor), and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of the Rev W.J. Orr, retired, and the appointment of the Rev T.W.D. Johnston 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.

23. That the following appointment of a General Assembly Trustee be made, effective from 1 January 2021:
- That Mr R. Tweed (Elder, First Larne) be, and is hereby nominated and appointed by the General Assembly as a Trustee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in room of Mr H. McClean, retired, and the appointment of Mr R. Tweed 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.
24. That the nominations of new members to the General Assembly Commissions, Councils and Committees (as tabled by the Nominations Committee) be approved, effective from 1 July 2020, with the exception of the convenerships referred to in resolution 20 above and the change of Trustee referred to in resolution 22 above, which shall be effective from 1 January 2021.
25. That the General Assembly give permission that, in future:
- (a) when a Direct Presbytery Nominee leaves a council he/she is permitted to continue in membership of any committees of that council until the next General Assembly;
 - (b) when a Direct Presbytery Nominee leaves a council and also leaves a vacancy in the membership of any of that council's committees, the Nominations Committee may appoint a replacement from the membership of the council to fill that vacancy (which may include any new Direct Presbytery Nominee).

General Council Standing Committee

26. That Section 5 of the Report of the General Council be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

REPORTS OF PRESBYTERIES

The **ARDS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev N.W. McAuley is their Moderator; that the Rev R.J. Stevenson, Minister of Carrowdore & Ballyfrenis, retired on 31 July 2019; that the Rev J.M. Wade, Minister of Portavogie, retired on 30 September 2019; that the Rev T.W.D. Johnston, Minister of Hamilton Road, Bangor, retired on 16 November 2019; that the Rev Gary Aitcheson, Minister of Kilcooley, resigned his charge on 26 June 2019 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine & Limavady; that the Rev Andrew Gill, Ordained Assistant in Bangor West, resigned his charge on 22 August 2019 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin & Munster; that Mr C.W. Jackson, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Armagh and was ordained and installed to the charge of Ballygilbert on 26 July 2019; that Mr David Morrison was licensed on 26 May 2019; that Mr R.C.V. Patton was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that under their care are: as Minister Without Charge, Rev C.D. Mawhinney; as Licentiates, Mr Ben Johnston, Mr David Morrison, Mr R.R. Tregaskis, Dr S.A. Wright; as students, Mr Paul Bradley, Mr Andrew Frazer and Mr Wallace Moore; that the Rev Simon Henning, Minister Without Charge, ceased to have that status on 10 March 2019; that Mr Keith Ward, Licentiate, had his licence withdrawn on 7 June 2019; that they held consultations at Second Ards and Regent Street; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **ARMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev R.L. Brown is their Moderator; that Mr J.T. Graham was licensed on 19 June 2019 and remains under the care of Presbytery; that Mr C.W. Jackson was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ards; that under their care are: as Minister Without Charge, Rev Dr J.W.P. McConnell; as Licentiates, Mr J.T. Graham, Mr Philip Houston, Mr J.U. Torrens; as students, Mr Mark Hawthorne, Mr Richard Hill; that they held consultations at Knappagh, Armagh Road, Portadown and First Portadown; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **BALLYMENA PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev W.E. Chestnutt is their Moderator; that the Rev J.B. Mooney, Minister Emeritus of Grange, died on 28 February 2020; that the Rev J.G. Johnston, Minister of Carnlough & Cushendall and Newtowncrommelin, retired on 24 January 2020; that Mr W.J.C. Brogan presented credentials from the Presbytery of Down and was ordained and installed to the charge of Glenarm and Cairnabana on 10 January 2020; that Mr Christopher Wilson was licensed on 16 June 2019 and remains under the care of Presbytery; that Mr Billy Abwa presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was received as a Student for the Ministry under the care of Presbytery on 5 November 2019; that

Mr M.S. Rutledge was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast on 25 May 2019; that Mr J.J. Boyd was given credentials to the Presbytery of Omagh on 27 June 2019; that Mrs P. Linton, Deaconess in West Church, retired from her position on 30 June 2019; that under their care are: as Licentiates, Messrs R.W. McFaul and Christopher Wilson; as Students for the Ministry, Messrs M.J.K. Kelso, Billy Abwa, M.J. Delaney and M.R.T. Rodgers; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed.

The **NORTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev A.W. Carson is their Moderator; that the Rev D.W. Brice, Minister of Glengormley, retired on 31 May 2019; that the Rev Ian McDonald, Minister of New Mossley, retired on 31 May 2019; that the Rev Brian McMillen, Minister of Ballygomartin, retired on 31 July 2019; that Mr M.S. Rutledge presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was ordained and installed to the Charge of Abbot's Cross on 26 May 2019; that Mr R.A. Orr was given credentials to the Presbytery of Omagh; that Mr J.T.H. Porter was given credentials to the Presbytery of Monaghan; that Mr A.J. Downey was given credentials to the Presbytery of Iveagh; that Mr J.A. Martin was given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that Mr Gareth Keaveney was licensed on 14 June 2019 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Carrickfergus; that under their care are: as Ministers Without Charge, the Revs Dr L.E. Carroll, S. Newell, W.A. Shaw, W.M.Smyth (retired) and F.W. Vincent; as Licentiates, Mr Peter Burke, Mr David McCarthy; as students, Mr Stephen Cairns, Mr Stephen Gaston, Mr Matthew Horner and Mr John McCracken; that no consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed separately.

The **SOUTH BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev K.H. Viner is their Moderator; that the Rev M.R.J. Anderson, Minister of Fisherwick, resigned his charge on 10 January 2020 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dublin & Munster; that the Rev R.J. Gilkinson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Route and was inducted to the work of PCI Health Care Chaplain (Belfast City Hospital) on 9 June 2019; that the Rev B.J. Walker, presented credentials from the Presbytery of East Belfast and was installed to the charge of Saintfield Road on 6 September 2019; that Mr J.J. O'Donnell, Licentiate, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Monaghan; that Mr D.P. Curran, Licentiate, was given credentials to the Presbytery of Omagh; that under their care are: as Ministers without Charge, Rev Dr L.H. Eagleson, Rev K.M. Mbayo, Rev J.D. Maxwell, Rev P.G. McDowell; as student, Mr Paul Lutton; that the Rev J.A. Peacock, Minister Without Charge, resigned from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on 4 February 2020; that no consultations were held; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **EAST BELFAST PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev W.S. Marrs is their Moderator; that the Very Rev Dr J.N.I. McNeely, Minister of First Holywood, retired on 31 August 2019; that the Rev W.J.R. Robinson, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 3 December 2019; that Mr R.S. Aicken presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was ordained and installed to the charge of St Andrew's on 10 January 2020; that the Rev B.J. Walker was given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast; that under their care are: as Ministers Without Charge, the Rev J.M. Casement, Rev Dr D.J. Montgomery, Rev Dr M.J. Welsh, Rev W.J. Harshaw (retired); as Licentiates, Mr Sam Bostock; as Transferring Minister, Rev Andras Gilicze; as students, Mr Philip Boyd and Mr Neil Stewart; that they held consultations at Mountpottinger; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **CARRICKFERGUS PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev B.S. Preston is their Moderator; that the Rev Douglas Armstrong, Minister Emeritus of Greenisland, died on 5 October 2019; that the Rev R.J.A. Bell, Minister of Ballyclare, retired on 30 June 2019; that the Rev G.A.J. Farquhar (Minister Without Charge) became Minister Emeritus of the congregation of Ballycarry by resolution of the General Assembly on 7 June 2019; that the Rev G.A.J. Farquhar, Minister of Ballycarry, resigned her charge on 31 March 2019 and became Minister Without Charge under the care of the Presbytery; that the Rev T.N. Bingham, Minister of Raloo and Magheramorne, resigned his charge on 30 September 2019 and became Minister Without Charge under the care of the Presbytery; that under their care are: as Minister Without Charge, Rev T.N. Bingham; as Licentiates, Mr C.M.S. Barron, Mr Campbell Mulvenny and Mr Gareth Keaveney; that they held consultations in the congregations of Gardenmore and First Carrickfergus; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **COLERAINE & LIMAVADY PRESBYTERY** report that; the Rev D.H. Brown is their Moderator; that the Rev J.A. McCaughan, Minister of First Dunboe, retired on 31 July 2019; that the Rev T.J. Laverty, Minister of Portstewart, retired on 30 September 2019; that the Rev Dr J. Frazer, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 29 February 2020; that the Rev T. V. Mawhinney MBE, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 29 February 2020; that the Rev Dr W.W. Porter, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 29 February 2020; that the Rev N. Ward, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 29 February 2020; that the Rev S.A. McCracken, Minister of Derramore and Drumachose, resigned his charge on 19 June 2019 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that the Rev Gary Aitcheson presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed to the charge of Balteagh and Bovevagh on 27 June 2019; that the

Rev K.A. Jones presented credentials from the Presbytery of Derry & Donegal and was installed to the charge of Aghadowey and Crossgar on 13 December 2019; that Mr J. D. McKane was given credentials to the Presbytery of Dromore; that under their care are: as Minister Without Charge, Rev Dr R.A. Kane; as student, Mr James O'Neill; that the Financial Reports of congregations are being printed.

The **DERRY AND DONEGAL PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Colin McKibbin is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr John Lappin, Minister Emeritus (Released) of Carndonagh & Malin, died on 1 October 2019; that the Very Rev Dr R.L. Craig, Minister of Kilfennan, retired on 30 June 2019; that the Rev A.C. Wilson, Minister of Ballykelly, retired on 31 July 2019; that the Rev Dr David Latimer, Minister of First Derry and Monreagh, retired on 31 January 2020; that the Rev K.A. Jones, Minister of Waterside and Fahan, resigned his charge on 12 December 2019 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Coleraine & Limavady; that Mrs E. Boyd, Auxiliary Minister in Alt, Carnone, Convoy & Donoughmore, resigned her appointment as an Auxiliary Minister on 28 July 2019; that the Rev S.W. Hibbert presented credentials from the Presbytery of Iveagh and was installed to the charge of Glendermott on 20 September 2019; that Mr J.R. Kernohan presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was ordained and installed to the charge of Carlisle Road and Crossroads on 13 December 2019; that under their care are: as Ministers Without Charge, Rev S.W.K. Glendinning and the Rev J.C. Teeney; that the Rev K.G. Patterson, Minister Without Charge, and the Rev D.A. Edgar, Minister without Charge (Retired), ceased to have that status on 4 February 2020; that they held a consultation at Ebrington; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **DOWN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev D.F. Leal Zamora is their Moderator; that the Rev Dr A.F. Nel, Minister of Killinchy, resigned his charge on 13 July 2019 and became a Minister Without Charge; that the Rev Dr Graham Connor, Minister of Second Saintfield, retired on 31 August 2019; that the Rev Dr A.F. Nel was inducted and commissioned, and Mrs O. Nel was commissioned, as Global Mission Workers on 1 December 2019; that Mr R.C. Patton presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was ordained and installed to the charge of Trinity, Boardmills on 28 June 2019; that Mr A.D. Burke, presented credentials from the Presbytery of Templepatrick and was ordained and installed to the charge of Lissara on 24 January 2020; that Mr Peter Burke was licensed on 9 June 2019 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of North Belfast; that Mr W.J.C. Brogan was given credentials to the Presbytery of Ballymena; that under their care are: as Minister Without Charge, Rev Dr B.C.G. Black; as student, Mr Thomas Moore; that they held one consultation at Second Comber; that the Financial Reports of the Congregations are being printed.

The **DROMORE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Andrew Faulkner is their Moderator; that the Rev Robert Lockhart, Minister Emeritus (Released), of Elmwood, died on 13 March 2019; that the Rev Gareth McFadden, Minister of Drumlough and Anahilt, resigned his charge on 7 November 2019 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Templepatrick; that the Rev Dr Z.J. Cole was inducted as Assistant to the Moderator of the General Assembly on 5 May 2019; that Mr M.A. McCormick was ordained to the office of the Holy Ministry and inducted as Chaplain to H.M. Forces (RAF) on 8 September 2019; that Mr J.D. McKane presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine & Limavady and was ordained and installed to the charge of First Dromore on 29 November 2019; that Dr Andre Alves-Areias was given credentials to the Presbytery of Route; that Mr J.S. Maguire was given credentials to the Presbytery of Newry and Mr R.S. Aicken was given credentials to the Presbytery of East Belfast; that under their care are: as Minister Without Charge, Rev W.J. Todd; as students, Mr Stephen Kerr, Mr Andrew Martin and Mr Tom Finnegan; that they held a consultation at Second Dromara; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **DUBLIN & MUNSTER PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Mark Proctor is their Moderator; that the Rev Andrew Gill presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ards and was installed in the Home Mission and inducted to the joint charge of Blackrock and Bray on 23 August 2019; that the Rev M.R.J Anderson presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was installed in the Home Mission and inducted to the charge of Arklow on 11 January 2020; that one consultation was held during the year, Dun Laoghaire; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **IVEAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev T.T. Boyd is their Moderator; that the Rev S.W. Hibbert, Minister of Gilford and Tullylish, resigned his charge on 19 September 2019 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry & Donegal; that Mr A.J. Downey presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was ordained and installed to the charge of Castlewellan and Leitrim on 1 February 2020; that under their care are: as Licentiate, Mr P.L. Poots; that consultations were held at Scarva Street, Magherally and Katesbridge; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **MONAGHAN PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev D.J. Clarke is their Moderator; that the Rev John Mann, Minister Emeritus, became a Minister Emeritus (Released) on 7 May 2019; that Mr J.T.H. Porter, presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was ordained and installed to the Home Mission and inducted to the charge of Dundalk on 24 August 2019; that Mr J.J. O'Donnell presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was ordained

and installed to the charge of First Bailieborough (Corglass), Trinity Bailieborough, Corraneary and Ervey on 7 September 2019; that under their care is: as Minister Without Charge, Rev D.J.M. Boyle; that they held consultations at Ballyalbany and Glennan; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **NEWRY PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev B.A. Kee is their Moderator; that the Rev N.L. Smyth presented credentials from the Presbytery of Omagh and was installed to the charge of First and Second Markethill on 6 September 2019; that Mr J.S. Maguire presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was ordained and installed to the charge of First Drumbanagher & Jerretspass, and Kingsmills on 31 January 2020; that Mr D.S. Bingham was licensed on 2 June 2019 and given credentials to the Presbytery of Tyrone; that under their care are: as Ministers Without Charge, Rev B.A.H. Wilson and Rev A.D. Mullan; that they held a consultation at Kilkeel; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **OMAGH PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev Jonathan Cowan is their Moderator; that the Rev Arthur O'Neill, Minister Emeritus (Released) of Fintona, Ballynahatty and Creevan, died on 25 March 2019; that the Rev R.G. McElnea, Minister of Newtownstewart and Gortin, resigned his charge on 16 April 2019; that the Rev N.L. Smyth, Minister of Clogherney and Sixmilecross, resigned his charge on 5 September 2019 and was given credentials to the Presbytery of Newry; that the Rev R.G. McElnea was installed to the charge of Aughnacloy and Ballymagrane on 17 April 2019; that Mr J.J. Boyd presented credentials from the Presbytery of Ballymena and was ordained and installed to the charge of Ballygawley and Ballyreagh on 28 June 2019; that Mr R.A. Orr presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was ordained and installed to the charge of Seskinore and Edenderry on 29 November 2019; that Mr D.P. Curran presented credentials from the Presbytery of South Belfast and was ordained and installed to the charge of Cavanaleck and Aughtentine on 6 December 2019; that under their care as a student is Mr Jeff Gawn; that they held no consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **ROUTE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev A.J. Buick is their Moderator; that the Rev Thomas Luke (Minister Emeritus) became Minister Emeritus (Released) on 31st December 2019; that the Rev S. A. McCracken presented credentials from the Presbytery of Coleraine & Limavady and was installed to the charge of First Ballymoney on 20 June 2019; that Dr Andre Alves-Areias presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was ordained and installed to the joint charge of Mosside and Toberdoney on 9 November 2019; that the Rev R.J. Gilkinson was given credentials to the Presbytery of South Belfast;

that under their care are: as Minister Without Charge, Rev Peter Turton; as Licentiate, Mr R.A. Morrison; that the Rev Dr V. Dobbin C.B. resigned as a Minister Without Charge and ceased to have that status on 5 November 2019; that they held no consultations; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **TEMPLEPATRICK PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev D.T. McNeill is their Moderator; that the Rev Brian Kennaway, Minister Emeritus of Crumlin, died on 14 October 2019; that the Rev S.W. McClintock, Minister Emeritus (Released) of Kilbride, died on 19 February 2020; that Prof L.S. Kirkpatrick, having been dismissed from his post as Professor of Church History, ceased to be a member of Presbytery on 20 March 2019; that the Rev Gareth McFadden presented credentials from the Presbytery of Dromore and was installed to the charge of Kilbride on 8 November 2019; that Mr J.R. Kernohan was given credentials to the Presbytery of Derry & Donegal; that Mr A.D. Burke was given credentials to the Presbytery of Down; that under their care are: as Ministers Without Charge, Revs J.A. Gordon and J.L. Tosh; as Licentiates, Messrs S.P. Kennedy and J.A. Porter; that they held a consultation at First Donegore; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

The **TYRONE PRESBYTERY** report that the Rev D.W. Leach is their Moderator; that Mr J.A. Martin presented credentials from the Presbytery of North Belfast and was installed to the charge of Culnady and Swatragh on 3 May 2019; that the Rev J.M. Gracey (Minister Without Charge) became Minister Emeritus of the congregations of Ballygoney, Coagh and Saltersland by resolution of the General Assembly on 7 June 2019; that under their care are: as Ministers Without Charge, Revs T.J. Conway and W.I. Ferris; as Licentiate, Mr D.S. Bingham; that they held consultations at Newmills and Carland; that the Financial Reports of Congregations are being printed.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Reports of Presbyteries be received.

TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Secretary: MR CLIVE KNOX

1. The following is an extract from the Minutes of the proceedings of the Trustees Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, at their Annual General Meeting held by video conference on 19 May 2020.
2. Moved by Sir Bruce Robinson, seconded by Mr Norman Bennett, and agreed that the appointment of a Chairperson be deferred until the next full meeting of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The appointed person to be appointed Chairman until the 2021 General Assembly.
3. The Statements of audited Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2019 of the following were laid before the Trustees:
 - (a) The General Investment Fund
 - (b) 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 and various other Trust Funds).
4. Moved by Sir Bruce Robinson, seconded by Mr Norman Bennett, and unanimously agreed that the Report and the Statements of Account be adopted, and lodged with the Clerk of Assembly to be laid before the Assembly in June. The Report and the Statements of Account were signed and lodged in accordance with the foregoing resolution.
5. The Trustees Standing Committee also received and examined the Accounts for 2019 of the John Getty Trust and accepted these for inclusion in the volume of Accounts to be submitted to the General Assembly.

Trust Funds

6. A summary Account of the various Trust Funds is included in the Book of Accounts 2019. The following Trust Funds are distributed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Trustees.

As in 2019, the Trustees have agreed to recommend to the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly that, where the terms of the 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 2019 available for distribution is £7,009.75. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	£7,009.75
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Sir Wm V McCleery Estate: The total income for 2019 available for distribution is £36,598.10. 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 2019 available for distribution is £7,582.85. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	£7,582.85
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Estate of Miss Ida Mary McGeown: The total income for 2019 available for distribution is £4,866.40. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	£4,866.40
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Estate of Mr Victor Morrow: The total income for 2019 available for distribution is £1,586.20. The following recommendation is made to the General Assembly:

United Appeal	£1,586.20
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THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH INVESTMENT FUND (commonly known as The General Investment Fund)

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.

10. The Trustees have prepared the accounts of the General Investment Fund for the year ended 31 December 2019 in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Financial Statement of Authorised Funds (May 2014). 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.

11. Declaration of Dividend	30.03.19	30.09.19
Number of shares qualifying	6,210,566	6,221,368
Income from investment for distribution and Tax recoverable less Administrative Charge and Investment Advisers' Fees	£738,536	£1,116,710
Dividend per share	11.00p	16.50p

12. During 2019, £90,184 was transferred to the Dividend Equalisation Reserve, in accordance with the Scheme Rules, and the balance on the Reserve at 31 December 2019 is £710,009.

13. The combined annual Dividend of 27.50p per share for 2019 is to be compared with 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; 28.00p for 2009.

Valuation	31.03.20	31.03.19
	£	£
Valuation of Investments	61,206,633	66,581,385
Cash Balance / on Deposit	(196,679)	(84,702)
Dividend Equalisation Reserve	710,009	619,825
	<u>£61,719,963</u>	<u>£67,116,508</u>

No of Shares Issued	6,211,308	6,220,325
Share Value	£9.9367	£10.7899

The shares in the Fund have from 28 February 2017 been valued on a monthly basis. The monthly share prices are included in the audited accounts. The share value at the end of the last financial year, 31 December 2019 was £11.6127 per share (2019, £10.1764).

14. The Trustees meet with Investment Managers, Newton Investment Management Limited, three times a year to review investment performance. During 2019, there was a return of 17.69% compared to a benchmark return of 15.62%. Newton Investment Management Limited was appointed Investment Adviser to the Trustees Funds in June 2006 and from then to 31 December 2019, the General Investment Fund returned 7.50% per annum compared to the benchmark of 6.85%. Since the end of the financial year there has been a significant decline in the value of the underlying Investment in the General Investment Fund as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. As indicated above, the Fund's share price has declined from £11.6127 at 31 December 2019

to £9.9367 at 31 March 2020. The Investment Manager is monitoring market movements and the Funds underlying investments to, as far as possible, limit the adverse impact on the performance of the Fund.

Trustees Discretionary Fund

15. 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 present policy is to allocate these to the Trustees Discretionary Fund which is invested in the General Investment Fund unless an immediate use is identified. The Trustees will consider requests for financial support through the use of the Funds annual income or capital and in doing so will have regard to any expressions of wish or known interests of the donor. The Trustees received a bequest of £14,375 during 2019. No amounts were distributed by the Fund during 2019. At 31 December 2019 the Fund held 61,021 shares in the General Investment Fund which valued the holding at £708,619.

Since the year end the Trustees have been asked by the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019), which have been considering transitional financial arrangements for Union Theological College, to provide a grant of £30,000 per annum for the academic years 2020/21 to 2024/25 (5 years) from the Trustees Discretionary Fund.

Following discussion within the Trustees regarding the use of the Trustees Discretionary Fund, the Clerk of Assembly sought formal advice from the General Assembly Solicitor regarding the appropriate body to decide on allocations from this Fund and other unrestricted funds of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held by the Trustees. (See Appendix)

In the light of that advice, the General Council, at its meeting on Thursday 11th March 2020, unanimously 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.

In light of legal advice and of the General Council decision of 11th March 2020, the Trustees Standing Committee agreed to the request of the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019).

Crescent Church Loan Fund

16. 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.

During 2019 interest was charged on loans at half the total of bank base rate plus 2% (i.e.1.25%) 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 2019 the Trustees provided loans of £93,167 and the loans outstanding at 31 December 2019 were £154,833 and at that time, the fund had £222,324 available to meet loan requests.

Retired Ministers House Fund

17. While the day to day administration of the Retired Ministers House Fund falls under the Property Panel of the Support Services Committee, any legal documentation in relation to property transactions or loan agreements for the Fund are signed by the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. During the year the Trustees became aware that where a property was being purchased with joint funding from a bank and the Retired Ministers House Fund, certain banks were not prepared to accept that the Fund would hold a second charge against the related property. While the Trustees were able to resolve this particular matter they considered it appropriate, in light of increasing financial regulations around the provision of loans etc., to seek the opinion of the General Assembly Solicitor on such matters. His advice was that the Fund should suspend the granting on any new loans and seek Counsel opinion on what is a complex area of law. At the time of preparation of this report the Trustees have just received an opinion from Counsel. This indicates that there is the possibility that the granting of loans would be regarded as a regulated activity and cannot be carried on without authorisation from the Financial Conduct Authority. Equity sharing arrangements do not appear to be subject to the same regulation. The Trustees will, in conjunction with the Property Panel, be giving further consideration to the advice received and the implications of this for the forms of assistance that the Fund is able to provide.

Getty Bequest

18. The allocation of grants out of the income of the Trust Estate of John Getty for the year ending 31 December, 2019 was as follows:

Overseas – Foreign	£2,330
Overseas – Jewish	£1,270
Home Mission	£3,070
Belfast City Mission	£2,330
TOTAL	£9,000

Bequests

19. The Trustees received a report of all bequests notified to the Church during 2019 and wish to record their deep gratitude for those who have decided to support the Church in this way.

Trustees

20. At the 2020 Annual General Meeting Very Rev Dr S Hutchinson completed his second term as a Trustee of the new Trustee body which was established at the 2013 General Assembly. He was originally appointed to the former Board of Trustees in 1982.

At the 2020 Annual General Meeting Rev Wilfred Orr (Chairman) completed his second term as a Trustee of the new Trustee body which was established at the 2013 General Assembly. He was originally appointed to the former Board of Trustees in 1982.

At the 2020 Annual General Meeting Mr Howard McClean completed his second term as a Trustee of the new Trustee body which was established at the 2013 General Assembly. He was originally appointed to the former Board of Trustees in 1982.

The Trustees wish to record their deep appreciation to the three gentlemen for their committed service and for their valuable contribution to the work of the Trustees.

The General Council has 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 should 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.”

This new process will be operative for 2020.

APPENDIX

ADVICE AS TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

1. I have been asked to advise as to the extent of the powers of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (“the Trustees”) with regard to the disposition of property which it holds on trust for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (“PCI”), particularly where there are no restrictions on how that property is to be applied.
2. The Trustees is a body corporate. It was so incorporated by Royal Charter. As with any body corporate, it has a constitution document which sets out its powers. The Trustees derive its powers from the Irish Presbyterian Church Act 1871 and the Irish Presbyterian Church Act 1901.
3. The preamble to the 1871 Act includes the following words:

*“An Act for regulating the **management** by the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland of certain trust properties for the said Church and for other purposes”.* (emphasis added)

This opening statement is very pertinent as to how the Act is to be construed; the important word is “manage” properties. Management of a trust fund encompasses investing money, and reviewing and transposing investments; and in the case of land and property looking after the property and letting the property to derive income. Management of a trust fund does not include a discretion as to the disposition of the trust funds.
4. The main thrust of the 1871 Act was to deal with the Commutation and Sustentation Funds and sections 9 and 10 of the Act (see Page 149 of the Code) contain provision as to who is to benefit from the Funds.
5. In the case of the Commutation Fund, the Act declares that it is for ministers of PCI, but with the addition of the words “*as the assembly may direct*”, and that, in respect of the application of the income from the Fund, the General Assembly has “*absolute and uncontrolled*” discretion as to the preference to be given to claims of congregations of PCI.
6. There are similar provisions in the case of the Sustentation Fund. The Trustees are to apply that Fund “*as the said general assembly may from time to time direct*”, and there is a similar provision as to the application of the income. The only fetter on the General Assembly are those cases where donors to the Sustentation Fund have directed that the gift is for the benefit of the minister of a particular congregation, and in that case the Act imposes an obligation on the Trustees to apply the gift for that minister.

7. The Discretionary Fund is not mentioned by name in either of the Acts, but it finds its genesis and authority in Section 11 of the 1871 Act (see Page 151 of the Code). This states:

“It shall be lawful for the trustees if they shall think fit, with the approval of the General Assembly, to accept or take a transfer of any other gift or request of personal property given or bequeath for the endowment or permanent use or benefit of the said Church ... or to take a transfer from any trustee or other person in whom the same shall be vested in any endowment or fund or security for the purpose as aforesaid and the trustees shall hold such personal property so given, bequeath or transferred as aforesaid on the trusts declared by or contained in the deed, will or instrument of an endowment”.

The 1901 Act contains a similar provision which is to be found in Section 4 (Pages 154 and 155 of the Code). This states as follows:

“The trustees may if desired so to do by the General Assembly accept, take and hold any real or personal property now or which may at any time hereafter be under the control or in the disposal of the said General Assembly upon such trusts as the said General Assembly may determine.

The trustees may if authorised so to do by the General Assembly accept or take a transfer of any give, devise or bequest of real or personal property given, devised or bequeathed for the endowment permanent use or benefit of the said Church and the trustees shall hold such property so given, devised, bequeathed or transferred as aforesaid on the trusts declared by or contained in the deed or will”.

These provisions allow the Trustees to act as trustees for any gift or endowment given to PCI.

8. The thrust of all these statutory provisions – with regard to the Commutation Fund, the Sustentation Fund, and the Discretionary - is that the Trustees is to be the servant of the General Assembly.
9. Where funds have been left or given to the PCI for a particular purpose, then the Trustees must apply the fund for that purpose. To do otherwise would be to act in breach of trust. Nor can the General Assembly override such a particular purpose unless the terms of the gift give it that discretion. To do so would be to seek to procure a breach of trust and would be unlawful.
10. Where funds have been left or given to be held on trust for PCI and no particular purpose is specified, these are unrestricted funds. Such funds are those to which section 4 of the 1901 Act (quoted above) applies. These are to be held upon such trusts *“as the said General Assembly may determine”*. It makes no difference whether unrestricted funds are given or left to “the Presbyterian Church in Ireland” or to “The Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland”. It is the General Assembly which will determine the application of those funds.

11. In conclusion the powers and duties of the Trustees are:
 - 11.1 to manage the funds and properties vested in it;
 - 11.2 where funds or properties have been given or bequeathed to PCI for a specific purpose, to apply the funds for that purpose. If that purpose can no longer be carried out, then to apply for a cy pres scheme to use the funds for the next nearest purpose;
 - 11.3 where the use of the funds and properties is unrestricted, to apply the funds as the General Assembly may determine.

19th February 2020

Stephen T Gowdy
King & Gowdy, Solicitors

RESOLUTIONS

1. That, in accordance with the will of the late John Getty, the following be constituted as the Committee for the “direction and management of the application” of the income from the Getty Bequest: Very Rev Dr David Clarke, Revs R Cobain, Dr DJ Watts, TD Gribben; Sir Bruce Robinson, Norman Bennett, Douglas Crowe, Mrs M Guiler.
2. That the following recommendations be adopted:
 - (a) regarding the Mrs AM 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.
3. That the Report of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland be received.

COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION

Convener: Rev Dr S.E. HUGHES

Secretary: Rev W.S. MARRS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council for Global Mission is all about global disciples sharing God's heart for the world, declaring good news and demonstrating God's love. 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. The Council met on three occasions since the last General Assembly and has sought to fulfil its remit through the following committees and panels, while recognising the importance of collaborating with and complementing the work of other councils:
 - (a) **Outreach Ministries Committee** oversees PCI's global outreach initiatives and has been particularly focused at present on reviewing evangelism and church-planting in southern Europe (Pars 3 to 9).
 - (b) **Leadership Development Committee** supports leaders in training through their studies, whether in the UK/Ireland or around the world; and seeks to build vision for global mission amongst church leaders within PCI (Pars 10 to 28).
 - (c) **Global Concerns Committee** grapples with a wide range of issues in relation to world faiths, the stewardship of creation, inter-cultural and international relations and in this report, highlights the issue of reviewing PCI's investment policy in relation to fossil fuels (Pars 29 to 51).
 - (d) **World Development Committee** addresses the challenge of global poverty through both the Annual and Moderator's Appeals, with a focus at present on food security (Pars 52 to 61).
 - (e) **Global Mission Worker Panel** oversees the support of PCI's global mission workers, dealing with Calls to missionary service; member care development; memorial minutes; and appreciations (Pars 62 to 67).

- (f) **Global Mission Partnership Panel** deals with all partnership related matters, including allocation of grants (Pars 68 to 73).
- (g) **Business and Finance Panel** handles matters of strategy; finance; property; and staffing (Pars 74 to 79).

OUTREACH MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

3. **Confidence in the Gospel.** The Apostle Paul writes that he is not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Romans 1:16). A new structure for the Council having been approved at the General Assembly in June 2019 means that this is the final report of the Outreach Ministries Committee, as its work will form part of the remit of a new Global Mission Committee. The Outreach Ministries Committee approaches this change in the confidence of God and the power of His gospel in our global outreach endeavours.
4. **Confidence in the Great Commission** (The Priority of Disciple-Making) Over its time the Outreach Ministries Committee has had six main areas of mission focus: Evangelism and church-planting; Healthcare mission; Mission through education; Sustainable development (integral mission); Peace-building; and the work of Specialist Service Agencies dealing with Bible translation, Christian literature distribution, and Christian Radio and Satellite TV. C.H. Wright has used the analogy of a wheel, which has a central hub, evangelism, but which also needs spokes and a rim to connect the wheel to the road, so that God's love for the world is demonstrated. These six different areas of gospel engagement may be likened to the spokes and rim on the wheel as Christians show God's love and compassion in reaching out to alleviate suffering and poverty. Christians are thankful that many governments and agencies are also active in meeting these needs. However, the hub or axle is the goal of making disciples of Jesus. It is only the Church that has been given the task of sharing the gospel of repentance and forgiveness that meets mankind's greatest need, and of making disciples of all nations in fulfilment of the Great Commission.
5. A wheel needs both hub and spokes if it is to function effectively. However, mindful of limited resources, there is still a need for PCI to prioritise doing what only the Church can do. Therefore, at the centre of all the Committee's outreach activities, the goal is to make disciples of Jesus who, in turn, will also make disciples. This question of priorities was verbalised by one new global mission worker, preparing to embark on their service overseas, who asked, "Is PCI sending me out to be a teacher who may, from time to time, make disciples as opportunities to do so arise? Alternatively, am I being sent out primarily to make disciples and I should seize opportunities of doing so through my day to day role as a teacher?"

6. It is not assumed that all those PCI send out will be evangelists but there is an expectation and mandate that they will be faithful witnesses and involved in the making of disciples. This is reflected in the preparation and orientation of global mission workers, who need to be well grounded in the local church, knowing, loving and trusting the Lord Jesus Christ and loving the people with whom they engage day by day. It is important that there is a distinctive Christian flavour to the character and service of PCI's global mission workers as they encounter the very real challenge of being 'fruitful on the frontline', making disciples wherever they find themselves.
7. **Confidence in Becoming a Church-Planting Church.** After two years of work, the Evangelism and Church Planting Task Group brought a final report to the Committee (See Appendix A). It focuses much on strategy and how to move the work forward in Portugal, while exploring fresh disciple-making and church-planting opportunities in the Basque Region of Spain, where there is a sense that God is preparing the ground. The Committee saw the potential for PCI to be re-envisioned as a church-planting church. As one member put it, "How can we call ourselves a church if we are not concerned about planting churches?" The Committee warmly commends the report as a detailed and comprehensive piece of work, and is very grateful to Rev Robert Bell for convening the task group.
8. **Containers for Malawi.** In order to ensure compliance with charities legislation, PCI's Mission Department is no longer involved in providing a financial support service for the Malawi Container Group which functions independently of PCI's structures. Mr Carson McMullan is in the process of replenishing the organising committee of the Container Group with a view to the group continuing for the foreseeable future. A container left for Malawi in January 2020 and it was hoped there would be another one sent out in the course of the year.
9. **Appreciation.** The Committee has had twelve meetings since 2015 and the Convener pays tribute to all its members who have faithfully served and contributed to its working. Thanks are expressed to the Global Mission Secretary and staff in the Mission Department for how they have facilitated and supported the work over this time. The Committee is pleased to pass the baton on to the new Global Mission Committee under the convenership of Dr Heather Clements and wish them, and her, God's richest blessing as they continue this work.

DAVID STEELE, Convener

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

10. Recognising the growth and vitality of the Church in many parts of the world and the challenges such growth brings, the Leadership Development Committee works along with partner churches and institutions for the development of mature, experienced, Christian leadership around the world.
11. The Committee's work has involved liaising with the Global Mission Workers' Panel on the placement, support, review and evaluation of global mission workers involved in leadership development; liaising with the Global Mission Partnership Panel on the provision of leadership development grants to partner churches and institutions; and ensuring the story of leadership development is told widely through the PCI website, magazine articles, and prayer resources.
12. The Leaders in Training Panel has been overseeing the provision of scholarship funding for partner church 'leaders in training' whether for study in the UK, Ireland or further afield. Where required, the Panel liaises with universities and colleges, ensures the provision of pastoral care, reception and orientation for leaders in training, and provides guidelines to congregations for sponsoring and supporting leaders in training. Under the Council's new structure, this work will be undertaken by a Global Leadership Training Panel.
13. Currently fourteen Leaders in Training are being supported across a range of disciplines, primarily through United Appeal funding. Scholarships totalling £49,082 have been paid over for the year 2019 covering leaders in training in India (Gujarat), Kenya, Myanmar, Malawi, Nepal and Indonesia, studying largely in their home or neighbouring countries. This includes £21,981 of new scholarships awarded in the course of the year.
14. The continued support (approximately £30,000 p.a.) from the Lindsay Memorial Fund is much appreciated and presently supports seven Leaders in Training:
 - (a) Rev Anderson Juma from Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod, Malawi, is undertaking a Master's Degree in Social Research at Sheffield University. When an opportunity arises, Rev Robin Quinn plans to meet with Anderson and his wife in Sheffield to offer pastoral support on behalf of the Council.
 - (b) The three Leaders in Training on the staff of Zomba Theological College currently being supported in their PhD studies by distance at Aberdeen University have encountered, to varying degrees, a number of issues that have hindered their progress and there is a need to pray for this unfolding situation. PCI provides some funding through the Lindsay Memorial Fund and their studies are overseen by Rev Dr Ken Jeffrey on behalf of Aberdeen University.

- (c) Congratulations have been offered to Rev Maqsood Kamil for completing his PhD at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, where staff had commented that his thesis was one of the best they had ever seen.
 - (d) Rev Elias Agola is progressing with his studies in conflict resolution at Queen's University, Belfast.
 - (e) While on his way to Oxford for a period of study, Mr Jean Musavuli had to spend a period of quarantine in Kenya due to the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
15. The matter of PCI funding sabbatical studies for partner church leaders was reviewed. It is felt that these sabbaticals should not be given priority over other study applications received from partners. Normally grants are for up to £5,000. However, there is potential for significant expenditure (up to £15,000) to be required for a one-year sabbatical located in Ireland. Any such applications, therefore, might lend themselves to simply receiving co-funding from PCI rather than full-funding.
16. The Committee refreshed its understanding of the student sponsorship scheme run for many years by Belfast Bible College and noted the sensitivities of launching a similar scheme within PCI owing to possible conflict with United Appeal fundraising. With this in mind, the Committee agreed that sabbatical opportunities should be placed as projects on the PCI website for congregations to consider providing financial, prayerful and practical support for Leaders in Training who would be assigned to them during their stay. These would be options for those congregations who have already met their United Appeal target of honour. This approach will effectively provide an additional option in the 'Go Deep' initiative for congregational engagement.
17. Members of the Committee volunteered to adopt different leaders in training to act as 'prayer friends', beginning with those who have recently begun their courses. It is hoped that other council members will volunteer when Leaders in Training are identified in the future. Guidance is being offered as to how such contacts might be developed.
18. The Global Envisioning Panel has sought to envision PCI ministers and students for the ministry through providing, as and when invited by Union Theological College, a series of lectures on the Missiology Short Course and a training day for licentiate ministers. The Panel has also facilitated overseas missional opportunities for ministers and others in PCI's leadership as part of their sabbatical study so as to promote missiological insight and experience, not least through the witness and example of global Christian leaders, especially those experiencing persecution and hardship.
19. In December 2019, the Panel shared in the facilitation of a Licentiates' Training Day at Assembly Buildings and as a component of their sabbatical study, three PCI ministers participated in a global envisioning trip to the Philippines facilitated by Wycliffe Bible Translators at the end of January 2020.

20. It was noted that grants totalling £35,389, funded by United Appeal and other designated gifts, with specific relevance to leadership development, had been disbursed by the Global Mission Partnership Panel for initiatives and projects in Malawi, France, Nepal, South Sudan, and Indonesia.

Overseas Visits

21. Pip Florit visited Myanmar in May 2019 and observed very significant leadership development initiatives amongst the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, with some 40 students and ministers being allocated both for theological education and secular courses, some being sponsored by PCI. The Committee saw the importance of not overlooking the need to improve training in the English Language at Tahan Theological College.
22. A visit to India by Rev John Faris to represent PCI at the Gujarat United School of Theology's valedictory celebration in April 2020 had to be postponed due to the Coronavirus crisis.
23. Rev Dr Liz Hughes, the Council Convener, attended the Communion of Churches in Indonesia meeting in Sumba, Indonesia in November 2019. The Evangelical Christian Church in Timor expressed the need to have one of their theological faculty qualified at PhD level with a view to teaching New Testament at their theological college in Kupang. There is also a drive to 'up-grade' pastors by providing better in-service training for them.
24. Prof Gordon Campbell's scheduled visit to Faculté Jean Calvin, France, in November 2019 was cancelled due to family illness. It was reported that the College is currently involved in a new Masters in Theology in Biblical Interpretation that will be taught in the medium of English beginning in 2020.
25. A visit by Rev Stephen McCracken to Zambia immediately after Easter 2020 with a view to teaching at the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Zambia Synod pastors' conference, was postponed due to the Coronavirus crisis.
26. Very Rev Dr Rob Craig had an encouraging visit in November 2019 to the Association for Theological Education in Nepal (ATEN) during which PCI was warmly thanked for its ongoing support. On the same visit to Nepal, Helen Johnston enjoyed a very constructive meeting with Minority Focus, Nepal which now has to wrestle with the question of sponsoring non-Christian as well as Christian students. A visit by two representatives of this organisation to Northern Ireland in early April 2020 had to be postponed due to the Coronavirus crisis.
27. **The Way Ahead – Preparing for Handover.** A brief document for purposes of handover has been prepared. While much of the work of the Leadership Development Committee focuses on scholarships and grants for Leaders in Training, focus is also placed on those Global Mission Workers serving overseas with a leadership development

focus. The Committee's work, which will continue as part of the remit of the new Global Mission Committee, needs to receive a higher profile within the wider church, not least a great focus upon those global mission workers serving overseas in a leadership development role. There is a role for committee members to be even more proactive in sharing its 'good news' stories throughout the wider church. The Committee also highlighted the opportunity for presbyteries to see the strategic opportunity to give a higher profile to missionary speakers and for committee members to write blogs and articles for the PCI website and the Herald respectively.

28. In this, the last report of the Leadership Development Committee to the General Assembly, the Convener expresses deep appreciation to the following: Mrs Isobel McAuley, Convener of the Leaders in Training Panel; Rev Stephen McCracken, Convener of the Global Envisioning Panel; Rev Uel Marrs, Secretary of the Council for Global Mission; to the Mission Department for their support; and also to members of the Committee and its Panels for their interest and involvement. Good wishes are expressed to the new Global Mission Committee which will be taking forward the strategic work of leadership development in the global church which is not only about achieving high academic standards, but also about encouraging the development of Christlike character.

JOHN FARIS, Convener

GLOBAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

29. "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together". (Colossians 1:15-17)
30. The Apostle Paul articulates a vast vision of the person and mission of Jesus Christ. This vision has inspired, formed the bedrock, provided the motivation and shaped the work of the Global Concerns Committee over the past five years. Only by people seeing themselves in the light of who Jesus is, and what he has done can they hope to grapple appropriately with issues of global concern.
31. This is reflected in landmark reports from the Stewardship of Creation Panel on Climate Change, the World Faiths Panel on 'PCI and its mission in a multi-faith society', the Intercultural Relations Panel in its recently released 'Home' resource and the International Relations Panel in the series of conferences providing a window on issues in the Middle East.

32. These resources provide significant opportunities for the wider church to engage with issues of global concern which increasingly intersect with issues of concern more locally. This work would not have been possible without the dedication of panel conveners: Rev Robin Quinn, World Faiths; Rev Dr Donald Watts, International Relations; Rev Helen Freeburn, Inter-cultural Relations; and Rev John Hanson, Stewardship of Creation; who together with their panel members, worked in partnership with the Secretary for Global Mission, Rev Uel Marrs, and indeed the staff of the Mission Department. A debt of gratitude is due to each one.
33. As the Global Concerns Committee will cease to exist following the General Assembly it is so important that the vision that inspired the work of the Committee is not lost and that these key areas of work are carried forward. To that end, work is on-going to develop a comprehensive handover document and, perhaps more importantly, to ensuring that key personnel with a passion for their respective remits will take on the role of agents in the new Global Development Committee.
34. The work of the Committee and its four Panels in the past months may be summarised as follows:
35. The World Faiths Panel has been working towards producing a pamphlet on Islam which would be a starter for church members. Conversations have been had with Neil Harrison, Mission Development Officer, with a view to it being taken forward by the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.
36. All efforts to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and extend God's Kingdom must be a work of the Holy Spirit, hence for the past three years the Panel has been promoting the use of '30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World' which is produced by Interserve in conjunction with other mission agencies. It is designed to be used during the month of Ramadan but can be used at any time.
37. In 2018 and 2019 a similar booklet, 'Hindu World Prayer Guide – 15 days of Prayer' was promoted. It is designed to be used during the period of Diwali. The Task Group would envisage that this would be promoted again, so stimulating interest and prayerful engagement with the people of one of the world's largest religions.
38. The Panel also encourages promotion of a further booklet 'Buddhist World Prayer Guide – 15 Days of Prayer' in the future. This can be used at any time of the year to better understand and pray for the world's half a billion Buddhists.
39. These guides not only enable informed prayer but give a very user-friendly wealth of information about the billions of people seeking hope in the wrong place.
40. The International Relations Panel had planned a morning conference to take place on 23 April 2020 in Assembly Buildings entitled, 'Faith and Freedom in the Middle East', the fourth in a series of Middle East-

focused conferences targeted at those in leadership and involvement in mission. The keynote speaker was to be Rita El-Mounayer, CEO of SAT 7, and her brief was to address issues of migration, the role of women in the Middle East and sharing stories of hope and challenge. This conference has been postponed indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

41. Two panel members, Rev Corrina Heron and Rev Susan Moore, together with Paul Lutton, a student at Union Theological College (UTC), were to attend the tenth anniversary of the bi-annual 'Christ at the Checkpoint' Conference in Bethlehem. Again, due to the COVID 19 crisis, it seems very unlikely this conference will go ahead.
42. The influence of Christian Zionism is something the Panel began to explore as part of its remit on the Middle East. Of particular interest is its impact on the attitudes and actions of members of PCI. This is something which the Task Group hopes will be explored under the new structure.
43. The main focus of the Intercultural Relations Panel in recent times has been the Home resource. It is now available and congregations are encouraged to make use of it. It is a resource that enables people to engage biblically with many of the issues around immigration, and, in particular, draws attention to the opportunities and challenges of immigrants meaningfully connecting with PCI congregations, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
44. One of the main roles of the Panel has been to keep a watching brief on local and global immigration trends and developments. The following areas are of immediate concern:
 - (a) **The impact of COVID-19** is felt keenly by immigrants including: refugees in camps in southern Europe; asylum seekers in Direct Provision Centres in the Republic of Ireland and those struggling to make ends meet in Northern Ireland. Immigrants are frequently the most vulnerable in society and it is in times like these that the Church needs to be particularly conscious of their isolation from family and distance from home.
 - (b) **The issues created by Brexit.** There is a great deal of uncertainty - leading to insecurity - among European Union nationals living in Northern Ireland about the implications of Brexit for them and their families. Many have lived here for years, contributed to the economy and community, had families and perhaps joined churches. The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union means that all European Union, European Economic Area or Swiss citizens living in Northern Ireland must now apply to have their legal status confirmed in order to protect their right to continue to live, work, study and access the National Health Service or other services in the United Kingdom. This applies to the approximately 88,000 European Union nationals living in Northern Ireland, no matter how long they have lived here. The deadline for applying is June 30, 2021. The United Kingdom

Government has also revealed its post-Brexit plans for a points-based system of immigration. There appears to be little, if any, effort to accommodate traditional immigration patterns. Northern Irish businesses and politicians have expressed concern that the skill and salary thresholds will impact local hospitality, agri-food and care sectors negatively and disproportionately.

- (c) The impact of the **escalating conflict in Idlib province in Syria** and the Turkish government's claim that it cannot cope with the resulting refugees. Turkey already hosts 3.7 million Syrian refugees. One knock-on result of this is greater numbers of Syrian refugees arriving on the Greek Island of Lesbos. In response, Greek authorities have suspended asylum applications and local opposition has led to violent clashes.
- 45. In February 2020 the Moderator visited the Larne Immigration Detention Unit as part of his visit to the Carrickfergus Presbytery. It was an opportunity for him not only to see the unit, but also to meet detainees, staff and members of the chaplaincy team.
- 46. In response to an invitation from the Trustees (responding to a letter from members of Waringstown Congregation), the **Stewardship of Creation Panel** has written a report inviting a **review of PCI's investment policies**, particularly in relation to fossil fuels. This report is attached as **Appendix B**.
- 47. This is a key area and encourages PCI to consider the investment of the church's monies, because how PCI invests will reflect the value that is being placed on God's creation and be an outworking of Presbyterians' discipleship as followers of Jesus Christ.
- 48. The Panel is also exploring how PCI as a denomination provides a lead on environmental issues. A written query regarding an environmental audit and energy performance within Assembly Buildings and Union Theological College, led to a constructive meeting with the Deputy Clerk and key building management staff of both buildings.
- 49. The Panel continues to explore how it might best encourage the church, at all levels, to engage with the 2018 Report on Climate Change. A pamphlet is being developed, outlining ten actions on climate change that people could adopt in terms of grassroots engagement. This should be available in due course.
- 50. Through the Panels, the Global Concerns Committee has sought to develop relationships with organisations that share a common vision, that can contribute to PCI's understanding of a particular global concern, and with whom there is significant potential to achieve more together than could be achieved independently.
- 51. At the conclusion of this report, and reflecting on the breadth of opportunity and challenge to PCI in engaging meaningfully with issues of global concern; it is important to be reminded, with the Apostle Paul, that "in [Christ] all things hold together".

RICHARD KERR, Convener

WORLD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

52. The 2019 World Development Appeal was launched on Thursday 17 October 2019 under the strapline, *Farming God's Way*. This was the third year of a proposed four-year plan for the Appeal: a plan laid out to enable the wider church to broaden understanding of the work of sustainable development and the challenges which such work faces on the ground. The aim was also to enable a deepening of understanding through focusing on how a particular partner project implements good sustainable development practices which can, in turn, have a positive impact on all aspects of a community's life together.
53. The intention behind the four-year plan, in ongoing partnership with Tearfund and Christian Aid, remains to link the four years together under an 'umbrella' theme: *the challenges of sustainable development in fragile states*. It was initially hoped that in years three and four of the plan the Appeal might once again highlight those projects which were the lead projects in years one and two. However, as the Committee sought to re-engage with the lead project from 2017, based in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it became clear that conditions on the ground would make a return visit defeasible.
54. Therefore, some 're-routing' was required for the 2019 Appeal and the choice was made to visit Mozambique to see the work Tearfund's partner, CEDES (Comité Ecuémico Para O Desenvolvimento Social — The Ecumenical Committee for Social Development), was carrying out there via the Church and Community Transformation process. This re-mapping of the four-year journey also provided an opportunity to move the spotlight, under the over-arching theme, from a narrow focus on gender justice and the prevention of gender-based violence to a 'wide-lens' look at food security. This allowed for a broadening of the development issues considered under the 'umbrella' theme whilst also recognising the trickle-down effect of good development practice on community relationships.
55. The partner highlighted in the 2019 Appeal, CEDES, trains facilitators to deliver 'Umoja' training sessions through which members of the community, including importantly members of the local church, come together for Bible studies which enable them to identify and use the resources they have at their disposal to lead and control their own development. In rural communities in Mozambique this has been worked out through CEDES assisting communities in moving away from traditional 'slash and burn' agricultural methods, embracing instead conservation agriculture techniques which enable them to produce a better quality and quantity of crops outside the traditional growing season and to do so under conditions where water resources are increasingly precarious due to the effect of climate change on rainfall patterns. A short film was produced for general congregational use along with accompanying information and materials for use in the context of worship.

56. In line with the four-year map for the Appeal, funds from the 2019 Appeal will continue to support the work of the Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo in the Democratic Republic of Congo and also projects in Chad, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria focused on building the capacity of small-scale farmers through training in conservation agriculture techniques. The funds directed towards Christian Aid will be supporting poverty alleviation through a sustainable farming project in Bangladesh (also highlighted in this year's World Development Appeal materials), projects in Burundi combating sexual and gender-based violence, and a project with the Young Women's Christian Association of Palestine aiming to empower marginalised women in the Bethlehem area to access resources and generate income to improve their, and their family's, quality of life.
57. The Committee is pleased to report that, at the meeting held on Thursday 6 February 2020, it was able to disburse £320,000 from the 2019 Appeal (£160,000 each to Tearfund and Christian Aid). The Moderator's Appeal for the Indonesian Tsunami 2018 had, as of 4 February 2020, a total balance of £62,468. This includes an amount of £59,686 being held for the Council of Churches in Indonesia. The Committee therefore agreed that an amount of £927 should each go to Tearfund, Christian Aid, and the Council of Churches in Indonesia. The Moderator's Appeal for those affected by Cyclone Idai had, as of 4 February 2020, a total balance of £149,284. It was noted that £89,564 was still being held from this total as an allocation to the Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission (BSHDC). Accordingly, the Committee was pleased to disburse £19,000 to each of Christian Aid, Tearfund, and Blantyre Synod.
58. The Committee expresses its warm gratitude to the congregations and individuals whose generous support of, and interest in, the work of sustainable development and whose response to situations of special need as reflected in giving to the Moderator's Appeals, have been an encouragement and also a witness to Presbyterians' calling, as global disciples, to share with God in the ministry of reconciliation that He has entrusted to God's people, working in harmony with His plan and purpose to heal the rifts that sin has driven through creation.
59. At the meeting held on 19 September 2019, the Committee approved the proposal that the Council for Global Mission's project allocation from the 2018 Appeal (that is 5% of the World Development Appeal total recorded in the audited accounts for 2018) should be made available to the Council's Global Mission Partnership Panel for allocation under its grants scheme, specifically for any projects with a focus on sustainable development. The Global Mission Partnership Panel made allocations as follows:
- (a) £5,000 to the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Livingstonia Synod, to support staffing of the Health Co-ordination Office which performs monitoring visits to the three Synod hospitals, assessing the standards of service and staff performance.

- (b) £5,000 to Minority Focus, Nepal, to provide scholarships for four minority Christian students for four years of study in education, vocational, technical and non-technical courses.
 - (c) £5,000 to the Presbyterian Church of Sudan and South Sudan for the Theological Training by Extension Programme in South Sudan which trains church leaders in peace mediation and trauma healing. The programme also plans to create two vocational training centres for women in the most war-torn areas of South Sudan.
 - (d) £5,000 to the Presbyterian Church of Sudan and South Sudan to provide training for teachers and head teachers in peace mediation and trauma healing. This training will take place in Juba and in refugee camps in surrounding countries.
 - (e) £5,000 to the Nile Theological College, South Sudan, for staff costs and peace training.
60. It is hoped that the 2020 Appeal will provide an opportunity to, once again, both widen and deepen the understanding of congregations around the challenges of sustainable development in fragile states. The Committee is currently engaged with PCI's development partner, Christian Aid, to identify a lead partner project as the focus of the 2020 Appeal, with a return to the year two project in Brazil no longer viable due to organisational re-structuring within Christian Aid. The launch of the 2020 Appeal is scheduled for Tuesday 20 October 2020 at 12.30pm, following a meeting of the Council for Global Mission.
61. In the meantime, the Committee is grateful for the continuing prayers of the wider church as it seeks to carry out and to develop the work with which it has been entrusted by the General Assembly, and it welcomes your interest.

FIONA FORBES, Convener

GLOBAL MISSION WORKER PANEL

62. The Global Mission Worker Panel has met twice since the General Assembly meeting in June 2019. Reporting directly to the Council, the Panel's key role is to provide advice and facilitate informed discussion on areas relating to human resources and member care guidelines for global mission workers.
63. **Global mission workers** Panel members thank God for the global mission workers (GMWs) who, as his witnesses, serve in eleven countries around the world; for those who have been commissioned for service; and for those whose overseas service has concluded.
64. Details of roles, locations, and global mission partners for those currently serving with the Council are found in Appendix C.

65. On Sunday 1 December 2019, under the Integrate Programme of service, two members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland were inducted and commissioned by the Presbytery of Down for service in Russia to take up roles in lecturing and translation.
66. Following their resignations, a Minute of Appreciation was recorded for Lyn and Johnny Dowds who served in Malawi at the David Gordon Memorial Hospital from June 2011 until December 2019.
67. **Human resources and member care development.** The Panel recommended the adoption of:
 - (a) biennial retreats continuing in Asia and the introduction of such retreats in Europe.
 - (b) the principle of separating an obvious connection between the Council for Global Mission (and PCI), the Global Mission Worker (name and identity), their country of service, the partner they are working with, and the people with whom they worship. This applies to any information placed on the internet regarding those PCI's global mission workers serving in sensitive locations.

VALERIE CLARKE, Convener

GLOBAL MISSION PARTNERSHIP PANEL

68. The Global Mission Partnership Panel reports directly to the Council on the following areas: the norms or principles of engagement in global mission partnerships; policy and strategy including overseas visits and visits by partners to Ireland; grants for global mission partnership projects; maintenance of a database of global mission partnerships; ensuring PCI's mission engagement through global partnerships is adequately reflected in PCI publications and website; and providing advice and support on partnership matters for other PCI Mission Councils and the wider church. (See list of Global Mission Partnerships: Appendix D.)
69. The current definition of global mission partnership is a church, organisation or institution where there is a global mission worker(s) and/or the provision of funding by PCI. A review of partners was carried out in 2017/2018 with 12 designated as 'focus partners'. This list of partners is kept under regular review and, in addition, this year the Council for Global Mission have been approached by three organisations that wish to be considered for partnership with PCI. The Panel acknowledges that there is a danger that, in attempting to sustain too many partnerships, this may result in shallow relationships that achieve little.
70. A task group was set up by the Panel to review the criteria for partnership and identified a number of questions that need to be answered at a strategic level. On the recommendation of the Task Group, the Panel

made the decision that any requests for new partnerships be delayed until the new structures are in place. This will allow time for strategic decisions made by the new Global Mission Committee and the Council to also be taken into consideration.

71. **Grants 2020.** In the course of the year, the Council for Global Mission approved grants for partner projects totalling £81,127 covering thirteen global mission partners in nine countries. The funding for these grants came from the United Appeal, the World Development Appeal and designated donations.
72. The following visits took place over the past year, some of which may have already been referenced in the reports of other committees and panels:
 - (a) Mrs Pip Florit to Myanmar to attend a roundtable meeting of the partners of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar from 23 June to 1 July 2019.
 - (b) Rev Uel Marrs to Mozambique with Tearfund to visit projects for the World Development Appeal from 19 to 28 August 2019.
 - (c) Rev Uel Marrs and Mrs Pauline Kennedy to London to visit SAT-7 from 26 to 29 October 2019
 - (d) Rev Uel Marrs to Porto, Portugal to take part in the retreat for European global mission workers from 1 to 4 November 2019.
 - (e) Rev Dr Liz Hughes and Mrs Raing McCullough to Indonesia to attend the General Assembly of the Indonesian Council of Churches from 3 to 17 November 2019.
 - (f) Mrs Karen Craig (PW President) and her husband, Very Rev Dr Rob Craig, with Miss Helen Johnston, to Nepal for the General Assembly of the United Mission to Nepal from 10 to 26 November 2019.
 - (g) Mrs Pip Florit to Copenhagen, Denmark to meet with the European partners of the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon from 20 to 22 November 2019.
 - (h) Revs Uel Marrs, Robert Bell and Dario Leal to Bilbao, Spain from 23 to 27 January 2020 to meet with the French family and explore church planting opportunities in the area.
 - (i) The Moderator, Rt Rev Dr William Henry and his wife, Nora and their children, Connor, Bethany and Megan, to Kenya to visit the Cowan, Lermore and Reid families and meet with leadership of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa from 13 to 25 February 2020.
73. The following overseas visitors were hosted:
 - (a) Mr Wamaka Nyondo CCAP Livingstonia Synod, Malawi, visited Ireland from 5 - 8 July 2019. He is a Leader in Training supported by a Lindsay Memorial Fund grant to complete a Masters of Science in Sexual and Reproductive Health at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh.

- (b) The annual Eukumindo General Assembly and Study Day focusing on ‘Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland and Indonesia’ was hosted by PCI at Assembly Buildings with 18 delegates from five countries, 12 - 14 September 2019.
- (c) Mr Amon Chanika, National Director of Scripture Union, Malawi, visited Belfast from 3 -9 December 2019.

HEATHER CLEMENTS, Convener

BUSINESS AND FINANCE PANEL

- 74. The Business and Finance Panel met on three occasions in the past year and reports as follows:
- 75. **Finance and Property.** 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 enthusiastic support and generous grant received annually from Presbyterian Women. Council for Global Mission accounts for the year 2019 indicate a net surplus on the Income and Expenditure Account of £1,163 which is very close to the budgeted figure. Having been pledged a grant from the United Appeal of £1,065,000 for 2020, the Council is requesting the same amount in its budget for 2021.
- 76. The Panel ensures the oversight, repair and maintenance of Council for Global Mission properties and following a review of the Council’s mission property portfolio, two serviced apartments have been purchased in the past year at a total cost of £547,213 with one property sold for £223,260; a second is currently ‘sale agreed’ for £440,000 and a third has been refurbished and providing rental income of £20,000 per year over the next two years.
- 77. **New Council Structure.** The Panel notes with deep appreciation the work of the conveners and members whose period of service is coming to an end under the outgoing council structure. Particular thanks are due to the following members of our Business and Finance Panel:
 - (a) Valerie Clarke, *Convener of the Global Mission Workers Panel 2015*. Valerie brought to this role considerable expertise from her professional working experience in Human Resources and Management. As Panel Convener she closely encouraged and supported Helen Johnston (Mission Support officer - Member Care). She also challenged both the Panel and the wider Council to be crystal clear on vision and strategy and was therefore instrumental in the work of the Task Group looking at the future and proposing the necessary changes in the Council Structures.
 - (b) Heather Clements, *Convener of the Global Mission Partnership Panel 2017*. Heather’s lifelong commitment to Global Mission has been demonstrated both in her work with PW and also within this

Council. She has led the Panel in a regular process of prayerfully reviewing the scope and limits of effective global partnership in order to prioritise where the need is greatest. Heather's spiritual insight and organisational skills have led to her nomination as Convener of the new Global Mission Committee from this Assembly.

- (c) Rev David Steele, *Convener of the Outreach Ministries Committee, 2015*. David has also served in this capacity for a number of years under our previous structure and has brought to this task a wealth of practical experience as well as a passionate commitment and infectious enthusiasm for engagement in global mission and evangelism. Alongside all of this he has demonstrated a deep concern for the Global mission workers and partners whose work this Committee has supported.
 - (d) Rev Richard Kerr, *Convener of the Global Concerns Committee, 2015*. Richard has been the face of Global Concerns for many years serving as Convener under the pre-2015 Board structure and before that as the Convener of the Race Relations Panel. Richard's deep commitment to the care of creation, to providing practical and pastoral care for asylum seekers and refugees, and to challenging the attitudes of the wider church in a range of international issues and concerns, have inspired and encouraged many within PCI to follow his lead and to recognise that taking action in these areas is an essential aspect of everyday Christian discipleship.
 - (e) Rev John Faris, *Convener of the Leadership Development Committee, 2016*. John has led this Committee with winsome pastoral perception and careful theological reflection. He has a large heart for the global church especially for those places where theological education needs additional practical support and prayerful encouragement. Although the Committee will no longer exist in its present form, the Council retains John's skills as World Faiths Agent on the Global Development Committee from this Assembly.
 - (f) Rev Fiona Forbes, *Convener of the World Development Committee* was only appointed in 2018 but her sheer hard work, deep spirituality and dedicated attention to detail alongside her utter conviction of the vital importance of sustainable development and its attendant issues has led to her nomination as Convener of the new Global Development Committee as from this Assembly.
78. A Committee and Panel Populating Task Group reviewed guidelines for the populating of the new council structure, forwarding recommendations to the Nominations Committee for membership of two new Assembly Committees. Panel conveners and Global Mission Committee agents were approved by the Council.

79. **Mission Department staffing.** The Council is very grateful for the dedicated and faithful service of all Mission Department staff during what has been a challenging year. Mandy Higgins retired from her role as PA to the Council for Mission in Ireland Secretary and the position was filled by Christine Craig who commenced work on 19 August 2019. Mission Departmental staff meetings and updates have been held periodically throughout the year.

LIZ HUGHES, Convener

APPENDIX A

EVANGELISM AND CHURCH PLANTING TASK GROUP REPORT

Introduction:

The 2018 Report of the Council for Global Mission included a recommendation that a task group should be established to carry out a root and branch review of the Council's church-planting and evangelism strategy in Western/Southern Europe (Portugal, Italy, Spain) in the spirit of Luke 14:25-30. In this section of the Gospel Jesus warns about the necessity of recognising the costly commitment of discipleship – a reality which is surely echoed in the experience of church-planting in western/southern Europe. This report reflects the work done by the Church-Planting Task Group appointed.

In contrast to PCI's long history of missional outreach, experience and partnership in other parts of the world, PCI's involvement in church-planting in Europe is, for the most part, relatively recent. Indeed, in some senses at least, it is still a steep learning-curve experience that is not without its very significant challenges, difficulties and disappointments.

The Task Group recognises and pays warm tribute to the courageous commitment of all those who have served with PCI in church-planting engagement in southern Europe, and those who continue to do so.

It encourages local PCI congregations to become much more fully acquainted with the immense challenges involved, and more prayerfully and practically supportive of the opportunities that exist.

1. An essential framework of understanding

In reflecting on church-planting in southern Europe, the Task Group recognised that it is essential to understand the context in which this work is undertaken.

Historically, the Reformation did not make the same impact in southern Europe as in other parts of the continent. The contemporary reality is that the Reformed Churches are usually very small, sometimes almost invisible, and often struggling to survive, never mind make much significant missional impact on the local population.

Therefore, whilst PCI's traditional model for outreach and evangelism overseas has been one of close partnership with the local Reformed Church - coming at its invitation, and working within its structures and support – this model may not always be as easily applicable in the southern European context, for the following reasons:

- (a) Since the Reformed denominations in southern Europe are often extremely small, they do not necessarily have either the vision or the practical resources for mission and outreach. Their history has

been mainly one of survival, sometimes in the face of powerful cultural and ecclesiastical traditions. Understandably, these small Reformed Churches often have a mainly maintenance mindset which does not easily embrace the vision of church-planting.

- (b) In some cases, the theological outlook and ecclesiastical perspectives of the denominations with whom PCI might most naturally expect to work may not always be conducive to effective church-planting. This means that it may sometimes be difficult to identify appropriate denominational partners when it comes to having a church-planting focus.
- (c) Even though PCI might rightly assume a greater cultural affinity with other parts of Europe than with other more distant parts of the world, this may not necessarily be so in every sense. Significant cultural, spiritual and practical aspects of life in southern Europe mean that all attempts at discipleship and church planting require strenuous efforts to understand the historical background and contemporary influences which shape the cultures of southern Europe and the attitudes and lifestyle of its peoples.

In this regard, the challenges and choices which faced the Jerusalem Church in Acts 15 may be instructive. At that time, the Council of Jerusalem found that it needed to identify, prioritise and affirm the things that really mattered for Christian faith and living wherever the church was found, but to recognise that many other matters were better left to the local church and its leaders, so that unhelpful and unnecessary restraints were not placed in the way of the spread of the gospel and the establishing of churches.

Having recognised these significant contextual challenges, the Evangelism and Church-Planting Task Group recalled the headline title at one of the Coleraine Special Assembly Conferences, - *'Confident in Christ'* - and affirms this as the headline for PCI's vision for church-planting in southern Europe, sustained and motivated by a focus on the sovereignty of God, the all-sufficiency of Christ, and the authority of Scripture, where decisions about where to go and whom to send are constantly grounded in prayer and total dependence upon the guidance and ongoing enabling of the Holy Spirit, believing that where the focus is on making Christ known and making disciples, churches will be planted.

On this basis, the Evangelism and Church Planting Task Group affirms, with strong conviction and confident vision, that disciple-making and church planting in southern Europe, the continent of which PCI is a part, should be very much a strand of the mission of PCI.

In the words of one contributor to our discussions, "*How can we call ourselves a church if we are not a church-planting church*".

2. Potential Opportunities for collaboration on church-planting between the Council for Global Mission and Council for Mission in Ireland.

The 2018 Council for Global Mission report to the General Assembly recognised that there may be beneficial opportunities for mutual learning, sharing of experience, and practical support since the Council for Mission in Ireland is also engaged in church planting, sometimes in a context which may not be completely dissimilar to that of southern Europe. Some conversations have already taken place, and representatives of the Council for Global Mission Evangelism and Church Planting Task Group met with the Council for Mission in Ireland Church Planting Panel in April 2019.

Discussion took place around the areas of further potential for collaboration, especially in understanding the particular gifting and training necessary for church planters and the most effective strategies for initiating new church plants. The Council for Global Mission representatives found it very helpful to hear about Council for Mission in Ireland's '*New Life, New People, New Places*' vision for church-planting, and their experience of planting from '*islands of strength*' - i.e. an existing 'mother church' which supplies a nucleus of initial members for the new church plant, as well as ongoing prayer and practical support from the mother church.

However, the Evangelism and Church Planting Task Group recognised that, in the southern European context, it is often much more difficult to identify such islands of strength. Some possible ways of working out this general principle in practice follow later in this report.

The two Councils' representatives agreed that there was real benefit in continued collaboration, especially through possible future church-planting conferences and in the development of ideas for the training of church planters.

3. Core Principles for Church Planting

Given the essential background outlined above, the following principles are offered:

- (a) '**Networking**' and '**Collaboration**' in addition or, as an alternative to, '**Partnership**'

Since it is not always possible to identify appropriate denominational partners, leading to formal partnership agreements, it may be more productive to adopt a more flexible, informal approach based on the ideas of networking and collaborating with like-minded initiatives and groups engaged in evangelism, disciple-making and church-planting in a particular locality. While this may be with mission-minded denominations, it would more often be with local congregations on the ground, and other church planters and mission organisations. In many cases this would not involve formalised partnerships, but rather

places the emphasis on a greater flexibility that permits more freedom to push forward with initiative-taking and decision-making at the local level. It is our view that this collaborative approach provides more active and effective channels of local support, mutual encouragement and helpful sharing of resources and ideas.

Whilst PCI might be reticent about formal arrangements with church-planting networks, it would seem that there is real benefit from collaborating as closely as possible with others who share PCI's primary perspectives in terms of evangelism, disciple-making and church-planting. It needs to be strongly affirmed, and it should be clear on the ground, that PCI is not in competition with other Reformed and evangelical church planters and that, where possible, wants to collaborate with them for the cause of the Kingdom.

Therefore, there is much work to be done in terms of building up knowledge of what others are doing in the relevant countries, and in exploring possible collaborative opportunities - although it is recognised that, at the end of the day, this may be best done by those PCI have placed on the ground in the relevant countries.

Whilst being persuaded that this is the right way to move forward, it is of course recognised that some other churches and denominational missions are not always open to the concept of collaboration.

The task group also recognises that very serious attention needs to be paid to the possibility of significant legal implications and potential difficulties which might arise if PCI is not working within the framework of formal partnerships with churches or organisations which are locally recognised and legally authorised. This has presented challenges in some European contexts, not least in terms of global mission workers being able to formally register organisations, buildings, get permissions etc, and therefore, it is essential to flag up this issue and the need for thorough research into the requirement that might pertain in any particular church-planting situation under consideration.

(b) **Islands of Strength**

As stated earlier, CMI's church-planting strategy builds on the idea of new church plants springing from *'islands of strength.'* The Task Group recognised this as a very clear and constructive approach to church-planting. Nevertheless, the group found it extremely challenging to think about how this important principle might be applied directly in the context of evangelism and church planting in southern Europe. In view of the fact that the existing denominational congregations are often very small, both numerically and in terms of resources, the potential for them to serve as 'islands of strength' appears much more limited in terms of possibilities.

(c) **Scaffolding of support**

The Task Group has concluded that whilst CMI's approach to church-planting uses the 'island of strength' approach, church-planting in southern Europe needs to think in terms of a scaffolding of support approach – multiple layers and sources of essential support which together make up the scaffolding necessary for a new 'building' to rise from the ground, for effective discipleship to take place and a church-plant to emerge.

This would include the following elements:

- (i) PCI, as a denomination, must obviously be a key part of the scaffolding, offering the essential, central denominational support which church-planters need in terms of pastoral, practical and personnel needs, financial resources, and 'sounding-board guidance' for those on the ground. This has already been PCI's approach, even when operating in partnership with local Reformed churches.
- (ii) Individual PCI congregations could be encouraged to become part of the scaffolding of church-planting support, perhaps with a small number of congregations intentionally committing to support a particular church-plant through prayer, regular visits, and practical resources, even though they might not normally be able to supply a nucleus of members for the church-plant. If this were to be effective, significant work would need to be done at congregational level in terms of raising the profile of church-planting in southern Europe. In some cases, this idea of 'adopting' a church-planting project might be helpfully focussed in a particular Presbytery. The Task Group was persuaded that this linked closely to the '*Go Deep, Go Wide*' vision of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.
- (iii) The Task Group recognises the lessons being learnt from past involvement, and accepts that an ex-pat community may not necessarily have a vision for, or desire to engage in, outreach and church-planting. Nevertheless, the Evangelism and Church Planting Task Group has reflected at length on the possibility that, in some situations at least, an international community which has a vision for reaching the people of their adopted home may have an important part to play in evangelism and church-planting. This would depend on there being an ex-pat community which is not simply seeking to worship and fellowship with fellow ex-pats and a church which is 'just like home'. This might either work itself out in terms of outreach from their own congregation or by providing a core of people who are willing to form the nucleus of a new work in a church plant among the local population. It goes without saying that the perspective of those already working on the ground in southern Europe

would be critically important in this regard: in particular, the assessment of whether the ex-pat community possessed the necessary vision and motivation for reaching out to the local population. Likewise, did they have a commitment to outreach that went beyond their own desire for a church which provided them with Biblical teaching, pastoral support and opportunities for fellowship?

- (iv) A further potential source of involvement in, and support for, evangelism and church planting may lie in the work being done in colleges and universities by the student Christian organisations which are affiliated to IFES. Much good work is already being done, in terms of evangelism and discipling among young adults whose careers and personal lives will be significant in their churches and communities in years to come. Through networking and collaboration with those involved in this work there may be important opportunities for encouraging Christian graduates to express their faith and play their part in evangelism and church planting initiatives.
- (v) Christian literature in the vernacular is also almost certainly a key part of the scaffolding which is being proposed. The publication of good quality literature which is produced to a high standard available for use by those working on the ground and serving in church-planting situations. The Task Group has seen encouraging examples of such literature which is beginning to be produced in conjunction with Grupos Bíblicos Unidos in Spain.

Almost certainly, this is not an exhaustive list of the elements which would make up the scaffolding of support that is necessary to facilitate effective and fruitful evangelism and church-planting initiatives. The experience of the Task Group is that it has become increasingly convinced of the importance of this multi-faceted approach, and strongly persuaded that this would provide an effective approach to evangelism and church-planting.

d) **Building relationships, Modelling Faith, and Making Disciples are the essential soil in which churches are planted.**

The Task Group found it inspiring that in some other cultures and countries, not least in the Muslim world, fruitful evangelism and church growth is taking place. In these situations, the primary emphasis is on becoming fully part of the local community, seamlessly merging commitment, compassion and care into a life of introducing the good news of the Kingdom of God.

It seemed to be the case that at its heart, this involved deliberately investing time in a small number of people, often the most ordinary of people and sometimes the most unlikely, and giving them time to 'discover' the convincing truth of Scripture. Out of this organic process, embryo disciples emerged who were then best placed to

make more such disciples. Rather than inviting people to come to 'a church', the church began to emerge around these initial disciples. This approach recognises that 'ordinary, local people' living in their local community are often the most important church-planters, even though they usually require the support of 'professional Christian workers' from outside the community.

These disciple-making movements are prayer movements at heart, where through making intercessory prayer the highest priority, the spiritual battle is taken out of the human realm.

Some of the literature of which the Task Group became aware suggested strongly that experience indicated that 'Disciple-Making' is a more accurate term than 'Church-Planting' to describe the core principles at work in the rapidly multiplying movements around the world today. (*Miraculous Movements*, Jerry Trousdale, Thomas Nelson Press, 2012.)

If this point is correct, then it reinforces the idea that PCI's church-planting strategy must be based on discipling and equipping both ex-pat and local Christians to be involved in all aspects of life in their community, building relations which make it possible to identify people who might become disciples, and recognising that this approach must inevitably be one that is 'long-haul'.

e) **Planting Reformed Churches that are culturally appropriate to their context.**

It needs to be recognised that the name '*Presbyterian*' may not always be a culturally helpful name in southern Europe. For many it is not understood, nor does it convey very much. It is a name that is sometimes seen as coming from the 'outside' as an unwelcome and unsettling alternative to the cultural and religious traditions of the community. At the same time, the Task Group also found it significant to note that in some cases, the denominational name was very important for 'outsiders' moving into the community of the church-plant and becoming identified with it. E.g South American people coming from a presbyterian background and settling in southern Europe.

Whilst Presbyterians should not hide or apologise for who they are and what they stand for, it was the Task Group's view that church-planters needed to be given freedom to work out what is best in any particular situation in terms of what the work is called, even though information about Presbyterianism, and PCI in particular, should always be available. The Task Group believe that it is important that ways are found to convey the fact that 'Presbyterianism' is part of a large worldwide denomination of the historic, apostolic, Christian Church.

The Task Group recognised that it is sometimes necessary to think in terms of Presbyterian church planting with a small 'p', certainly in name, and sometimes also in terms of some of the characteristics of the church that may emerge. Even though PCI

is unashamedly committed to establishing churches that are Presbyterian and Reformed in doctrine and practice, what emerges on the ground over a period of time, may not always look much like a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

There will, of course, be some difficult questions which arise directly from the fact that the majority of people who become connected to southern European church-plants and who may come to faith through them will come, predominantly, from a very traditional, and often nominal, Catholic background or indeed, from an increasingly secular European culture. At least some of them will be ‘first generation Christians’. Therefore, against this background, PCI will need to have the courage to give the church-planter a good degree of freedom and flexibility to decide how best to respond to this reality and to develop approaches that are helpful and appropriate in their context, whilst at the same time maintaining their commitment to Reformed fundamentals and to their roots in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Perhaps, as with the Council of Jerusalem, the challenges of achieving this balance must be entrusted to the leadership on the ground – a model which does not abandon genuine denominational convictions, but which emphasises, in the way it was put at the joint meeting between the Council for Mission in Ireland and the Council for Global Mission, ‘*vision oversight and stewardship*’, ‘*releasing*’ and ‘*encouraging*’ those who are working on the ground, whilst remaining able to say ‘*no*’ when necessary.

Perhaps, ultimately, where church planting projects bear fruit, and where fledgling congregations emerge, PCI may need to be ready to think carefully and courageously about whether what is being planted is a congregation of PCI, or a congregation of an appropriate local denomination, or something else entirely.

(f) **Church-Planting Personnel**

This report has already referred to the courageous commitment of those who have been, and who continue to be, engaged in church-planting in southern Europe. Several more specific comments that arise from this seem relevant:

- (i) It is absolutely essential to recognize that Church-Planting in this context is difficult and demanding work. It requires determination and perseverance, particular evangelistic gifting, and relationship-building people skills. Church-planting personnel require significant practical flexibility and real initiative in wise decision-making, as well as perceptive networking abilities. Perhaps both CGM and CMI, in conjunction with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, would benefit greatly from some significant thought being given by the Council for Training in Ministry to what might be called ‘a specialised calling to a church-planting ministry’, and by Union Theological College in terms of the

essential training and preparation courses which might be required, not least in preparing and equipping candidates for the particular issues and challenges which apply to church-planting in southern Europe. The Task Group was encouraged to learn that some thinking about these issues has already begun.

- (ii) Church-planting will normally require long-term, even life-time, commitment to a particular country and culture, and to its people. It is essential for the church-planter to be, or very quickly become, completely fluent in the language. They must be critically comfortable in the culture, with the ability to identify with and become part of the everyday life of their community, building relationships with local people. In this church-planting context, much 'pre-evangelism' and a wholistic mission approach is often essential since the Bible and the evangelical gospel is largely unknown, and therefore, the church-planter must be able to cope with this. They must be able to establish 'a critical friend' approach to those elements of the culture which must be challenged and inevitably changed by the gospel. Given these challenges and the fact that church-planting may involve a significant sense of isolation, it is the Task Group's view that the norm should be for church-planters to work as part of a team, which might consist of a mixture of full-time, tent-making, and local personnel.
- (iii) Because of these challenges, church-planters require and should be provided with, as an absolute priority, as much pastoral support as possible. This comes through strenuous efforts to identify other church planters with whom they can network and find mutual encouragement, but also through a more active level of ongoing pastoral contact and support from PCI.

The Task Group recognised that, given their wide-ranging and heavy work-load, there is, inevitably, a practical limit to the level of pastoral support which the CGM staff can provide, and it is therefore suggesting that some structure of 'pastors' for the church planters could be developed from those within PCI who have a particular interest in church-planting in southern Europe and who have the necessary awareness of, and openness to, its spiritual, cultural and practical challenges.

Encouraging local PCI congregations to develop a better understanding of church-planting in southern Europe must surely also be a very important part of this regular support, if the work is to be fruitful. Congregations might be encouraged to adopt a particular church-plant project and to develop their links with it. Regular short visits from

such congregations might well prove helpful, both in terms of support and prayer whilst they are there, but also in terms of encouraging more regular and informed prayer support in the congregation at home.

- (iv) Consideration might also be given to youth or all-age teams spending some time in the church-planting situation, supporting the church-planters and perhaps facilitating some extra summer activities or projects. This concept has been shown to be popular and effective in other contexts by PCI and other agencies. It can not only enhance the work itself but also increasing understanding, vision and support on a more long-term basis. However, it needs to be very clearly recognised that there are significant language and cultural issues which need to be thought through carefully in order to prepare teams to be helpful. The Task Group noted that Spanish, in particular, is now so widely learnt at schools in Ireland, that it may provide real possibilities that should be explored.

4. Church-Planting Locations

The Task Group is convinced that there is a very strong argument for focusing PCI's church planting initiatives in one or two parts of southern Europe. By so doing our church-planters can increasingly develop a fuller understanding of the cultures and the ways in which evangelical, reformed Christians and their churches are perceived. They can come to appreciate the work already being done by other churches or mission organisations and the possibilities for networking. With time they have the opportunity to become steadily more relevant and fruitful in their own church-planting initiatives.

The Task Group is also of the view that within the countries or regions identified, it may be helpful to aim at developing a 'cluster' of church-plants within limited geographical areas, thereby providing for much greater mutual support and encouragement for the planters, and raising the profile of a 'Reformed' Church in that area.

As CGM's 2018 General Assembly Report made clear, PCI's resources of church-planting personnel and funding are finite and therefore, at a practical level, it is essential to prioritise the locations in which PCI becomes involved.

Therefore, based on these assumptions, it is the recommendation of the Evangelism and Church-Planting Task Group that moving forward, efforts should be focussed in the following two locations:

- (a) The area of northern Portugal around Porto where Comunidade Pedras Vivas is located, where James and Heather Cochrane and Chris and Rachel Humphries and their families are serving in collaboration with the Christian Presbyterian Church of Portugal.

- (b) In northern Spain around the city of Bilbao, among the people of the Basque Country, where Jane and Derek French and their family have served for many years through the work of GBU. In both locations, these families serve with enormous commitment and perseverance, and require PCI's constant prayer and wholehearted encouragement.

Porto and Bilbao are both major cities where the Task Group believes the impact of fruitful church-planting has the potential to filter back into the smaller local communities elsewhere in the country, from where the town/city residents originally come. This probably reflects the pattern as seen in Paul's missionary journeys.

Should invitations or opportunities arise for church-planting in southern Europe in countries not as yet considered, these should be looked at seriously, whilst recognising that the challenges of becoming involved in yet another country and culture may run the risk of spreading resources too thinly in terms of gaining cultural understanding and accessing suitable personnel and adequate resources.

Specific Recommendations re Porto and Bilbao.

The Task Group recognises that the opportunities and challenges in these two cities are distinct, and in many ways different. Therefore, the following recommendations are made, realising that there is much by way of strategy and decision-making that can only be determined by those working on the ground.

(a) Porto:

- (i) The Task Group recognises that the large numbers of Brazilian Christians who have come to Porto and become connected to CPV do not always have a significant sense of the importance of mission and outreach to the Portuguese people. They are primarily seeking a church 'like home' to nurture, pastor and support them. Those arriving from Brazil struggle to deal with an unchurched and Biblically illiterate culture, which requires a very different approach from that to which they were used. This mindset is also often dominant in the thinking of the Brazilian pastors who come to serve in Portugal.

Therefore, a great deal of teaching, vision-casting and modelling of a much more missional approach is essential. Such work is time-consuming and difficult and, to date, has yielded very limited results. Nevertheless, there is huge potential in the what has been described as the tsunami of Brazilian Christians, many of them Presbyterians, arriving in Portugal. Even though the vision-casting process may be a very long-haul challenge, the Task Group believes that it should not be abandoned.

- (ii) Given the fact that evangelism, outreach and church-planting among Portuguese people must begin at a very basic level of ‘re-founding’ Biblical faith fundamentals, the Task Group fully endorses CPV’s emphasis on micro-group ‘curiosity’ and ‘discipleship’ groups, picking up the emphasis noted earlier from the work among Muslim people in other parts of the world.
- (iii) The importance and long-term value of becoming as fully part of the local community as possible, which also echoes the lessons learnt in other contexts, seems to be essential. At the same time, it is recognised that the Portuguese people may be naturally cautious in embracing people and influences from outside their culture.
- (iv) Whilst recognising that the work of GBU is not as strong in Portugal as it is in Spain, the Task Group believes that there may be value in exploring connections and collaboration in this direction, and in networking with other mission workers, organisations and local churches who may be seeking to do so also.
- (v) Though this list is almost certainly not exhaustive, the final suggestion would be that it may be valuable to explore all other potential networking and collaborative opportunities, alongside the existing partnership with the Christian Presbyterian church of Portugal.

(b) Bilbao

Representatives of the Task Group visited Bilbao in January 2020 in order to learn more about the work in which Derek and Jane French are involved, both through GBU and through their connections with the Bilbao International Church. They reported back with a deep appreciation of the work being done and with strong conviction about the potential for church-planting work in the future. The recommendations are as follows:

- (i) That Derek and Jane French, having built very significant connections in Bilbao and the Basque country over many years, are very much part of the community in which they live, are highly respected by the wider Christian community and are therefore well placed to lead a church-planting initiative in that region.
- (ii) That the French’s work with Grupos Biblicos Unidos has given a unique insight into the potential for a strategy whereby GBU students might catch a vision for church-planting in the Basque region, among both Spanish and Basque speaking people and that, by emphasising this vision during their student years, Christian graduates might then be very significant in church-planting initiatives when they leave university.

- (iii) That the Andamio publishing project, which is linked to Grupos Biblicos Unidos and which is beginning to produce high-quality Christian literature in the vernacular for various age groups, may be an important tool in evangelism and church-planting.
- (iv) That as the Bilbao International Church with which the Frenchs are connected, demonstrates outreach and worship services in English, it may actually be much more significant than experience in other locations has suggested. It is acting as a bridge for church-planting, especially among couples and families where one partner speaks English and the other speaks Spanish or Basque, as well as among younger people who, at least initially, see it as an opportunity to improve their English.
- (v) That Bilbao International Church offers a very positive opportunity to collaborate with a small church which has sprung from the Baptist Church of the Basque region, but where the ‘mother-church’ appears to be very open to this church, and further potential church-plants, having a life and identity of their own. The Task Group believes that these new church-plants could be independent and Reformed, and that PCI’s collaboration with Bilbao International Church might well become the springboard for fruitful church-planting in Bilbao and beyond.
- (vi) That given the unique character of the Basque region, and the significance of the Basque language and culture, the primary aim of church-planting in this area should be to reach the Basque people. This would require the involvement of Basque-speaking personnel and the development of outreach and services in Basque, the potential for which already exists in Bilbao International Church.

Conclusion

As Jesus warns in Luke 14, *“if one of you wants to build a tower, he must first sit down and estimate the cost...”*

The long-term challenges and the cost, which is not simply financial, of church-planting in southern Europe are very considerable, in terms of the spiritual battle, the perseverance required, the skills which are essential, and the commitment involved.

Nevertheless, the Task Group is very strongly convinced that this is a task to which PCI should be committed – mission and church-planting in the continent of Europe must surely be a priority – *“how can we call ourselves a church if we are not a church-planting church?”*

Whilst this challenge must be approached with realism, wisdom and care, as stated in the early sections of this report, the Church Planting Task Group affirms, with strong conviction and confident vision, that disciple-making and church planting in southern Europe, part of our own continent, should be very much part of the mission of PCI.

APPENDIX B

‘Reviewing PCI’s Investment Policy’

“The Lord God put the man in the Garden of Eden to take care of it and to look after it.” Genesis 2:15 (Contemporary English Version).

The General Assembly of 2018 passed a resolution commending the Stewardship of Creation Report on Climate Change and encouraging congregations to consider how its conclusions might challenge lifestyle choices.

The Report has provided a biblical and theological foundation to guide PCI as it approaches issues relating to the care of God’s creation. It affirms God’s creation as being good and reflects on the importance of God’s people being good stewards of that same creation. This is understood as both an outworking of, and a witness to, the Christian faith. By implication, failure to look after the gift that God has entrusted to people conveys a disregard for God; as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

Further, climate change disadvantages PCI’s brothers and sisters in other parts of the world disproportionately. Those who live in more vulnerable locations or who do not have adequate safety nets are especially susceptible to the impact of rising sea levels, droughts and floods. If God’s people in the West are to carry out Jesus’ command to love their neighbour as themselves, serious consideration needs to be given to consumption and the impact it has on neighbours in the wider world.

Commending a report is one thing. How Presbyterians allow that report to change their practice is another. Perhaps most challenging is how it impacts lifestyle choices; not least regarding how money is invested. Indeed, in their use of money God’s people demonstrate how seriously they take what they claim to believe regarding creation, stewardship and discipleship.

Presbyteries, congregations and individual members have raised this challenge; particularly, but not limited to, the investments held by the denomination. More specifically, the issue of investment in fossil fuels was raised in a letter from members of Waringstown Congregation to

the Trustees of PCI. This letter was in turn referred to the Stewardship of Creation Panel for consideration.

Over the past few years other Irish and European church bodies and PCI partners, including Christian Aid and Tearfund, have chosen to move towards divesting from fossil fuels. While this cannot in itself be a reason for PCI to do likewise, it does seem timely to examine PCI's policies in this regard.

Historically PCI has chosen to divest from companies that could not be defended morally, including those in the armaments, gambling, alcohol and tobacco industries. These positions have necessarily evolved as PCI become more aware of the inherent moral inconsistencies. The same can be said of our growing understanding of climate change. Continuing to support investment policies which contradict our understanding of the damage being done to the earth clearly provides an inconsistent witness.

Scientists inform us that present fossil usage is a major contributor to global warming. Bob (Robert) White, Professor of Geophysics in the Department of Earth Sciences at the University of Cambridge and a member of Christians in Science says:

“It is increasingly clear that our use of oil and gas in the West is driving rapid climate change in the whole world.... The effects of more extreme weather events will fall disproportionately on the very young and very old, on the poor and the marginalised in places such as sub-Saharan Africa. One quarter of the planet's population lives in poverty and is extremely vulnerable to changes caused by drought or flooding, to the failure of agricultural crops or to rising sea levels. If we take caring for our global neighbour seriously, we need to consider the impact of our lifestyles on them.” (Stewardship of Creation Climate Change Report 2018)

At the Paris Climate Conference of 2016 there was widespread agreement to address the climate “crisis” by holding the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that this would significantly reduce the risks and impacts of climate change. Studies show that the carbon contained in existing fossil fuel using, if allowed to run its course, would take us beyond the globally agreed goals of the Paris Agreement.

Some have argued that divestment from fossil fuels is not possible because of the legal obligation that require trustees to act in the best interests of their members (fiduciary duty). However, on the other hand, some specialists in charity law have argued that carbon intensive investments may create a conflict between a church and its mission. In this case divestment from fossil fuels may be the only morally sustainable option.

Good stewardship of creation can have positive financial benefits

too. Academic research and market trends suggest that divestment may not necessarily hurt our pockets. With the need to meet targets on greenhouse gas emissions, profit margins for fossil fuel companies may well be compromised. Government policies could also have an impact. For example, the United Kingdom government have made a commitment to phase out coal by 2025.

Divesting from fossil fuels may provide opportunities for PCI to take a lead in investing in positive alternatives including renewable energy and clean technologies. Examples may include solar and wind power, and the use of electric vehicles. Adequate investment in these areas is urgently needed to ensure a rapid transition to an economy which considerably reduces carbon.

In summary, PCI's investment policies must flow from a biblical basis and theology of creation, a commitment to God's world and to those whom Jesus Christ described as neighbours. The broad consensus of scientific thought supports the view that fossil fuel production contributes to climate change. It is therefore morally questionable to invest in companies deriving revenue from fossil fuels.

PCI's response should reflect a consistency of witness and provide a lead to church members and wider society. Most importantly, how PCI invest reflects how our Heavenly Father's creation is valued and is an outworking of what it means to be disciples of Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX C

GLOBAL MISSION WORKERS

Global mission workers: the names, spheres and category of service are listed below and are to be taken together with the Global Mission Worker Panel Report.

INTEGRATE PROGRAMME – service of two or more years

Brazil

Naomi Keefe	2004	Outreach programme, The Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), Recife
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Great Britain

Edwin and Anne Kibathi	2009	Ministry among East Africans in East London
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Kenya

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

Two global mission workers	2016	Theological education
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Nepal

Peter and Valerie Lockwood	2012	Programme Advisor United Mission to Nepal (UMN), Kathmandu
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Peter and Jayne Fleming	2017	Integral Development Advisor UMN, Kathmandu Teacher, Kathmandu International Study Centre
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Portugal

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

Csaba and Ilona Veres	2001 1993	Co-ordinator – SERVANT Mission of Diakonia, Cluj Mera children's project
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Russia

Two global mission workers 2019 Theological education

Spain

Derek & 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 D**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

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- 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 Evangelical 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

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly commit to pray for PCI's global mission partners, especially those located in fragile states where the humanitarian crisis is being exacerbated by Covid-19, and for the concerted efforts by PCI's development partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund, to undertake timely relief and sustainable development initiatives.
2. That the General Assembly give thanks for the faithful witness of PCI's global mission workers and encourage congregations through the 'Go Deep, Go Wide' initiative, to active, prayerful, and practical involvement with global mission workers and partners, not least those engaged in disciple-making and church-planting.
3. That the General Assembly encourage a renewed commitment within PCI to sharing in leadership development in the global church, such that Leaders in Training are not only envisioned to achieve high academic standards but also to develop Christlikeness in character.

4. That the General Assembly acknowledge the particular challenges facing immigrants and those most vulnerable, globally and locally, and encourage congregations to explore ways of engaging with these people in a Christlike manner, in collaboration with appropriate partner churches and organisations.
5. That the General Assembly, in light of the new Global Mission Council structures becoming operational, give thanks for the faithful endeavour of the conveners and members of the outgoing Assembly committees, panels and task groups.
6. That the General Assembly give thanks for the gracious and sustained generosity shown by congregations and members of the PCI in supporting the World Development Appeal.
7. *That the General Assembly, not underestimating the challenges, yet with confidence in Christ, re-affirm disciple-making and church-planting in Southern Europe as an important strand of the mission to which PCI is called and approve the core principles and specific recommendations for disciple-making and church-planting in Porto and Bilbao for out-working by the Global Mission Committee, in consultation with the Council for Mission in Ireland.**
8. *In light of our responsibility to be good stewards of creation, the General Assembly task the Trustees to review PCI's present investment policies with particular attention to companies engaged directly and indirectly in fossil fuel production, with a view to divesting from such.**
9. That the Report of the Council for Global Mission be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS

Convener: Rev Dr TREVOR McCORMICK

Secretary: Mr LINDSAY CONWAY, OBE

1. Mark tells us in his Gospel about men who had compassion and concern for a paralysed friend – but more was needed: they had to work in co-operation to carry their friend to Jesus and to endeavour with commitment to overcome the challenges they met along the way. This is the blueprint for the work of the Council for Social Witness (CSW), stirred by compassion, co-operating with an array of individuals and agencies within and beyond the church, and committed to effective work and witness at every level.
2. The report of the Council and its committees are to be understood in the light of significant challenges, in particular:
3. **Increasing standards and expectations:** Residents, tenants, their families and carers come with their own expectations in terms of standards of facilities and care, additional opportunities and resources, past experiences and future security. Although not all of our property is ‘purpose-built’, the high occupancy rate bears testimony to the efficacy of the programme of routine maintenance and required upgrades ensuring our facilities are welcoming, comfortable and safe.
4. **Financial pressures:** The financial climate in which we operate remains challenging. The Business and Finance Panel, in monitoring financial, property and personnel issues, has kept the realities of current deficit budgets and the necessities of future provision before CSW. The Council is aware that mission and ministry costs money but such costs must be met through careful stewardship of the resources available to us.
5. **Expanding needs:** The Council is also aware of a multiplicity of needs all around. At the last General Assembly, attention was drawn to the cycle of drug abuse, mental health issues and suicide. Sadly, the needs have increased, as have issues previously referred to, in particular domestic abuse and the increase of scamming, especially exploitation of the elderly.
6. In addressing these challenges, the words of John Stott in ‘Basic Christianity’ bring encouragement and guidance “We must trust in Him as our Saviour and submit to Him as our Lord; and then go on to take our place as loyal members of the church and responsible citizens in the community.”
7. The Council has responded to these challenges with commitment and co-operation with a wide range of individuals and agencies. To

fulfil our Church's responsibilities to all service users and staff, CSW Senior Management Team has ongoing interaction with a diverse range of regulatory and statutory bodies and the wider voluntary sector. In particular: Regulation & Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA), Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC), Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJI), Probation Board Northern Ireland (PBNI), Supporting People Initiative (NI Housing Executive), and Health and Social Care Trusts and our partner housing associations.

8. Staff are a key resource whose professional skill, diligent commitment and human tenderness are foundational to the care that is offered. Regular training and professional development are available to all staff and the Key Staff Forum for senior staff provides updates on new requirements and initiatives for senior staff.
9. A vast number of people are engaged as volunteers in: 'Friends-of' groups and the expanding Cracker project, the expansion of the Christmas Cracker programme and Fresh Start. CSW is committed to developing the role of volunteers in CSW projects and in an increasing number of both familiar and innovative projects initiated by congregations, groups and individuals. The Council believes this will engender further engagement and deepen the sense of partnership throughout the Church.
10. During this year, the Council has had helpful engagement with other PCI Councils and Departments and it appreciates the developing sense of collaboration with, in particular, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, the Council for Public Affairs, and the Communications, IT, Finance, Personnel Department and General Secretary's Departments.
11. The staffing structure presented at the 2019 Assembly has been in operation, apart from the appointment of a Training Officer. Denise Keegan has taken responsibility for Older People Services; Melanie Bowden is responsible for Disability Services; and Jacqui Montgomery-Devlin as Head of Safeguarding.
12. All of the Council's work is heavily dependent upon the professional standing and immeasurable commitment of the whole staff team led by Lindsay Conway, who guides and develops the work. It also relies heavily on David Hooks and Laura Kelly for their expertise in finance and personnel matters. The day to day functioning of the Council is facilitated by Julie Sykes (Office Manager), Gail Gamble, Wilma Steele, Jennie Telford, Cathy Mullin and Marjorie Coulter. Sincere thanks are expressed to each.

Fulfilling Strategic Objectives

13. The Council's report to the 2019 General Assembly detailed the strategic objectives arising from the Strategic Plan 2019-2022. Further work has been done to clarify and define the responsibilities and interfaces of the Council, its committees and panels, and the leadership in the various units.

14. The basic concept is that of **focused responsibilities**. This recognises that much work has a vital inter-dependence of policy and personnel. However, duplication can lead to disengagement and dissipation of limited resources. In broad terms, the Council and committees have the roles of strategic planning, monitoring and evaluating, while executive staff manage, and unit staff deliver the work. This is not a hierarchical system rather, a collaborative model in which the principles of accountability, communication and engagement, which were foundational to the restructuring of all General Assembly work have been maintained. The discussion has resulted in a Focused Responsibilities template as follows:
15. Council for Social Witness:
 - (a) To **coordinate** the work of standing committees and panels.
 - (b) To **oversee** the implementation of the Council's Strategic Plan.
 - (c) To **celebrate** the work and achievements of units / projects / individuals.
 - (d) To **communicate** with the Church and wider community.
 - (e) To **develop** policy.

DISABILITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

16. The Committee welcomed the appointment of Melanie Bowden as Head of Disability Services.
17. The Committee's aim is to have a Christmas Cracker (CC) respite initiative held in each presbytery area, and to extend such events beyond the Christmas period, perhaps under a different title, so that carers and families could enjoy similar respite opportunities on a more regular basis.
18. The Committee discussed further concerns about the viability of Lawnfield House. CSW staff, together with staff in the home, have been working on ways of publicising the home to encourage greater occupancy levels, but the financial deficit continues to grow.
19. The Kinghan Church Task Group continues to meet and have agreed a way forward in partnership with another congregation. The Committee expressed its deep appreciation for the ministry of Rev Dr Will Murphy (Church of Ireland) who has been conducting worship (with signing) in Kinghan three Sundays a month, with Windsor PC involved one Sunday per month. The Committee commend the work of Judith Curry, who has a pastor's heart and a passion for the church members.
20. The work of Aaron House, Willow Brook/Topley Terrace, Lawnfield House and Kinghan Church continue to provide a high standard of care. The Committee commended staff for the excellent standards of

care provided in our residential, day care, supported living and respite facilities and ministry to the deaf community.

21. The Committee noted issues relating to staffing, property and finances in each of the facilities, together with changing care needs as residents grow older. This will require some adjustment from staff in order to meet these needs in coming years.
22. The Committee again discussed the lack of funding levels from government agencies which places considerable pressure on all of our facilities and results in the Council for Social Witness supplementing this important work.

PETER DICKINSON, Convener

OLDER PEOPLE SERVICES COMMITTEE

23. The Committee welcomed the appointment of Denise Keegan as Head of Older People Services.
24. The Committee has been encouraged by reports from our homes. Staff are responding to the ongoing pressures within the sector and have demonstrated an ability to change and modify practice when required. There has been a good uptake of training opportunities and a willingness to develop new skills. The Committee were informed that all homes continue to have very positive reports from RQIA. Minor recommendations are quickly implemented and the appropriate changes made
25. The Senior Team is to examine and explore the need for additional homes in the West and South. The Committee considered the need for new homes, particularly in the western and southern regions of the province. Approaches are to be made to housing associations, which would be interested in taking this forward. It is noted that border communities have little or no residential/nursing provision at present. Denise Keegan brought to attention the issue that referrals coming through the Health Trusts are for dementia services and that the homes are presently at maximum capacity for dementia residents.
26. The Committee is to explore the role of 'chaplain' for pastoral and spiritual care in the homes. Following discussion with regard to pastoral support and current involvement within the homes, it was suggested that a questionnaire be put together to establish the extent of both within our homes. The Committee discussed the possibility of training for ministers, particularly in respect to dementia, in order to further the aim of creating a dementia-friendly church. Such training would be a useful tool for those who take daily services or epilogues within the homes and units.

27. The Committee discussed the involvement by congregations in our homes through the 'Getting on Board' volunteer scheme. The 'Getting on Board'/'Fresh Start' Scheme was recently relaunched and local engagement is encouraged within our homes. Local support committee membership is lacking at present in some of our homes and units and it would be beneficial for local presbyteries and congregations to get involved.
28. The Committee agreed to undertake and develop ministry to older people, in conjunction with Congregational Life and Witness, seeking to share best practice throughout the denomination.
29. **Reports from homes.** Members discussed reports received from Older People Services homes and units and were encouraged by the good work carried on there. It was noted that the staff in the Social Witness Department in Assembly Buildings play an invaluable role in the work of Older People Services.

NIGEL REID, Convener

TAKING CARE COMMITTEE

30. The Committee welcomed the appointment of Dr Jacqui Montgomery-Devlin as Head of Safeguarding. This new position covers Child Protection and Adult Safeguarding and replaces the former Programme Co-ordinator.
31. **Taking Care Audit** for congregations throughout PCI has taken place with an 83% response to date. Further reminders have been issued and the findings will be issued at a later date.
32. **Taking Care 3.** A Task Group has been set up and is drafting Taking Care 3, with a rebranding and new format that will be more user friendly. The format will take the form of – 'Through the Eyes' of ministers, kirk session, church committee, parents, children and young people, designated persons and youth leaders.
33. **The Republic of Ireland Task Group** chaired by Rev Daryl Edwards has provided congregations with safeguarding and risk assessment statements which are required to be displayed in their churches and halls. A useful pocket guide entitled "Reporting a concern in the Republic of Ireland" is now available giving basic information, in order to disseminate all the changes to ministers, clerks of presbyteries and designated persons.
34. Roadshows have been held to launch the new Statements and Pocket Guides.

35. **Social Media.** The Committee remains concerned about the risks to our children and young people in the misuse of social media. A major conference hosted by the Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland), Faith Group will be held later in the year.

DR PAMELA MARSHALL, Convener

SPECIALIST SERVICES COMMITTEE

36. The Committee acknowledges the continued dedication of all staff working at Carlisle House, Gray's Court, Thompson House and also the support of Council for Social Witness office staff.
37. **Thompson House.** Thompson House has experienced a relatively quiet period, during which it has accommodated 41 residents, of which 23 have moved on.
38. Two residents have also taken up the opportunity to get connected with local congregations. One of those doing so has regular contact with a local Baptist church, who visit him regularly due to the seriousness of his past offences. The other attends another church frequently and is considering attending a UK Christian faith-based corporation whose aim is to help people with problems such as substance abuse or self-destructive behaviour. CSW has recently provided finance to enable the management to purchase a number of copies of the Haynes Man Manual. These resources were distributed amongst residents and have been helpful in initiating conversations with residents focused on various issues related to men's health and areas which men find hard to talk about.
39. **Carlisle House.** Staffing levels remain a focus of attention for the CSW Management Team due to a couple of unavoidable long-term sick periods. We are thankful that these members of staff have recently returned to work under a phased return. Staffing issues are difficult to resolve in this sector due to the specialist skills set required to operate and function effectively in the environment of a Substance Misuse Treatment Centre.
40. **Regulatory Bodies.** RQIA conducted an unannounced inspection of Carlisle House in August. All areas highlighted on the QIP that was provided have been actioned and resolved. The report highlighted the good practice and effectiveness of the Carlisle House therapeutic treatment programme. Thompson House was also inspected by the regulatory body used by the PBNI. This once again resulted in a satisfactory report with no major issues highlighted.

41. **Fresh Start** has had an injection of new volunteers with 11 people aged between mid- 20s to 70s, with a broad range of skills and gifts, coming on board to journey with residents at Hydebank Wood College. Access NI checks have been completed and Prison Service interviews and profiling are ongoing. This is very encouraging.
42. The Committee has identified members for the Mental Health Task and plan to carry out a scoping study to assess the needs within the work of the Council and the wider church.

JOHN STANBRIDGE, Convener

43. **Retiring Conveners.** The Rev Peter Dickinson has completed his term of service convening the Disability Services Committee. Peter has brought experience, passion, wisdom and humour to this work which has seen significant and challenging developments in recent years with the added responsibilities and opportunities of Aaron House, Lawnfield House and Peacehaven. Initiatives such as ‘Christmas Cracker’ reflect Peter’s practical care and commitment to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, this has been an inspiration to all who have worked alongside him and who recognise the debt of gratitude he is owed.
44. Dr Pamela Marshall has convened the Taking Care Committee with skill, patience and tenacity during a period when this area of work has developed and expanded, with new safeguarding processes in Northern Ireland, an evolving process in the Republic, the emergence of Safeguarding for All, and the revision of our Taking Care manual. Pamela’s attention to detail and meticulous record keeping has provided a secure foundation during the transition of staff, and the increased need for training and for that she is to be appreciated and thanked most warmly.

APPENDIX

RESTRUCTURING COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS

This purpose of this paper is to review and, if thought necessary, propose a revised structure of the Council and its work.

The basic concept is that of “FOCUSSED RESPONSIBILITIES”. This recognises that much work has a vital inter-dependence of policy and personnel. However duplication can lead to disengagement, and dissipation of limited resources.

The principles of Accountability, Communication and Engagement which were foundational to the restructuring of all General Assembly work have also been used in this paper.

BODY	FOCUSSED RESPONSIBILITY Ref Code 279 (3)	Accountability Communication Engagement	Strategic Objectives	Action	Timeframe
<p>Council for Social Witness</p>	<p>To co-ordinate the work of Standing Committees and Panels To oversee the implementation of the Council's Strategic Plan To celebrate the work and achievements of units / projects / individuals To communicate with the Church and wider community To develop policy</p>	<p>Report to General Assembly Communicate with wider Church</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 1 To review the structure of the Council. Strategic Objective 2 To develop a Republic of Ireland Panel. Strategic Objective 3 To develop a strategy to improve engagement with the whole Church. Strategic Objective 4 To raise awareness of particular needs identified by our work and consider how they may be addressed. Strategic Objective 5 To develop a strategy to facilitate engagement with other Councils and agencies on emerging issues.</p>	<p>Proposals to CSW / General Assembly Panel formed and functioning Paper to CSW with proposals SMT & Conveners discussion Round table with CCLW, CPA, CMI</p>	<p>March 2020 June 2020 March 2020 February 2020 May 2020</p>
<p>Senior Management Team</p>	<p>To manage the delivery of services To ensure compliance with regulatory bodies</p>	<p>Report to the Business & Finance Panel Report to relevant Committees Provide advice and relevant information Committees and Staff.</p>		<p>Regular B&F Panel Agenda item</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

BODY	FOCUSSED RESPONSIBILITY Ref Code 279 (3)	Accountability Communication Engagement	Strategic Objectives	Action	Timeframe
Business & Finance Panel	<p>To monitor the effective deployment of resources</p> <p>To assess the potential and viability of new work proposed by Standing Committees and/or Panels</p> <p>To explore additional funding streams</p>	<p>Report to CSW</p> <p>Business and Finance Panel – will monitor the Financial Management, Personnel Functions, Information Technology and Property Management of the Council supported by the Finance and Staffing Commission.</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 24 To regularly review CSW terms and conditions of employment and make recommendations to ensure that we reward staff effectively and maintain competitiveness in the market place.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 25 To promote training and development and career progression opportunities within the Council.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 26 To provide a caring and supportive working environment for our staff.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 27 To negotiate an IT policy which is fit for purpose in all units.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 28 To develop a conversation with United Appeal with regards to funding.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 7 To examine the viability of, and options for DSC facilities</p> <p>Strategic Objective 11 To examine and explore the need for additional homes throughout the island of Ireland.</p>	<p>Discussion with IT Dept</p> <p>Discussion with UA Panel</p> <p>Report from DSC</p>	<p>Annual Review</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Mar 2020</p> <p>Mar 2020</p> <p>Apr 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

BODY	FOCUSED RESPONSIBILITY Ref Code 279 (3)	Accountability Communication Engagement	Strategic Objectives	Action	Timeframe
Disability Services	<p>To monitor the work in units</p> <p>To develop the appropriate elements of the Strategic Plan</p> <p>To oversee work of Panel(s) for specific projects</p>	<p>Report to CSW</p> <p>The Disability Services Committee (DSC) – will deliver a high standard of day, residential, supported housing and respite care in all of our Units. Support the ministry of the Kinghan Church and wider ministry to the deaf.</p> <p>Contribute to the disability, health and wellbeing work of the wider Church in partnership with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 6 To expand ‘Christmas Cracker’ through the Task Group and explore other forms of supported respite.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 7 To examine the viability of, and options for DSC facilities.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 8 To encourage the development of ministry to the deaf community through the Kinghan Task Group.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 9 To explore and develop provision for pastoral support in DSC homes.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 10 To explore and signpost resources for areas of disability in which DSC is not currently involved.</p>		

BODY	FOCUSSED RESPONSIBILITY Ref Code 279 (3)	Accountability Communication Engagement	Strategic Objectives	Action	Timeframe
Older People Services	<p>To monitor the work in units</p> <p>To develop the appropriate elements of the Strategic Plan</p> <p>To oversee work of Panel(s) for specific projects</p>	<p>Report to CSW</p> <p>Older People Services Committee – will deliver a high standard of day, residential, nursing and respite care to all our users and campaign and raise awareness on behalf of older people issues and services.</p> <p>Support the development of the pastoral support of those requiring support in their own homes.</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 11 To examine and explore the need for additional homes throughout the island of Ireland.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 12 To explore the role of chaplain for pastoral and spiritual care in the homes.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 13 To encourage involvement by congregations in our homes through the 'Getting on Board' volunteer scheme.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 14 To undertake and develop older people's ministry by seeking to share best practice throughout the denomination.</p>		

BODY	FOCUSSED RESPONSIBILITY Ref Code 279 (3)	Accountability Communication Engagement	Strategic Objectives	Action	Timeframe
Taking Care	To oversee the Taking Care programme of PCI	Report to CSW Taking Care Committee (The Safeguarding Programme of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) – creating a safe environment for all our members, users, volunteers and staff. For those working with or in contact with children and adults at risk.	<p>Strategic Objective 15 To develop Taking Care 3.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 16 To correlate results of the Taking Care Audit and review and revise training in the light of the responses.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 17 To progress the work of the Republic of Ireland Task Group.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 18 To raise awareness of Adult Safeguarding and, in particular, ScamwiseNI, human trafficking, domestic and sexual violence.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 19 To raise awareness and signpost resources on the use and misuse of social media.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 20 To develop relationships with public protection partners and other faith and voluntary groups.</p>		

BODY	FOCUSSED RESPONSIBILITY Ref Code 279 (3)	Accountability Communication Engagement	Strategic Objectives	Action	Timeframe
Specialist Services	<p>To monitor the work in units</p> <p>To develop the appropriate elements of the Strategic Plan</p> <p>To oversee work of Panel(s) for specific projects</p>	<p>Report to CSW</p> <p>The Specialist Services Committee – will deliver a high standard of service to those with additions, offending behaviours and who require supported housing.</p>	<p>Strategic Objective 21 To regularly review, evaluate current practices and explore new ministries within Thompson House, Carlisle House and Gray's Court.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 22 To pursue the expansion of 'Fresh Start' within the Criminal Justice sector.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 23 To establish a Task Group to provide a scoping study on how local churches can support individuals and existing agencies address issues regarding Mental Health and Suicide.</p>	SMT compile Training Needs Analysis	01/05/20
Key Staff Forum	Enabling best practice across the units	Report to SMT	<p>Strategic Objective 25 To promote training and development and career progression opportunities within the Council.</p> <p>Strategic Objective 26 To provide a caring and supportive working environment for our staff.</p>	SMT compile Training Needs Analysis	01/05/20

BODY	FOCUSSED RESPONSIBILITY Ref Code 279 (3)	Accountability Communication Engagement	Strategic Objectives	Action	Timeframe
Units	Delivery of Service	Report to SMT Reports to appropriate committees	Council Objectives: The Council shall deliver an effective social care service for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and to the wider community by the provision of residential, nursing, supported housing, respite and day care, and community based programmes.	Reference Inspection Reports	Ongoing
Kinghan Church Task Group		Report to Disability Services Committee	Strategic Objective 8 To encourage the development of ministry to the deaf community through the Kinghan Task Group.	Develop relationships within South Belfast Presbytery. Explore possible expansion of work eg streaming services	June 2020 June 2020

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WITNESS – OPERATIONAL CHART

General Assembly

Council for Social Witness
 To coordinate the work of Standing Committees and Panels
 To oversee the implementation of the Council's Strategic Plan
 To celebrate the work and achievements of units / projects / individuals
 To communicate with the Church and wider community
 To develop policy

Senior Management Team
 To manage the delivery of services
 To ensure compliance with regulatory bodies

Business and Finance Panel
 To monitor the effective deployment of resources
 To assess the potential and viability of new work proposed by Standing Committees and/or Panels
 To explore additional funding streams

Disability Services
 To monitor the work in units
 To develop the appropriate elements of the Strategic Plan
 To oversee work of Panel(s) for specific projects

Older People Services
 To monitor the work in units
 To develop the appropriate elements of the Strategic Plan
 To oversee work of Panel(s) for specific projects

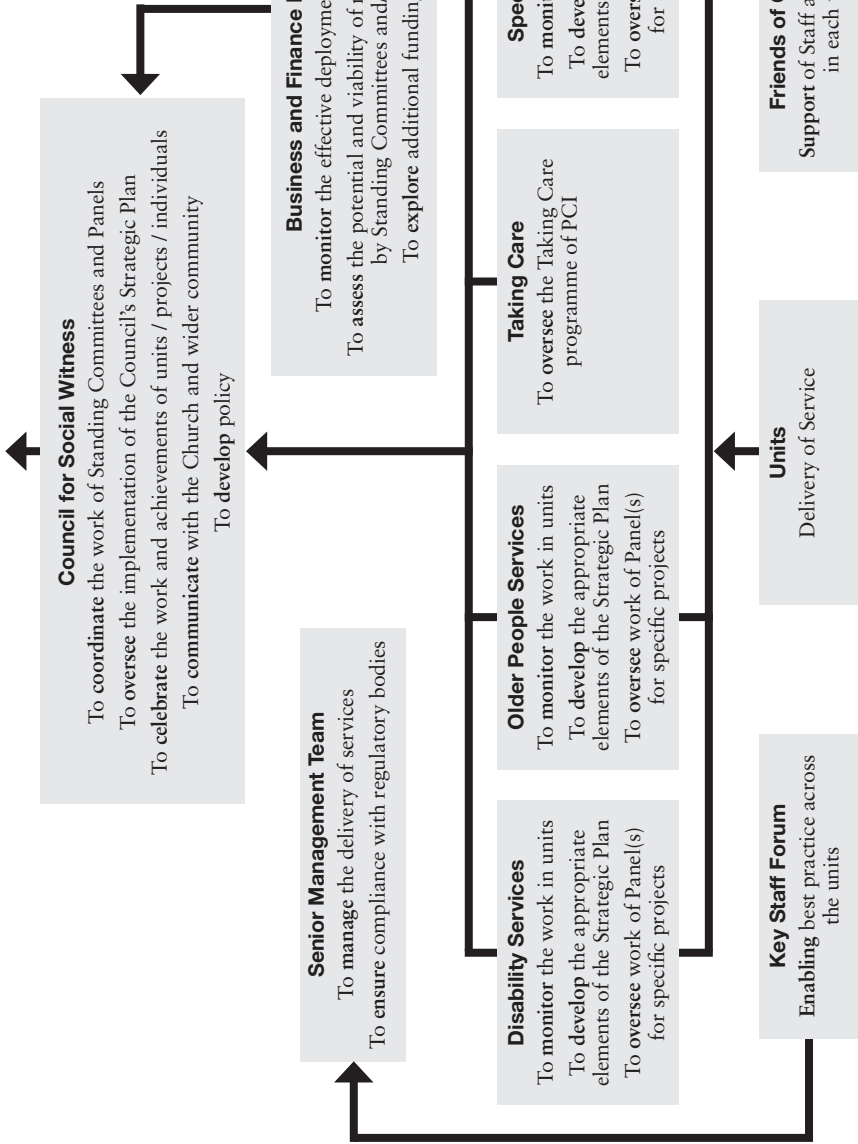
Taking Care
 To oversee the Taking Care programme of PCI

Specialist Services
 To monitor the work in units
 To develop the appropriate elements of the Strategic Plan
 To oversee work of Panel(s) for specific projects

Key Staff Forum
 Enabling best practice across the units

Units
 Delivery of Service

Friends of Groups
 Support of Staff and Residents in each unit



RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Council for Social Witness be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

LINKAGE COMMISSION

Convener: T.J. LIVINGSTONE

Secretary: Rev R.K. GRAHAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report summarises the work of the Linkage Commission from April 2019-March 2020. 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. 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 sometimes creates debate when vacancies occur with the inevitable conflict between the understandable desire to retain meetinghouses with the reality of the decreasing financial sustainability of some of these congregations.

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 filling the vacancy. This practice is to be encouraged. It is of note that, as a result of this increased preparedness, the time between a vacancy occurring and the granting of Leave to Call has significantly reduced.
3. However, despite this welcome change, the Commission is also aware that the Church is entering a period when, for a few years, there will be a reduction in the number of available licensed assistants. 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 the year. Copies of the revised guidelines are now issued to vacancy conveners when Leave to Call is granted. Congregations in such situations are reminded of the requirement to draw up objectives/goals/aims within the first twelve months of the installation of a new minister. These will then form part of the assessment made in the subsequent Tenure Review.

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 another dissolution and an amalgamation.
6. It is anticipated that the Commission will be presenting a request for a further dissolution or amalgamation. If so, this will appear in the Supplementary Reports.

Church Architecture and Manses Panel

7. 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.
8. The Panel also gave consideration to the need to produce an amendment to Manse Guidelines to deal with situations where modifications/adaptions to Church property are required to meet the needs of the minister or his/her family. Revised guidelines have been drawn up and are presented in this report.

Additional Pastoral Personnel and Auxiliary Ministry Panel

9. The 2019 General Assembly agreed the following Resolution: "That Appendix A. 'Paper on Adding a Band C Salary Scale to the Recommended Salary Scales for Additional Pastoral Personnel' be sent down to presbyteries for discussion and comment, with report back through the Deputy Clerk by 31 December 2019". The Commission, having discussed the feedback from presbyteries, presents a resolution offering a way to address this matter.

10. To date, the Commission has only been requested to establish two auxiliary ministry posts. The Commission again commends this scheme to the wider Church for consideration so that the gifts identified may be harnessed for the extension of Christ's Kingdom.

Parish Bounds Panel

11. The Parish Bounds Panel has completed some work on providing parish bounds for new congregations and filling gaps in recorded parish bounds as filed in the General Secretary's Department. After consultation, the Belfast Conference has made a recommendation concerning the boundary between the North and South Belfast Presbyteries. This will enable the Panel to draw up new parish bounds for the large areas of Belfast that have seen amalgamations over recent decades.

Leave to Call a Minister

12. This is only a summary - there may well be conditions to the Leave to Call that 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
Drumbanagher First – and Jerrettspass	40% AMM [2019]	£2,448 [2019]
Kingsmills	60% AMM [2019]	£3,672 [2019]
Clones	8.5% €AMM [2019]	€813.87 [2019]
Stonebridge	9.75% €AMM [2019]	€933.56 [2019]
Ballyhobridge	5.25% €AMM [2019]	€502.68 [2019]
Newbliss	26.5% €AMM [2019]	€2,537.38 [2019]
Arklow	€12,000 [2019]	€3,000 [2019]
Seskinore	60% AMM [2019]	£3,672 [2019]
Edenderry	40% AMM [2019]	£2,448 [2019]
Cairncastle	AMM [2019]	£6,120 [2019]
Coagh	42.7% AMM [2019]	£2,448 [2019]
Ballygoney	14.6% AMM [2019]	£1,224 [2019]
Saltersland	42.7% AMM [2019]	£2,448 [2019]
Ballycarry	AMM [2019]	£6,120 [2019]
Second Saintfield	£35,000 [2019]	£6,120 [2019]
Glengormley	£36,000 [2019]	£6,120 [2019]
Killinchy	£38,000 [2019]	£6,120 [2019]

Tobermore	25% AMM [2019]	£2,040 [2019]
Draperstown	25% AMM [2019]	£1,020 [2019]
Ballyclare	£37,000 [2019]	£6,120 [2019]
First Holywood	£39,500 [2019]	£6,120 [2019]
Kilfennan	£35,500 [2019]	£6,120 [2019]
Hamilton Road	£45,000 [2020]	£6,242 [2020]
Second Donegore	70% AMM [2020]	£4,369.40 [2020]
Tullylish	£16,100 [2020]	£3,745.20 [2020]
Gilford	£11,000 [2020]	£2,496.80 [2020]
Portstewart	£36,750 [2020]	£6,242 [2020]
Ballykelly	£30,000 [2020]	£6,242 [2020]
Drumlough	£17,700 [2020]	£3,121 [2020]
Anahilt	£15,800 [2020]	£3,121 [2020]
Kilkenny	€41,000 [2020]	€ 9,671 [2020]
Carndonagh	€7,250 [2020]	€2,418 [2020]
Greenbank	€8,700 [2020]	€ 2,901 [2020]
Malin	€7,250 [2020]	€2,418 [2020]
Moville	€5,800 [2020]	€ 1,934 [2020]

Reviewable Tenure Ministries

13. Reviewable Tenure of the Ministry in Windsor was extended for a further seven years from 30 March 2020.

Associate Reviewable Tenure Ministries

14. Reviewable Tenure for the Associate Ministry in Orangefield was extended for a further three years from 26 November 2019.

Stated Supply Arrangements

15. 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 Dervock, Armoy and Ramoan, Brookvale and Ryans, Warrenpoint, Rostrevor, and Ballycairn were effected.

Dissolution of Linkages

16. During the year there were no dissolutions of any Linkages.

Congregations Linked

17. During the year no new Linkages were agreed.

Congregations Amalgamated

18. The 2019 General Assembly resolved as follows “That the congregation of May Street be, as appropriate, dissolved or, amalgamated with the congregation of Fisherwick, on 31 December 2019, or other suitable date, on terms set by the Linkage Commission”.

DRAFT TERMS OF DISSOLUTION OF MAY STREET

That the congregation of May Street be dissolved on 31 December 2019, on the following terms:

- (a) That the congregation of Fisherwick becomes responsible for the pastoral care of such members of May Street who do not transfer to other congregations.
- (b) That the assets (to be dispersed) are defined as the May Street Church, Church Hall and any surrounding ground, any investments and bank accounts in the name of May Street Congregation.
- (c) In determining the distribution of the assets these Draft Terms are constructed on the basis that the Manse will be sold prior to the dissolution and the Capital sum from this sale, less sale costs, will form part of the bank accounts. Should this not be the case the Linkage Commission will draft revised Terms.
 - (i) Therefore, in the light of this understanding, and with respect to the financial assets, these shall be dispersed as follows:
 - (ii) £10,000 to the congregation of Fisherwick.
 - (iii) £70,000 to Council for Mission in Ireland.
- (d) The remaining amount, following the payment of the £10,000 to Fisherwick and the £70,000 to CMI, will go to the Presbytery of South Belfast.
- (e) At the point of dissolution the property assets will be transferred to the ownership of the Presbytery of South Belfast. Should these property assets subsequently be sold, the Linkage Commission will set the terms for the distribution of the proceeds from such sale.
- (f) That all future assets, including legacies and bequests subsequent to the dissolution, become the property of the Presbytery of South Belfast.
- (g) That the Presbytery of South Belfast will remain responsible for any May Street non property-related liabilities from the point of dissolution and, following dispersal of the assets, for all liabilities.

Following application to the Court the following “cy pres” scheme was approved:

CY-PRES SCHEME

Application of Trust Fund

- (a) The Presbytery Trustee shall hold the Trust Fund upon the following trusts:
- (i) as to the suite of buildings known as May Street Presbyterian Church, Belfast on trust for the Presbytery of South Belfast to be used by it for the purposes of mission within central Belfast, including, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the provision of a building in which groups associated with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland can meet for worship and other activities to promote the advancement of religion, and in particular that of the Presbyterian denomination, within central Belfast, but with the power of the Presbytery Trustee, if so directed by the Presbytery of South Belfast at a meeting called for that purpose, to sell that suite of buildings and to use the proceeds of such sale for the provision of financial assistance to Presbyterian congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery of South Belfast and otherwise for the promotion of the mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland within the bounds of the Presbytery of South Belfast;
 - (ii) as to the sum of £10,000 for the Fisherwick Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, being a congregation under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of South Belfast;
 - (iii) as to £70,000 to the Council for Mission in Ireland of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for use by that Council in mission work in the Greater Belfast area;
 - (iv) as to the remainder of the Trust Fund for the Presbytery of South Belfast for the general work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland within the bounds of the Presbytery of South Belfast;

Date of Dissolution: 23 January 2020

REVIEWS, ALLOWANCES AND FEES PANEL

Reviews

19. In accordance with Par. 236 (2) of the Code, and arising out of other circumstances, the Reviews, Allowances and Fees Panel reviewed the stipend of the following Congregations:

Presbytery and Congregation	Stipend
ARDS	
Greenwell Street	No Change
BALLYMENA	
Harryville	No Change
NORTH BELFAST	
Immanuel	No Change
West Kirk	No Change
SOUTH BELFAST	
Cooke Centenary	No Change
Lowe Memorial	No Change
CARRICKFERGUS	
Craigy Hill	Increase £1000
COLERAINE & LIMAVADY	
Ballywillan	Increase £1000
Garvagh Main Street	No Change
Killaig	No Change
Hazelbank	Increase £500
Second Limavady	No Change
Myroe	No Change
DERRY & DONEGAL	
Ebrington	No Change
Faughanvale	No Change
Trinity Letterkenny	No Change
Trenta	No Change

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DOWN

Raffrey No Change

DROMORE

Second Dromara No Change

Elmwood No Change

Maze Increase £1500

DUBLIN & MUNSTERDrogheda Increase:
Year 1 €2000
Year 2 €1500
Year 3 €1500**IVEAGH**

Loughbrickland No Change

Scarva No Change

NEWRY

Cremore No Change

Fourtowns No Change

Poyntzpass No Change

Kilkeel No Change

Mourne, Kilkeel No Change

ROUTE

St. James', Ballymoney No Change

TEMPLEPATRICK

Muckamore No Change

TYRONE

First Magherafelt No Change

Supply Fee

20. The level of Supply Fee is determined by the Code, Par. 238, and for 2020 this is:

£110 (€160) or £73 (€107) where only a single service is supplied in one congregation. Travelling 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

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE AND MANSES PANEL

21. In the past year, the Panel has met regularly and considered applications in accordance with Par. 57(6) of the Code. Proposals included construction of new churches and extensions, halls, manses, demolition works, structural alterations, removal/adjustments of pews etc. to enable more appropriate access for wheelchairs, provision of new audio-visual systems, designs for memorials, windows, artificial lighting, and seating/furnishings requisite for public worship. Proposals are authorised, successively, by congregation, presbytery and Linkage Commission, to which the Panel is responsible when making recommendations. Enquiries and submissions for Church Architecture and Manses Panel should be sent to Graham Patterson, Property Support Officer, Assembly Buildings, 2-10 Fisherwick Place, Belfast, BT1 6DW.
22. Over the year the majority of the submissions were able to be dealt with by the Panel using the information provided, while others necessitated the request for more detailed explanation on/drawings of the proposal. The Panel was also able to meet congregational representatives when this was appropriate and was therefore of assistance on numerous occasions by making helpful comments and suggestions, which were appreciated by the congregations involved.
23. The Panel is also involved in respect of a variety of manse accommodation issues referred to in Guidelines for Manses and in this regard assisted in the preparation of a paper identifying further guidelines in respect of Manse Adaptations. This Paper was circulated to Clerks of Presbytery in late 2019 and subsequently adopted by the Linkage Commission. It is presented for the attention of the Assembly as Appendix A.

BRIAN KNOX, Convener

ADDITIONAL PASTORAL PERSONNEL AND AUXILIARY MINISTRY PANEL

24. The Commission approved the creation of 36 new Additional Pastoral Personnel (APP) posts in the past year and the extension or amendment of 9 posts. There were no requests to create Auxiliary Ministry posts.
25. ‘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 may be advertised.
26. The approval of the HR support provider, presbytery and the Linkage Commission is required to extend 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.
27. 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].
28. New APP salary scales for 2020 were agreed by the Linkage Commission in November 2019. These are available from the panel convener and are shown below. Kirk sessions are required to use the salary scales when creating a new APP post.
29. The panel also considered the responses of presbyteries regarding the possibility of adding a higher Band C Salary Scale to existing Salary Scales. A paper outlining the key points made by presbyteries appears at Appendix B. A resolution is appended.
30. 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.
31. Kirk sessions are again reminded that organists (or similar) who receive any form of remuneration should be issued with a statement of main terms and conditions and job description. Once the documents have been issued presbytery should be notified. Before employing a new organist (or similar), the kirk session should draw up a statement of the 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 provider should always be consulted.

32. 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

APP Recommended Salary Scales for 2020 (Bands A and B)

	2019	% Increase	Increase	2020
NI Band A	Point A1 £18,685	2%	£374	£19,059
	Point A2 £19,355	2%	£387	£19,742
	Point A3 £20,031	2%	£401	£20,432
	Point A4 £20,703	2%	£414	£21,117
	Point A5 £21,558	2%	£431	£21,989
	Point A6 £22,226	2%	£445	£22,671
NI Band B	Point B1 £23,306	2%	£466	£23,772
	Point B2 £24,363	2%	£487	£24,850
	Point B3 £25,455	2%	£509	£25,964
	Point B4 £26,582	2%	£532	£27,114
	Point B5 £27,352	2%	£547	£27,899

ROI Band A	Point A1 €28,248	1%	€282	€28,530
	Point A2 €29,260	1%	€293	€29,553
	Point A3 €30,281	1%	€303	€30,584
	Point A4 €31,298	1%	€313	€31,611
	Point A5 €32,591	1%	€326	€32,917
	Point A6 €33,599	1%	€336	€33,955
ROI Band B	Point B1 €35,233	1%	€352	€35,585
	Point B2 €36,831	1%	€368	€37,199
	Point B3 €38,480	1%	€385	€38,865
	Point B4 €40,184	1%	€402	€40,586
	Point B5 €41,347	1%	€413	€41,760

Band A

Mostly direct work with children, young people or adults under close regular supervision; low management responsibility for people or projects. Obtained or working towards OCN level 2 and 3 qualifications, PCI Youth/Children's Ministry Course or similar qualification in the relevant field. Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent.

Band B

General responsibility for specific areas of programme and ministry oversight; graduating to less closely supervised responsibility for programmes, strategy, volunteers or leaders. Appropriate recognition of attainment or working towards undergraduate or postgraduate theological study or professional qualifications (including youth and community, teaching qualification or other related professional qualifications such as counselling or social work). Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent. The above rates are deemed to apply to a minimum of 37.5 hours per week. For employees working less than 37.5 hours per week a pro rata rate is applicable.

Please note:

- (a) This salary scale was initially based on the JNC Youth and Community work scale (2009) for the UK and has since been updated annually. For 2019, the NI salary scale has been increased in line with the increase in the NI ministerial minimum (2% for 2020). The ROI salary scale has been increased in line with the increase in the ROI ministerial minimum (1% for 2020).
- (b) The above rates are deemed to apply to a minimum of 37.5 hours per week. For employees working less than 37.5 hours per week, a pro-rata rate is applicable.
- (c) The APPAM Panel Convener of the Linkage Commission should be contacted for the most up to date figures and for advice on their interpretation.

BRIAN McMANUS, Convener

PARISH BOUNDS PANEL

33. Subsequent to the amalgamation of Boyle with Sligo, the parish bounds of Corboy, Ballina & Killala, Ballymote and Sligo were revised.
34. Two relatively recently constituted congregations have had parish bounds drawn up, and necessary adjustments made to those of neighbouring congregations. The new bounds are for Maynooth and Donabate. The revised bounds are for Lucan and Naas and for Drogheda and Howth & Malahide respectively.
35. The General Secretary's Department held no records of parish bounds for the Monaghan Presbytery apart from those published in 1935! The Panel has produced new bounds for all the congregations within the presbytery.
36. All the new or revised parish bounds are shown in Appendix C in alphabetical order by presbytery.
37. 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.

JIM STOTHERS, Convener

APPENDIX A

CHURCH ARCHITECTURE AND MANSES PANEL

Further Manse Guidelines on Adaptations (to be added to the Guidelines published in General Assembly Reports 2016, pages 182-185)

1. From time to time adaptations may be necessary in a manse to take account of a physical condition of the minister or of a member of a minister's family. It is the responsibility of the Congregational Committee to carry out those adaptations.
2. In a vacancy, the minister-elect should draw the attention of the convener of the vacancy to the possible need for an adaptation to take place. The convener should draw this to the attention of the congregational committee and ensure that the process described in the rest of this paragraph is followed. Arrangements should be made with the minister for an assessment of the needs by the statutory authorities, and an application made to them by the congregation for a grant towards this. In most circumstances the grant will cover the cost of the adaptation. The statutory authorities will also decide on whether the person for whom the adaptation is necessary is in a close enough relationship to the minister for them to give a grant. The relationship of the minister and family to the congregation here is parallel to that of a tenant to a landlord: the property belongs to the congregation, so it should make application. The usual church permissions should be sought before any work is undertaken. It should be noted that a congregation will often carry out extensive work to the manse prior to an installation, so this, and the fact that a grant is available, will mean that it is not bearing a more significant cost than it otherwise would.
3. In a settled situation, where a need for adaptation becomes evident, the minister should inform the congregational committee and the clerk of presbytery. The clerk should arrange for a neighbouring minister to chair any meetings of committee where the matter is discussed, and facilitate the progression of matters in a similar way to that described in paragraph 2. It should be noted that, if the removal of any adaptation is appropriate after the minister leaves the congregation, the cost is usually covered by the statutory authorities, and in any case, in a vacancy a congregation will often carry out extensive work to the manse, which means that it is not bearing a more significant cost than it otherwise would.
4. In a linkage the congregation which owns the manse should make any necessary decisions and pay any costs above the grant received, but that would not prevent any other congregation in the linkage offering to contribute to costs.

5. In cases of difficulty, the advice of the Linkage Commission should be sought through the Convener of the Church Architecture and Manses Panel.

APPENDIX B

ADDITIONAL PASTORAL PERSONNEL AND AUXILIARY MINISTRY PANEL

**Paper on Band C Salary Scale sent down to Presbyteries
for discussion and comment
(Minutes of General Assembly 2019 page 39 Resolution 1)**

Appendix B, Section 1

The following are the responses to the Consultation document sent down to presbyteries together with a summary of these responses.
NOTE: the original paper is reproduced at Appendix B, section 3.

SUMMARY OF PRESBYTERY RESPONSES

1. It should be noted that only 14 out of the 19 presbyteries responded to this Consultation.
2. Of the 14 responses it may appear that the answers to some of the questions are contradictory e.g. 6 agree on the need for a BAND C, yet 10 say that there is a matter of principle that no one working in the same congregation should be paid more than the lead minister. This may be because it is felt that the ministerial stipend in such congregations will ALWAYS be greater than the AMM Scale.
3. Of the 14 responses, 9 questioned the current scale paid to deaconesses. This is beyond the remit of the Linkage Commission.
4. Again, a similar number made reference to payment of Irish Mission workers, which is also outside of the Commission's remit.
5. There is some support (6 Yes and 5 Nos) for the introduction of a BAND C. Those who comment positively point to the need for flexibility to manage salaries, career progression and additional responsibilities. Those against, suggest that the need for such a Band is so small as to make its introduction unnecessary.

Some presbyteries would wish the matter of ministerial minimum also to be looked at in this context but again, that is NOT the remit of the Linkage Commission.

Appendix B, Section 2

These are the General Principles that the Linkage Commission drew up prior to determining its Resolutions to the 2020 General Assembly

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. The Linkage Commission would point to the overarching theme in the creation of APP posts in that the management of such individuals lies with the kirk session. This management responsibility cannot be delegated to others.
2. However, it is possible to delegate in certain situations where there is a plurality of APP posts in a congregation, a supervisory role to one of the posts.
3. Where a kirk session believes such a need exists, this would be a new post with some requirement for a Job Evaluation and no individual should be automatically regraded to such a post since it would be regarded as being a promotion. [The advice of Peninsula should be sought on this matter].
4. No post should be placed on a Band C where this would place an individual on a higher salary than the lead minister in THAT congregation. This is in line with Appendix 4 of the General Board Report to 2010 General Assembly which states that the figure should be “no higher than 95% of current minister’s stipend”.
5. Consideration needs to be given to the fact that while our deaconesses and indeed Licentiates require to have theological training there is no such requirement for many of those holding APP posts who need not in fact be members of PCI Again, some of these matters are beyond the remit of the Linkage Commission.
6. Where there is a perceived need to reward a few of these APP posts for performing a supervisory role, does this need to be addressed by the creation of a new BAND C or can it be addressed by the payment of a ‘Responsibility Allowance’ which would be at the discretion of a kirk session and therefore not require a Job Evaluation or permission from the Commission?

OPTIONS

1. **Do Nothing.** This will not address a sense of injustice on the part of a small number of congregations who feel they wish to reward their APP for the additional supervisory nature of their post.
2. **Introduction of a RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE.** This would be an allowance paid by the agreement of a kirk session in recognition of the few situations which merit the payment of such an allowance. Such Responsibility Allowances to be restricted to a figure of 5.5% of Basic Ministerial Minimum. This would address the matter of recognition of task without the need to create a new Band C which, as already stated, may have few needing it.

3. **A new BAND C.** The pros and cons have already been stated above for such a Band but it is felt that this is not the best way forward at this time.

A resolution based on the above principles and on option 2 is appended.

Appendix B, section 3

For ease of reference, this was the Paper presented to the 2019 General Assembly Paper on Adding a Band C Salary Scale to the Recommended Salary Scales for Additional Pastoral Personnel.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to consider adding a new Band C Salary Scale to the Linkage Commission's Recommended Salary Scales for Additional Pastoral Personnel (APP).

Current Situation

- (a) Whenever a kirk session wishes to create a new APP post, it is required to follow the guidelines produced by the Linkage Commission and to select an appropriate salary from the Recommended Salary Scales contained within the guidelines.
- (b) The current guidelines and salary scales were produced in 2011 to meet the needs of congregations at that time. The Recommended Salary Scales were originally based on the JNC Youth and Community Work Scale (2009) for the United Kingdom and have been updated annually in line with increases to the basic ministerial minimum. There are two bands.
- (c) The Band A Scale has six points: £18,685; £19,355; £20,031; £20,703; £21,558; £22,226 (€28,248; €29,260; €30,281; €31,298; €32,591; €33,599). These are the salary points for 2019 and are for 37.5 hours per week.
- (d) The qualifications for a Band A post are as follows: 'Obtained or working towards OCN level 2&3 qualifications, PCI Youth/Children's Ministry Course or similar qualification in the relevant field. Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent.'
- (e) The level of responsibility for a Band A post is as follows: 'Mostly direct work with children, young people or adults under close regular supervision; low management responsibility for people or projects.'
- (f) The Band B Scale has five points: £23,306; £24,363; £25,455; £26,582; £27,352 (€35,233; €36,831; €38,480; €40,184; €41,347). Once again, these are the salary points for 2019 and are for 37.5 hours per week.
- (g) The qualifications for a Band B post are as follows: 'Appropriate recognition of attainment or working towards undergraduate

or postgraduate theological study or professional qualifications (including Youth & Community, teaching qualification or other related professional qualifications such as counselling or social work). Where this level of qualification is not held, demonstrated experience in this field of activity may be deemed equivalent.'

- (h) The level of responsibility for a Band B post is as follows: 'General responsibility for specific areas of programme and ministry oversight; graduating to less closely supervised responsibility for programmes, strategy, volunteers or leaders.'

Notice that the Band B level of responsibility is 'general responsibility for specific areas of programme and ministry oversight' and 'less closely supervised responsibility for ... volunteers or leaders.'

Emerging Situation

Recent conversations with some APPs and kirk sessions have suggested to the Panel that there may be a need for a higher Band C Salary Scale.

The higher scale would be for those posts which involve the management of other employees (in distinction to Band B posts where the post holder has responsibility for volunteers or leaders) or which involve greater responsibility or expertise than is required for Band B posts. It would also provide a pathway for career progression for those APPs who see youth work, for instance, as a long-term career choice.

For instance, in the case of one congregation, the kirk session wishes to employ someone to manage its other staff. Since the other staff are already on the Band B Scale, it may be appropriate for their manager to be on a higher pay scale to reflect this person's management position.

The Panel can also foresee that a kirk session with, for instance, a large children's and youth ministry may wish to employ someone to oversee both areas of ministry and to advise the kirk session on the 'big picture' (in distinction to Band B posts where the post holder has responsibility for specific areas of oversight). The minimum criteria for such a responsible position would be higher than for a Band B post to reflect that the person appointed is an expert in the field who is able to contribute to the formation of policy and to plan strategies and programmes on behalf of the session.

A proposed Band C Scale is as follows: £27,030; £27,540; £28,050; £28,560; £29,070; £29,580 (€40,905; €41,663; €42,420; €43,178; €43,935; €44,693).

Points for Consideration

The proposal raises a number of points for consideration including the following:

APPs on Band C will receive a salary which is higher than the basic ministerial minimum (BMM) which is currently £26,695 and €39,953. While it may be possible to set down a principle that no one appointed to a Band C post should receive a salary greater

than the minister's stipend, it still introduces the possibility of an APP on Band C being paid significantly more than an associate minister in the same congregation or a minister in a neighbouring congregation who is on BMM. This may be deemed unacceptable to the Church, given the status ministers have in the Church as well as the training they must undergo before ordination and the duties they perform.

However, it should also be noted that it is already the case that APPs on Band B Point 5 in the UK and on Band B Points 4 and 5 in the ROI are receiving a salary which is higher than BMM.

It should also be noted that there is a difficulty comparing the remuneration paid to ministers and APPs, given that the minister is able to live in a manse without paying rent or rates and a stipend is not the same as a salary. An associate minister, however, does not live in a manse.

The proposed Band C Scale is also significantly higher than the remuneration paid to deaconesses and Irish Mission workers who may well match such APPs in terms of qualifications, experience, expertise and the work they do. Again consideration should be given as to whether it is acceptable that some APPs could receive a higher salary than these other workers.

If the Church is unwilling to introduce a higher salary scale, it may be more acceptable to allow kirk sessions to award a 'management bonus' to those APPs in a management role. Therefore a manager who is overseeing the work of two APPs on Band B Point 5 would receive a salary of Band B Point 5 plus a bonus to differentiate the manager's role from the other staff. However, even in this case, the manager's salary will still be higher than BMM.

Another point for consideration is that those appointed to a Band C post may have significant influence over a congregation's ministry without themselves being ordained or without having subscribed to the church's Subordinate Standards. However, this is already the case with many APPs. A possible solution may be to introduce an accreditation process similar to the one for accredited preachers.

Despite the points raised above, the Church may still take the view that for some APP posts, there needs to be a salary which is commensurate with the qualifications and experience required.

APPENDIX C

PARISH BOUNDS PANEL

Schedule of recommended new and revised parish bounds

PRESBYTERY OF DUBLIN & MUNSTER

Corboy 2020

All of Co. Longford; Co. Roscommon south of, and including, Roosky, Elphin, Castlereagh and Ballymoe.

Donabate 2020

From Meath/Dublin boundary at the coast following county boundary inland to Fieldstown (O 110504), then follow Broad Meadow River to M1 motorway, then along northern shore of Malahide Estuary to the coast.

Drogheda 2020

Dunany Point via Drumcar passing south of Ardee to Drumconrath then to Beauparc, then Kilmessan, then east to Meath/Dublin boundary at Borranstown (O 039568), and following county boundary to the coast.

Howth and Malahide 2020

Along southern shore of Malahide Estuary to meet the M1 motorway, then follow M1 motorway north to Broad Meadow River, then follow river to Dublin/Meath boundary at Fieldstown (O 110504), then follow county boundary to Borranstown (O 039568), then west to Kilmessan, then by line to meet M3 motorway near Dunshaughlin at N 955529, then by M3 motorway to meet M50 motorway at Blanchardstown, then by line through Finglas to Santry, then by Coolock Lane to Coolock, Edenmore Road to Raheny, Howth Road to the shore.

Lucan 2020

From River Liffey at Islandbridge along South Circular Road to Emmet Road, then to Tyrconnell Road, then Naas Road to Dublin/Kildare boundary near Steeles town (N 986251), then along county boundary north to Grand Canal (N 972295), then by line to Straffan, then by line to Royal Canal west of Blakestown at N 973371, then by line to M3 motorway at M3 Parkway (O 018440), then by M3 Motorway to M50 at Blanchardstown, then by M 50 to Castleknock, then through Pheonix Park to River Liffey and Islandbridge.

Maynooth 2020

From M3 motorway at M3 Parkway (O 018440), then north along M3 motorway to point near Dunshaughlin at N 955529, then by line to Killmessan, then by line to Trim, then by line to Meath/Westmeath boundary on at N 649545, then south along County Meath boundary to meet Kildare/Offaly boundary, then south along country boundary to Meath/Westmeath boundary to meet Meath/Offaly boundary, then southwest to meet Meath/Kildare boiuyndary to Grand Canal south-east of Edenderry at N 659313, then by line to Straffan, then by line to Royal Canal west of Blakestown at N 973371, then by line to M3 motorway at M3 Parkway (O 018440).

Naas 2020

From Dublin/Kildare boundary near Steelestown (N 986251), then south along Kildare county boundary Kildare/Wicklow boundary to Poulaphouca (N 949087), then by line to Kilcullen, then by road (R413) to meet M7 at N 787130, then along M7 to Kildare/Laois boundary at N 620074, then along county boundary north to Grand Canal south-east of Edenderry at N 659313, then by line to Straffan, then by line to Dublin/Kildare boundary at Grand Canal at N 972295, then south along county boundary to Steelestown (N 986251).

PRESBYTERY OF MONAGHAN**First Bailieborough 2020**

From point at Crossreagh on L3510 between Kilmount and Grousehall at H 576010 by line to point on L3507 near southern shore of Knockbride Lough at H 658049. Then by road east along L3507 to meet R162 in Main Street in Shercock (H 722057), then south-east along R162 to Cavan/Monaghan county boundary at Drumbracken (H 765000), then south-west along minor road to crossroads at Corlea (N 748991), continuing on to meet R165 at Cornaman (N 736984), along R165 to meet L3512 at N 710987, north along L3512 to minor road at N 710990, along minor road through Annalough to meet R178 at Lear (N 681994) and by line to point at Crossreagh on L3510 between Kilmount and Grousehall at H 576010.

Trinity, Bailieborough 2020

From point on R178 at Lear (N 681994) along minor road through Annalough to meet L3512 at N 710990, south along L3512 to meet R165 at N 710987, then along R165 to Cornaman (N 736984), along minor road to crossroads at Corlea (N 748991), then continuing north-east to 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), to Crossreagh on L3510 between Kilmount and Grousehall at H 576010 to point on R178 at Lear (N 681994).

Ballina and Killala 2020

All Co. Mayo and Co. Sligo, west of a line from Portavade through Tobercurry to Charlestown.

Ballyalbany 2020

From road on Fermanagh/Monaghan country boundary at Stramackilroy (H 525405) by road to Scotstown crossroads (H 608369). Then by line to junction of Derry Road and Collshannagh Road on R135 at H 675345), to crossroads of R213 with L1402 and L1403 (H 732355), to point on N12 at Killyneill (H 723359) and then by road to Billis National School. By line, west to Fermanagh/Monaghan county boundary at Bragan (H 558437). South along county boundary to road at Stramackilroy (H 525405).

First Ballybay 2020

From Tullycorbet Cross Roads (H 719260) south to meet R184 at H 723249 and then south along R184 to meet R162. Along R162 through Ballybay to minor road at Drumhillagh (H 711190). By road to crossroads near Bowelk House (H 699181), to crossroads on R190 near Cumry Lodge (H 695189), by straight line to Enagh at H 656214 then by road to Dundrannan Crossroads at H 659224, west along R183 to crossroads at Aghadrumkeen, (H 630225), north by road to meet R189 at H 613287. Along R189 to Three Mile House at junction of R189 and L2400. By line to Tanderagebrack on R162 (H 689294). Then by R162 road south to Dunraymond crossroads (H 700250), east via L7310 to Tullycorbet Cross Roads (H 719260).

Second Ballybay 2020

From Tullycorbet Crossroads (H 719260) by road to Cornanagh Crossroads (H 735251), then on to Scotch Corner on R184 at H 739262, to Dunfelimy Crossroads (H 771243) to McNally's Crossroads (H 755228), south-east along L3430 through Doohamlat onto L3212 onto L7202 to Dromgarra on R181 (H 791163). Along R181 to meet R180 at H 777135 near Lough Egish. Then by line to point on road east of Corlea Church at H 723114, and to Aghnamullen Crossroads (H 680166). By road north-east to meet R162 at Drumhillagh (H 711190), then north along R162 through Ballybay to meet R184 and along R184 to Tullycorbet Crossroads (H 719260).

Ballyhobridge 2020

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 passing Lisnalee 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 Trehoo. By line west to point on

N54 south of Cloverhill at H 413147, then by line to point 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 2020

From junction of N4 and N17 at Collooney south along N17 to junction with N5, along N5 to Mayo/Roscommon boundary, then south along County Roscommon boundary to Ballymote, then by line through, but excluding, Castlereagh, Elphin and 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 2020

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, 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.

First Castleblayney 2020

From point on road north-west of Annayalla at H 781256 south-east through Annayalla to corner at Annayalla National School, then north-east along L3501 to crossroads near Carrickaslane Lough, then south to meet R181 at Killygola (H 826220). South along R181 through Castleblayney via Market Square, Henry Street, Church Street, Beech Corner and Dublin Road to meet N53 and then N2 roundabout. By line to Drumavaddy Crossroads at H 820156 to Dromgarra on R181 (H 791163). By road on L7202 onto L3212 through Doohamlet onto L3430 to McNally's Crossroads (H 755228), north-east through Dunfelimy Crossroads to point on road north-west of Annayalla at H 781256.

Cavan 2020

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 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 Cavan/Monaghan/Fermanagh county boundary at H 445184. Along Cavan/Fermanagh county boundary where it meets the N3 at H 339194.

Clones 2020

From point on A34 between Clones and Newtownbutler at H 463252. Then by line to south-east to Munilly Bridge (H 486238). By road south of Munilly House to junction with R212. South along R212 to road junction south of Cumber at H 500231. By line to Annalore at bridge over River Finn at H 538256. By line to junction of B36 and B143 at Derrynawilt crossroads. By line to point on A34 between Clones and Newtownbutler at H 463252.

Clontibret 2020

From point north of Castleshane on R213 at Lismennan (H 732346), south-west by road to junction at Corrawillin (H 713325). Then west by road to join N2, by line south-west to Tanderageebrack on R162 (H 689294). Then by road south to Dunraymond crossroads (H 700250), east via L7310 to Carnanagh crossroads (H 735251), north to Scotch Corner (H 739262), south-east to Lakelands crossroads (H 771243), north-east to point on road north-west of Annayalla at H 781256, by road south-east long to Annayalla at H 786249 to north-east to corner beside Tassan Lake (H 797262), northwest to Tassan Corner (H 791265) northeast to Lemgare (H 801280). Then by line to Monaghan/Tyrone county boundary at Crossbane (H 804286), along county boundary to meet R214 at Drumgolat (H 770329), then along R214 to Greenmount House Corner and by line to point north of Castleshane on R213 Lismennan (H 732346).

Cootehill 2020

From Dawson Monument at H 610178, by line south-east across Inner Lough to Monaghan/Cavan county boundary at H 622167, then along county boundary to northernmost point on Beraghy Lough at H 664127, then by line to bridge at Maudabawn beside Chapel (H 641095). By road west to meet R191 at Drumgoon (H 628100), then along R191 to junction with minor road at H 624105. By road west to crossroads at Tonymacgilduff (H 605104), then by line to point on R165 west of Drumole at H 527081 and by line to Ballynallon Bridge (H 501116). 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

Corraneary 2020

By line from bridge on R191 at Kilnacrew (H 621060), to bridge at Maudabawn beside Chapel (H 641095), to meet Monaghan/Cavan county boundary at northernmost point on Beraghy Lough at

H 664127. Then south along county boundary to meet R162 at H 699084. Then by road along R162 to meet L3507 in Main Street in Shercock (H 722057), west along L3507 to point near southern shore of Knockbride Lough at H 658049. Then by line to point at Crossreagh on L3510 between Kilmount and Grousehall at H 576010, to bridge on R191 at Kilnacrew (H 621060).

Corvally 2020

From Monaghan/Cavan county boundary on R162 at H 699084 by line to point on road east of Corlea Church at H 723114 to meet R180 near Lough Egish at H 777135. Then by road along R181 to Dromgarra (H 791163) and by line to Drumavaddy Crossroads at H 820156, then to Armagh/Monaghan county boundary near Clarbane Bridge at H 876168. South along country boundary to southernmost point on Fane River and then along Fane River to L3119 at Magoney Bridge (H 908097). By line to meet N2 at Roe's Cross (N 887988), to R162 at Drumbracken (H 762004). Along R162 to Monaghan/Cavan county boundary on R162 at H 699084.

Drum 2020

From eastern tip of Annaghmakerig Lough at H 589206, by line to crossroads east of Scotshouse at H 501194, turning south and passing Lisnalee 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 Trehoo. Along R212 south-west to Brockly at H 472140, then south-east Ballyallon Bridge (H 501116), 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 Annaghmakerig Lough at H 589206.

Drumkeen 2020

From eastern tip of Annaghmakerig 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 to junction at Corramegan H 623252, west to junction at Drumgarly (H 595249). By line to eastern tip of Annaghmakerig Lough at H 589206.

Drumkeeran 2020

From Roscommon/Leitrim county boundary north of Roosky on Lough Bofin at N 050879 along country boundary northwards to Leitrim/Roscommon county boundary at G 949029 south of Leitrim

town. By line due east to point on R203 south-east of Carrigallen Church at H 245029, to Cavan/Leitrim county boundary at southern end of Rockfield Lough at H 274032 to Killeshandra to Aughnacore Road at H 311052, to point on eastern shore of Lough Atrain at H 365052, to junction of R198 and R154 at Crossdoney. South-east along R154 to road junction north-west of Kilnaleck at N 439914. By line to Cavan/Westmeath county boundary at south-west tip of Lough Sheelin. By county boundary to point where counties Cavan, Leitrim and Longford, and then by Leitrim county boundary to point north of Roosky on Lough Bofin at N050879.

Dundalk 2020

From Dunany Point by line via Drumcar passing south of Ardee to junction on R165 in Drumcondra at St Peter and Paul's Church (N 884900) to N2 at Roe's Cross (N 887988), to point at Fane River on L3119 at Magoney Bridge (H 908097). Then along Fane River to meet Armagh/Monaghan county boundary, along county boundary to where Armagh, Monaghan and Louth counties meet, along Armagh/Louth county boundary to the sea north of Omeath, and by the coast to Dunany Point.

Ervey 2020

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. By road along R191 to road junction at Corlat (N 688883). 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).

Frankford 2020

From point on R181 at Killygola (H 826220) south along R181 through Castleblayney via Market Square, Henry Street, Church Street, Beech Corner and Dublin Road to meet N53 and then N2 roundabout. By line to Drumavaddy Crossroads at H 820156, then to Armagh/Monaghan county boundary near Clarebane Bridge at H 876168. North along county boundary to bridge at Mullaghduff (H 884210). By road to crossroads to north-east of Muckno Mill Lough at H 849227. By line to point on R181 at Killygola (H 826220).

Glennan 2020

From Billis National School, west to Fermanagh/Monaghan county boundary at Bragan (H 558437). Then by line to R186 at H 606453 west of Corryarbeg, by road north-east passing Corryarbeg to meet L1135, east along L1135 then L5161 to meet N2. North on N2, turning east at H 672461, then by road through Mullan to Burn's Bridge on Blackwater River at Tyrone/Monaghan county boundary at H 711473. South along county boundary to point east of Glaslough

at H 744409, then by line Bellanaman at H 728400 and by road to Faulkland Bridge on R185 at H 703378, then by road to Billis National School.

Kells 2020

From junction on R165 in Drumcondra at St Peter and Paul's Church (N 884900) by line to Beauparc, then Kilmessan, then Trim, then to Meath/Westmeath county boundary at N 649545. North along Meath/Westmeath county boundary to Lough Sheelin. East along Meath/Cavan county boundary to River Blackwater near Ballydurrow at N 642807, by line to junction of R194 with L3009 north-west of Mullagh, (N 674860), to road junction on R191 at Corlat (N 688883), to point on R164 at Glebe (N 738868), to junction on R165 in Drumcondra at St Peter and Paul's Church (N 884900).

Killeshandra 2020

From point on Roscommon/Leitrim country 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 Maneen 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.

Kilmount 2020

From bridge at Maudabawn beside Chapel (H 641095) by road west to meet R191 at Drumgoon (H 628100), then along R191 to junction with minor road at H 624105. By road west to crossroads at Tonymacgilduff (H 605104), then by line to point on R165 west of Drumole at H 527081, to southernmost junction of N3 and R165 south of Stradone at H 506021, to Crossreagh on L3510 between Kilmount and Grousehall at H 576010, to bridge on R191 at Kilnacrew (H 621060), to bridge at Maudabawn beside Chapel (H 641095).

Middletown 2020

From Armagh/Monaghan county boundary on Blackwater River at H 745409 by line east to point on Doogary Road at H 772405, then by road south to meet A3 at Doogary Crossroads (H 781390), along A3 to Ballymargy Crossroads (H 801389), south-east along Hanslough Road passing Portnelligan and Skerries to boundary and becoming L1403, continuing as such to crossroads on R213 with L1402 at H 732355. By line to point on N2 at Killyneill (H 723359) and then by road to meet R185 at H 704374. By road along R185 to junction at Fernhill

(H 707387), along minor roads, passing south of Killyboley Lough, to Bellanaman at H 728400. Then by line to Armagh/Monaghan county boundary on Blackwater River at H 745409.

First Monaghan 2020

From Three Mile House at junction of R189 and L2400 by line north to meet N54 between Smithborough and Monaghan at H 621326. By road west to crossroads on R187 at Killydonnelly (H 607326), by road north to crossroads between Selloo and Killygrallen at Tullaghan (H 605345), by road west to Selloo on L2032 at H 570342, by road to Monaghan/Fermanagh county boundary at H 560340 on road between Selloo and Rosslea. North along county boundary to road at Stramackilroy (H 525405). Then by road to Scotstown crossroads (H 608369). Then by line to junction of Derry Road and Coolshannagh Road on R135 at H 675345, to crossroads of R213 with L1402 and L1403 (H 732355) and by road south on R213 to road at Lismennan (H 732346), then south-west by road to junction at Corrawillin (H 713325). Then west by road to join N2, by line south-west to Tanderageeback on R162 (H 689294) and by line to Three Mile House at junction of R189 and L2400.

Newbliss 2020

From Annalore at bridge over River Finn at H 538256, by line to point on road between Lissarley and Killykespin at H 584273, then by road to R189 at H 602275, south along R189 to crossroads east of Amagose Lough at H 594253 then turning south to junction at Drumgarly (H 595249). By line to eastern tip of Annaghmakerig Lough at H 589206, then by line to crossroads east of Scotshouse at H 501194. By road to meet R212 at H 495196, then north along R212 to road junction south of Cumber at H 500231. By line to Annalore at bridge over River Finn at H 538256.

Rockcorry 2020

From Dawson Monument at H 610178 by road to Corglass H 638212, then by line east to Enagh at H 656214, by line to crossroads on R190 near Cumry Lodge (H 695189), then by road to crossroads near Bowelk House (H 699181), to Aghnamullen Crossroads (H 680166). By line to point on road east of Corlea Church at H 723114 to Monaghan/Cavan county boundary on R162 at H 699084. Then along county boundary to northernmost point on Beraghy Lough (H 664127). By county boundary to point south-east of Inner Lough at H 622167 and by line north-west across Inner Lough to Dawson Monument at H 610178.

Sligo 2020

From Sligo/Leitrim boundary at coast, by line to Kinlough, then along south shore of Lough Melvin to meet Leitrim/Fermanagh boundary at G 937508, then along County Leitrim boundary to where it meets

County Cavan at H 035394, then by line to Dowra, to junction of N4 and N17 at Collooney south along N17 to Tobbercurry, then north by line to Portavade, then along coast to Sligo/Leitrim boundary.

Smithborough 2020

From point on road between Lissarley and Killykespin at H 584273 by line to Monaghan/Fermanagh country boundary on R187 at H 555319 by line to Eshywulligan crossroads at H 469383, by line to Monaghan/Fermanagh county boundary at H 560340 on road between Rosslea and Selloo, by road to Selloo on L2032 at H 570342, by road east to crossroads between Selloo and Killygrallen at Tullaghan (H 605345), by road south to crossroads on R187 at Killydonnelly (H 607326), by road to meet N54 between Smithborough and Monaghan at H 621326. Then by line south to Three Mile House at junction of R189 and L2400, south-west along R189 to junction at H 602275, then by road to point on road between Lissarley and Killykespin at H 584273.

Stonebridge 2020

From junction of B36 and B143 at Derrynawilt crossroads (H 482320) by line to Annalore at bridge over River Finn at H 538256, by line to point on road between Lissarley and Killykespin at H 584273. By line to Monaghan/Fermanagh country boundary on R187 at H 555319 and then by line to Eshywulligan crossroads at H 469383. By road to junction of B36 and B143 at Derrynawilt crossroads.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Further Manse Guidelines on Adaptations as set out in Appendix A be noted.
2. That new and revised parish bounds, as set out in Appendix C, be approved.
3. *That a Responsibility Allowance be introduced for those Additional Pastoral Personnel posts where a kirk session agrees there is a need to recognise the additional supervisory nature of a particular post. Such Responsibility Allowance to be restricted to a figure of up to 5.5% of Basic Ministerial Minimum.**
4. *That the General Assembly instruct the General Council to set up a Task Group, which will report back to the 2021 General Assembly with the remit to examine the relativity of salaries, paid to Additional Pastoral Personnel, Deaconesses and Irish Mission Workers.**
5. That the Report of the Linkage Commission be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: REV NORMAN CAMERON

Secretary: THE CLERK

1. The Judicial Commission has met on four occasions since the last meeting of the General Assembly in June 2019.
2. At its meeting on 14 October 2019, the Judicial Commission considered two separate, but closely related, Notices of Appeal against a Finding of a Commission of the Dublin & Munster Presbytery. The outcome of the Judicial Commission's deliberations can be found in Appendix 1 of the Commission's Confidential Reports.
3. At its meeting on 14 October 2019, the Commission also considered a Notice of Appeal lodged against a decision of a Commission of the Presbytery of Down. The person lodging the Notice of Appeal had also indicated that he intended to pursue action through the civil courts. The Judicial Commission resolved not to consider the Notice of Appeal as it does not consider such matters until all related proceedings in the civil courts have come to an end, or a clear and final decision has been taken not to pursue proceedings in the civil courts.
4. The Judicial Commission met on 2 December 2019 to consider the Notice of Appeal lodged against a decision of a Commission of the Presbytery of Down, the person lodging the Notice of Appeal having indicated in writing that he was no longer pursuing proceedings in the civil courts nor did he intend to in the future. The outcome of the Judicial Commission's deliberations can be found in Appendix 2 of the Commission's Confidential Reports.
5. At its meeting on 2 December 2019, the Commission also considered a Notice of Appeal lodged against a decision of a Commission of the Presbytery of Carrickfergus. The papers lodged were read and consideration was given to the necessary requirements for an appeal to be heard, namely:
 - (a) The appeal has been lodged within 10 days (Code Par 164(1))
 - (b) The person lodging the Notice of Appeal must have "the right of appeal" (Par 163(2))
 - (c) The stated grounds of appeal are "adequate and appropriate to be heard" (Par 165(1))Following discussion, the Commission agreed that the requirements for the appeal to be heard had been met and agreed to hear the parties on 17 January 2020.
6. The Judicial Commission met on 17 January 2020 and considered four separate, but closely related, Notices of Appeal which had been lodged against a decision of the Presbytery of Dublin & Munster. Consideration was given to the necessary requirements for an appeal to be heard (see

paragraph 5 above). Following discussion, the Commission agreed that the requirements for the appeal to be heard had been met and agreed to hear the parties in these four separate, but closely related, appeals simultaneously on 7 February 2020.

7. On 17 January 2020, the Commission also heard the appeal lodged against a decision of a Commission of the Presbytery of Carrickfergus, to which it had given preliminary consideration on 2 December 2019. The Judicial Commission's Finding can be found in Appendix 3 of the Commission's Confidential Reports.
8. The Judicial Commission met on 7 February 2020 to hear the four separate, but closely related, appeals lodged against decisions of the Presbytery of Dublin & Munster, to which it had given preliminary consideration on 17 January 2020. The Judicial Commission's Finding can be found in Appendix 4 of the Commission's Confidential Reports.

CODE REPUBLISHING PANEL

9. The Code Republishing Panel has met on sixteen occasions since the 2019 General Assembly, but has not been able to meet since 10 March 2020. As a result, though the Panel reported to the Judicial Commission on its work in October 2019, it has not been able to report in detail on the work it has done since.
10. Last year the Panel presented the Assembly with an early draft of the first two proposed chapters for a new Code, viz.: *General Principles and The Congregation*. The latter included sections on 'The Kirk Session' and 'The Congregational Committee'.
11. Since then, work has entailed minor revision of those first two draft chapters, along with the production of drafts of three further chapters on 'The Minister', 'Office Holders other than Ministers' and 'The Presbytery'.
12. The draft chapter on 'The Minister' is broken down into sections on:
 - (a) Vocation of the Minister
 - (b) Training for Ministry
 - (c) Congregational Ministry
 - (d) Home Mission
 - (e) Special Work
 - (f) Associate Ministers
 - (g) Licentiates
 - (h) Ordained Assistant to the Moderator of the General Assembly
 - (i) Divorce and Re-marriage of a Minister
 - (j) Retirement, Resignation and Incapacity of Ministers

13. The draft chapter on ‘Office Holders other than Ministers’ is broken down into sections on:
 - (a) General
 - (b) Global Mission Workers
 - (c) Irish Mission Workers
 - (d) Deaconesses
 - (e) Auxiliary Ministers
14. The draft chapter on ‘The Presbytery’ is broken down into sections on:
 - (a) Purpose of Presbytery
 - (b) Membership of Presbytery
 - (c) Meetings of Presbytery
 - (d) Duties of Presbytery
 - (e) Administrative Role of Presbytery
 - (f) Vacancies in Congregations
 - (g) Vacancy for Associate Minister
 - (h) Nominations to Ministry
 - (i) Presbytery Services
 - (j) Ministers without charge and Licentiates
15. All the work done so far is subject to further revision as progress is made and a clearer picture is formed of the overall structure of the new Code.
16. Work has begun on a draft chapter on ‘The General Assembly’ (including councils etc), to be followed by work on a draft chapter on ‘Church Courts’ – their jurisdiction and conduct of business.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Judicial Commission be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

SPECIAL JUDICIAL COMMISSION

Convener: Rev NAL CAMERON

Secretary: THE CLERK

1. It was not necessary for the Special Commission to meet.

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Special Commission be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

COMMISSION ON APPLICATIONS

Convener: THE CLERK

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

RESOLUTION

1. That the Report of the Commission on Applications be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND

Convener: Very Rev Dr FRANK SELLAR

Secretary: Rev DAVID BRUCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The report this year reflects work done during 2019, including plans made for 2020/21, before the COVID-19 crisis. Necessary adjustments to schedules and delivery of projects will apply as the implications of the spread of the coronavirus become evident over time. Consequently, most of the strategic decisions and plans described in this report are necessarily provisional for 2020/21.
2. The Council gives thanks to God for his presence and guidance in the delivery of the six components of the CMI remit:
 - (a) Developing PCI's strategic priorities in all-age mission in Ireland, and planning initiatives at General Assembly 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.
3. During the year, a process of re-evaluating the CMI committee and panel structure introduced in 2015 was commenced. Proposals in this regard have been written up for submission to the General Assembly, but the Council has agreed to delay the request for these changes to be implemented for one year until the return of the Council Secretary from his year as Moderator of the General Assembly to his regular duties.
4. During the incoming year, it has been agreed that Rev Jim Stothers will assume the responsibilities of the Council Secretary pertaining to Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee and the Home Mission, Irish Mission and Deaconess Committee. This will include the processing of any Home Mission vacancies and CMI's liaison with the Linkage Commission. It has further been agreed that Rev Robert Bell will assume the responsibilities of the Council Secretary

pertaining to the Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy Committee and the Healthcare, Prisons and Forces Chaplaincy Committee. This will include the processing of any chaplaincy vacancies, and CMI's liaison with public bodies where chaplaincy provision is made.

HOME MISSION, IRISH MISSION AND DEACONESS COMMITTEE

Home Mission

5. 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 2020.

MINISTER	CHARGE
HOME MISSION	
Rev Colin Anderson	(Frankford, Castleblayney), Corvalley
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 David Conkey*	Enniscorthy and Wexford
Rev Richie Cronin*	Trinity Cork and Aghada
Rev Molly Deatherage*	Ballina, Killala, Ballymote
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 William Hayes*	Tullamore and Mountmellick

MINISTER	CHARGE
Rev Dr Keith McCrory*	Maynooth
Rev Gary McDowell*	Greystones
Rev Roger McElnea	(Aughnacloy) and Ballymagrane
Rev Jean Mackarel*	Drumkeeran, Killeshandra, Cavan and Bellasis
Rev Colin McKibbin	(Convoy, Carnone, Donoughmore) and Alt
Rev Alan McQuade	(First Monaghan) and Smithborough
Rev Katherine P. Meyer*	Sandymount (Alternating Scheme)
Rev Alan Moore	(Cavanaleck) and Aughtentaine
Rev Susan Moore	(Kerrykeel, Milford) and Rathmullan
Rev William Montgomery*	Fermoy with Cahir
Rev John O'Donnell*	First Bailieborough, Corranery, (Trinity Bailieborough) and Ervey
Rev Jonathan Porter*	Louth County Hospital
Rev Mark Proctor*	Naas (pt) 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
Rev Andrew Watson*	Carrigart and Dunfanaghy (part-time)
Vacant	Kells (Stated Supply)
Vacant	Christ Church, Limerick (Alternating Scheme)
Vacant	Clones, Stonebridge, Ballyhobridge and Newbliss (part-time)
Vacant	Inch
Vacant	Kilkenny

MINISTER	CHARGE
Vacant	(Waterside) and Fahan
Vacant	Moville, Greenbank, Carndonagh and Malin
URBAN MISSION	
Vacant	Belvoir
Rev Rodney Cameron*	St Columba'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

Braniel & Taughmonagh

6. Following representations by the Methodist Church in Ireland, it is proposed that Braniel Church, currently governed jointly by the PCI and MCI under the terms of an arrangement put in place in 1958, become a congregation of the Methodist Church in Ireland. It is similarly proposed that Taughmonagh Church, currently jointly governed under rules introduced in tandem with those pertaining in Braniel, become a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Resolutions to enable this are appended.

Home Mission Review Implementation Task Group

7. (a) The Home Mission Review Implementation Task Group, as agreed by the General Assembly in 2019, has continued its work for a further year.
- (b) A half-day conference for Home Mission Ministers was held in Belfast on Friday 21 February 2020. This event was called to update ministers on progress, and to test some aspects of the implementation of the review with those who may be most obviously impacted by it. Discussion centered on the following areas:
- (c) Congregational health – how can this be determined? What arbiters of health should be used in determining which of the three pathways a Home Mission congregation should embark upon? Discussion included the following:
- (i) Trends in Sunday attendance over a number of years

- (ii) Trends in financial giving over a number of years
 - (iii) Proportions of younger people with which the congregation engages
 - (iv) The gap between the stated number on the communion roll and the number recorded as attending communion at least once per year.
- (d) In these reflections with ministers at the day conference, it became very apparent that hard statistical data, while important, needs to be set alongside “soft” or narrative data which tells the story of the congregation’s life, history and vision for the future.
- (e) Which arbiters for remaining within the scheme, or exiting from it, ought to be applied? Should the default position be that congregations in a linkage with a congregation not in the scheme should cease to be part of the scheme going forward?
- (f) Evidently, the process of assessing the pathways for over 70 congregations currently in the scheme is going to take some time. The “triggers” for the commencement of the process were discussed and noted, and include:
- (i) presbytery consultations
 - (ii) tenure reviews
 - (iii) resignations or retirement of ministers leading to requests for leave to call
 - (iv) a specific request by a kirk session
 - (v) a specific request by a presbytery
- (g) Other matters discussed included:
- (i) The possible impact of call arrangements for ministers, should a change of status of a congregation be implemented.
 - (ii) The possible impact on grants provision for congregations within the Home Mission, which cease to be part of it.
 - (iii) The nature of accompaniment of congregations on their pathway – who will lead this and how will it be monitored and evaluated?
 - (iv) The possible impact on property in Home Mission congregations – including repairs and maintenance, acquisitions and disposals.
- (h) The work of the Task Group continues, and a schedule of engagement with congregations from 2020 to 2025 is being drafted.

IRISH MISSION WORKER AND DEACONESS PANEL

8. The Panel provides supervision and support for deaconesses and Irish Mission workers, including the management of their annual conference and retreat, adjustments to the handbook, conduct of three-yearly reviews, granting of sabbatical leave and in-service training and other matters regarding their deployment.
9. The Panel records its thanks to Helen Johnston, Mission Support Officer (Member Care), for her work in support of Irish Mission workers and deaconesses.
10. Following advertisement, three applications for the role of deaconess have been received during the year.
11. The Panel reports that applications from congregations for the services of a deaconess continue to be received.

Directory of Irish mission workers and the location of their service (March 2020)

NAME	LOCATION
David Boyd	Adelaide Road, Dublin
Tom Dowling	Kilkenny
Keith Preston	International Meeting Point, Belfast
Philip Whelton	Arklow
William Workman	Athy & Carlow

Directory of deaconesses and the location of their service (March 2020)

NAME	LOCATION
Sonya Anderson	Shore Street, Donaghadee
Eileen Black	South Belfast Friendship House and Great Victoria Street
Rachel Cubitt	Whiteabbey
Eleanor Drysdale	Wellington, Ballymena
Joanne Dunlop	Chaplaincy Team – Antrim and Craigavon Hospitals
Heidi England	Railway Street (Call issued. Commissioning postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic.)
Sharon Heron	International Meeting Point, Belfast

Robert 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
Margaret Robertson	Elmwood, Lisburn
Rosemary Spiers	Greenwell Street, Newtownards

12. The Council marked the retirements of Evelyn White and Phyllis Linton on 30 June 2019, and the resignation from the diaconate of Amy Magee from 15 January 2020.

IAN CARTON, Convener

INTERNATIONAL MEETING POINT MANAGEMENT PANEL

13. The Management Panel now combines representatives from CMI, South Belfast Presbytery, North Belfast Presbytery and the volunteers who work in support of the two Belfast projects through the year.
14. During the year, the second IMP centre was opened at Carlisle Circus, and includes a charity shop for parents of young children and babies. In the course of coming months, the Memorial Hall beside Carlisle House will develop into a drop-in centre. At its spring meeting, the Council approved that the status of this one-year pilot project would be upgraded to become a joint project of the CMI and the North Belfast Presbytery.
15. The project continues to make strong connections with hundreds of migrants each week, offering varieties of support ranging from the meals so generously supplied by a number of volunteer groups, through internet access to communicate with families at home, foodbank, clothing bank, helping with asylum requests and job applications, English language classes and weekly Bible classes.
16. Discussions are ongoing concerning the long-term future location of the South Belfast Project currently based in rented premises, 133a Lisburn Road.
17. This is a very encouraging and challenging ministry. It is with gratitude to God for his continued provision and the dedication of staff and volunteers, that we confidently step forward to meet new needs and opportunities.

STEPHEN SIMPSON, Convener

SOUTH BELFAST FRIENDSHIP HOUSE MANAGEMENT PANEL

18. Project Leader Rev William Harkness and Deaconess Mrs Eileen Black continue their invaluable work heading up the team at Friendship House.
19. The relationships with the Sandy Row community and with other local groups such as the Men's Hostel and Belfast City Mission, who are also working in the area, are strong and include activities such as foodbank, children's and youth ministry, homework clubs, meetings for seniors and summer teams for outreach.
20. The team is still exploring ways to strengthen the links between Great Victoria Street congregation and the House and to make that connection more evident to the Sandy Row community.
21. The Council records its thanks for the continuing, generous support of Presbyterian Women which, in addition to generous funding of deaconess training, also provides over 80% of the operational costs for the work of South Belfast Friendship House with the remainder coming from United Appeal.
22. Discussions are ongoing regarding the long-term financial stability of this important work.

MARK SPRATT, Convener

NIGHTLIGHT MANAGEMENT PANEL

23. In 2019, the Panel reported that a review had been commissioned into the work of Nightlight and the wider question of 'Night-time ministry' in the Church.
24. The report of the review and recommendations following from it are notified under the Strategy for Mission Committee report.

DANNY RANKIN, Convener

IAN CARTON, Committee Convener

HEALTHCARE, PRISONS AND FORCES CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

25. The Committee continues to liaise 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. The Committee wishes to place on record its most sincere appreciation of the work being done by those who serve as hospital chaplains – almost all of whom are part-time - providing pastoral care and support to patients, families and staff, and ministering in situations of missional opportunity. It seeks every possible opportunity, in conjunction with the relevant authorities, to make this work as effective as possible, both within the hospital contexts themselves as well as in terms of facilitating the pastoral ministry of parish ministers.

Directory of PCI Healthcare Chaplains and the location of their service (March 2020)

NAME	LOCATION
Rev Lindsay Blair	Altnagelvin Hospital
Very Rev Dr Godfrey Brown	Dalriada Hospital
Rev David Clarke	Sligo University Hospital
Rev Richie Cronin	Cork University Hospital
Rev David Cupples	South West Acute Hospital, Enniskillen
Rev Tony Davidson	St Luke's; Mullinure and Longstone
Susan Dawson	Co-ordinating Chaplain, Dublin Hospitals
Rev Molly Deatherage	Mayo General Hospital
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 Keith Hibbert	Altnagelvin Hospital
Rev Jim Lamont	Letterkenny General Hospital
Rev Paul Linkens	Altnagelvin Hospital

NAME	LOCATION
Heather McCracken (Deaconess Assistant to the Chaplain)	Royal Group of Hospitals Belfast City Hospital Musgrave Park Hospital
Rev Roger McElnea	Tyrone and Fermanagh
Rev Keith McIntyre	Daisy Hill Hospital
Rev Stephen McNie	Monaghan General Hospital
Rev Jonathan Porter	Dundalk District Hospital (interim)
Rev Dr Ivan Neish	Whiteabbey Hospital
Rev Jane Nelson	Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex
Rev Leslie Patterson	Lagan Valley Hospital (temporary cover)
Rev Owen Patterson	Downe Hospital
Rev Mark Proctor	Tallaght Hospital (Adelaide and Meath)
Rev Marlene Taylor	Belfast Trust (Bank relief chaplain)
Rev Ivan Thompson	Bluestone Psychiatric Unit
Rev Alan Thompson	South Tyrone Hospital
Vacant	University Hospital, Limerick
Vacant - Rev Ernie Boggs (locum)	Ulster Hospital, Dundonald

PRISONS CHAPLAINCY

Directory of PCI Prisons' Chaplains and the locations of their service (March 2020)

NAME	LOCATION
Rev Alan Boal	Mountjoy, Dublin
Heidi England	Hydebank Wood College (part-time and temporary)
Rev Colin Megaw	Woodland's Juvenile Justice Centre
Rev Graham Stockdale	HMP Maghaberry (Co-ordinating Chaplain, full-time)
Vacant	HMP Magilligan

26. During the past year there have been opportunities for office-bearers to visit some of the prison and the Juvenile Justice Centre listed above, and to learn directly about the excellent work being done by PCI chaplains. The importance of this work is recognised by the NI Department of Justice and PCI chaplains are held in high regard.
27. PCI is required to provide a chaplaincy service, funded by the NIPS in the three prisons in Northern Ireland. In Magilligan, discussions regarding the introduction of a collaborative model involving the three main Protestant denominations pooling their resources may result in the appointment of a chaplain with a larger number of allocated hours. These discussions continue.
28. Funding for Prisons Chaplaincy work
- (a) The Committee notes the real-terms reduction in allocation of Department of Justice funds to chaplaincy provision. While understanding the budgetary constraints at government level, negotiations regarding a more realistic subvention towards this work are taking place.

FORCES CHAPLAINCY PANEL

Directory of Commissioned Chaplains within the Armed Forces (March 2020)

NAME	LOCATION
Rev Mark Donald	Army Reserve (part-time)
Rev Simon Hamilton	Royal Naval Reserve (part-time)
Rev Mark Henderson	Army
Rev Colin Jones	Army Reserve (part-time)
Rev Ivan Linton	Army
Rev Graeme McConville	Army
Rev Michael McCormick	RAF
Rev Norman McDowell	Army
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 Dr Ivan Neish	Air Training Corps
Rev Jane Nelson	Air Training Corps
Rev Prof. Patton Taylor	Air Training Corps

29. Expressions of interest in Forces Chaplaincy

- (a) A number of expressions of interest in military chaplaincy have been received and are being progressed by the Panel.
- (b) Applications from two Army Chaplains, currently serving with the Church of Scotland, to be received as ministers of the PCI have been referred to the Reception of Ministers and Licentiate Committee.

30. Moderator's visits

- (a) The Moderator attended the Homecoming Parade of 1 Royal Irish in Market Drayton, following their deployment in Afghanistan during 2019. Rev Mark Donald accompanied the Moderator as the PCI Chaplain who had been deployed in Afghanistan from April – June 2019.
- (b) The Moderator conducted an informal pastoral visit to some PCI Chaplains based in England during March 2020. Some other planned events in the latter part of the year were suspended or cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis.

ROB CRAIG, Convener

Rural Chaplaincy

31. This pilot scheme has been under discussion for some time and, after two rounds of consultation with, and feedback from the Presbyteries in which the scheme will be piloted, the post has been created, and is in preparation for recruitment.
32. It is planned that this new initiative will enable the Church to begin to address the very significant challenges which face farmers, farming families and those living in a rural context – issues of isolation, challenges to mental health, economic pressures and changes in the regulatory and trading context.

33. The concept of rural chaplaincy will be assessed during, and especially at, the conclusion of the pilot scheme.

Police Chaplaincy Pilot Scheme

34. The initiative for this scheme has come from the PSNI, which is aware from other police forces of the benefits of chaplaincy. Two formal exploratory meetings between the PSNI and representatives of the main churches have taken place, and following approval by the PSNI Executive in October 2019, a pilot scheme (2 hours per week) has been agreed. Should the scheme become permanent following a review by the full Policing Board in June 2020, the normal process for the nomination of PCI Chaplains would be followed. Rev Terry Laverty has been appointed by the PSNI for the duration of the pilot scheme.

ROBERT BELL, Committee Convener

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES CHAPLAINCY COMMITTEE

35. As outgoing Convener of the Committee, Dr Maureen Bennett writes:
- (a) As I enter the final lap of my role as convener of this committee, I am pleased to be able to identify a number of positive developments as well as a number of matters that still cause disquiet. I am grateful for having the privilege of leading this work over the last seven years and pay tribute to the support and guidance of Rev David Bruce and the members of the University and Colleges Chaplaincy Committee (UCCC). I also pay tribute to the team of chaplains working across this island at what is arguably one of the church's most significant missional interfaces.
 - (b) I am delighted that Rev Craig Lynn will take over as convener pending the approval of the General Assembly. Craig has been an active and passionate member of the UCCC for quite a number of years, was an intern in Derryvolgie and has been shadowing the work of the Convener during 2019-20.

Introduction

36. There are 360,000 tertiary level education students across this island; PCI has two full-time chaplains in greater Belfast and affords less than the equivalent of five days a week to all the rest. PCI has no student chaplains in Dublin. In most universities or colleges, apart from Belfast, presbyterian chaplains manage a parish and can afford only half a day per week to commit to institutions involving thousands of students who will be the leaders of tomorrow.
37. The Committee continues to espouse the principle that student chaplaincy is not a one-person ministry and is not just for Irish students.

It is for students and staff both local and international. It is not just for ordained personnel - there is a role for deaconesses and interns, students and other volunteers. There is (for example) a place for people in various professions to get alongside students who might be entering their profession. This is work in which PCI must partner with others who share the same passion to see the strengthening of Christ's church and the building of his Kingdom. There is also much scope for identifying leadership and other gifts among presbyterian students and releasing them to serve in PCI churches during their student years.

38. To that end, at the Assembly last year, the Council urged presbyteries to become more active in supporting the work of its chaplains in universities and colleges. The Committee holds to the working principle that chaplaincy is missional as well as pastoral, and the work of a chaplain ought to be rooted in the life of an all age worshipping community.

Activities and initiatives

39. Magee

- (a) The Convener and Mr Lynn visited with Rev Graeme Orr, chaplain to Magee University College in Londonderry, and were encouraged by the way he has developed good staff and student relationships, and has productive conversations when he sets up a coffee dock in the Students' Union each week. Graeme has had opportunity to pray with members of staff. He has also been invited, with the chaplain from Altnagelvin Hospital, to participate in the "Hands of the Nurse" - a graduation ceremony for student nurses. The relationship with the Head of Nursing has also led to the latter opening up the possibility of Graeme contributing to some of the relevant and pertinent ethical issues for nurses.

40. Presbytery engagement

- (a) At the February meeting of Coleraine & Limavady Presbytery, Rev Dr John Coulter and the Convener were invited to speak about chaplaincy - John about his role as chaplain in the Ulster University at Coleraine and the Convener urged the members of presbytery to support John in practical ways underlining the fact that chaplaincy was not a one-person ministry. There are ways in which others can become involved, from hospitality and friendship, to mentoring, prayer, and professionals sharing some of their life experiences. The UCCC also would like to see gifted Christian students have the opportunity to exercise their gifting in the local church. The presentation was well received and it is our prayer that God will prompt some people to become actively involved. It is encouraging to know that there is a small prayer group in the north coast area that prays specifically for chaplaincy in Ulster University.

41. Belfast strategy
 - (a) Much thinking has been given to developing a strategy for greater Belfast. A new Student Chaplaincy Belfast Partnership Group has met on three occasions, drawing together ministers and others from congregations close to university campuses in the city. The Belfast Conference has identified student work as one of its four main strategic priorities and has commended the work of this Partnership Group.
42. A new approach in Belfast
 - (a) The Student Chaplaincy Belfast Partnership Group has proposed to bring the two full-time chaplains at QUB and UU into one team and to add a third member, along with a number of interns. In addition, the Partnership Group is keen to nurture various strands of student work developing in, for example, Carnmoney Central, Fisherwick, Fitzroy and Great Victoria Street Churches, and to encourage the sort of voluntary support from the Belfast Presbyteries described in Coleraine & Limavady. To that end, the proposed new post will also have a strong congregational focus, to nurture further the student work in these local congregations.
 - (b) The Partnership Group, which will act as an advisory steering group to the Belfast Chaplaincy team, is made up of ministers who work in the geographical corridor between QUB and UUJ.
43. Dublin strategy
 - (a) Discussions have been opened with two ministers from the greater Dublin area, who are exploring how they might support or contribute to chaplaincy provision in Dublin.
44. Cork and Galway
 - (a) There has been no further development in Cork where the Committee patiently awaits the result of a review of chaplaincy commissioned by the university authorities. The pressure of parish ministry has curtailed PCI's involvement in Galway.
45. Regional Institutes of Technology, including Letterkenny, Sligo and Dundalk
 - (a) Rev Andrew Watson continues to develop a fruitful ministry in Letterkenny Institute of Technology.
 - (b) The Convener and Mr Lynn visited Rev David Clarke to look at ways of opening up student work at the Sligo Institute of Technology. The discussions were positive and David was ready to build on the initial steps he has already taken. Rev Jonathan Porter has been installed as the Home Mission minister in Dundalk, and the Committee will wish to initiate conversations with him and the Presbytery of Monaghan regarding the continuation of chaplaincy provision in Dundalk Institute of Technology.

DERRYVOLGIE AND ELMWOOD AVENUE MANAGEMENT PANEL

46. The renovation work in Derryvolgie Halls and Elmwood Avenue is completed and final accounts for both have been submitted. Some additional, less onerous work is required in both Elmwood Avenue and Derryvolgie Halls and this will be factored into the new budgets.
- (a) Derryvolgie Halls
 - (i) Provision of new student accommodation in the city of Belfast has grown during the year. At present there is a surplus due to further delays in the move of the UUJ campus into Belfast. This over-supply of student accommodation in the area affects the structuring of fees, which in turn exerts downward pressure on income projections for the next number of years.
 - (ii) The Panel thanks the chaplain and his team for promoting the benefits to students of being resident in Derryvolgie, and commends this vital work to the prayers of the wider church.
 - (b) Elmwood Avenue Chaplaincy Centre
 - (i) Income from commercial tenants in Elmwood Avenue is essential if this building is to be retained by the church in the long term
 - (ii) The Panel has been able to allocate most of the first floor of the building to the Chaplain for his face-to-face work with students.
 - (iii) The Panel seek to encourage the Chaplain and his team to develop the use of the space, and a new lighting scheme has been planned for the rear entrance and car park area of the building, to facilitate this development.
47. The Panel notes with concern the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which led to the early closure of Derryvolgie at the end of March 2020.
48. In Elmwood Avenue, and following the General Assembly resolution that the building be retained for student ministry at zero costs to the Church, the Panel has continued to seek the re-negotiation of the terms of leases of tenants in the building, and to reconfigure the allocation of space to permit the Chaplain to have access to the appropriate rooms for the development of his work.

JOHNSTON LAMBE, Convener

MAUREEN BENNETT, Committee Convener

STRATEGY FOR MISSION COORDINATION COMMITTEE

49. The Where? What? and Why? of mission
- (a) The committee seeks to set strategic priorities for the denomination. This provides a basis for the allocation of resources of money and people to further the cause of presbyterian mission across the island of Ireland.
 - (b) While some of its work is technical, most of the Committee's energies are devoted to helping congregations and presbyteries grapple with the fresh demands of mission in the rapidly changing context before the church.
 - (c) Some discussion has been had on the background to the existing priorities for mission or the denomination. These include:
 - (i) The presbyterian presence in the six major cities of Ireland
 - (ii) Missional development along the eastern seaboard of Ireland (Euro route E01 from Larne to Rosslare)
 - (iii) Developing a presbyterian presence in the centres of population where there is no reformed witness
 - (iv) Forming and strengthening the presbyterian presence in the fifty most populated towns in Ireland
 - (v) Developing sustainable and repeatable models of new church development
 - (vi) More broadly speaking: urban mission, migrants' mission and rural mission.
 - (d) It was recognised that while these priorities are helpful as broad-brush descriptors of where the church should be directing its energies (and are reflected in the report below), the process of strategic formation needs to be revisited regularly.

URBAN MISSION NETWORK

(Facilitator, Neil Harrison, Mission Development Officer)

50. The Urban Mission Network has two face to face meetings per year and a strong social media presence on Facebook. Some members made a trip to the '20 schemes' conference in Edinburgh earlier in the year.
51. The purpose of the network is information-sharing, vision building and encouragement to develop best practice in this specialised field.

BELFAST CONFERENCE

The Very Rev Dr Alastair Dunlop writes:

52. The level of attendance at meetings of the Belfast Conference has been high with a strong sense of ownership of these conversations between representatives of the three Belfast presbyteries and the Council.
53. Advisory comment has been given concerning Belvoir, plans from the Universities and Colleges Chaplaincy Committee (UCCC), Ballygomartin, IMP North Belfast and a Presbytery Bounds deliberation within Belfast. Any amendment to the presbytery bounds will probably be presented to the General Assembly in 2021.
54. Initial discussions with representatives of the Council for Training in Ministry and the Faculty at UTC regarding wider training needs for Urban Mission (specifically relating to Belfast) are underway.

CHURCH PLANTING PANEL

55. The Panel has been encouraged by fresh enthusiasm shared by individuals and congregations for starting new Presbyterian churches in Ireland.
56. The Panel's main business at the start of the year was planning for the church-wide church planting conference to be held on Saturday 9 May 2020 in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Dundalk. The conference was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but provisional plans are in place to run a similar event in the future.

MARTIN MCNEELY and TOM GILLIAM, Co-Conveners

57. Church Revitalisation
 - a) Discussions are ongoing with colleagues in the Council for Congregational Life and Witness concerning the re-birth and revitalisation of churches. Revitalisation is one of the three identified Home Mission Pathways, but it is recognised that the task of encouraging congregations to growth, fruitfulness and vitality extends far beyond the scope of the Home Mission alone.

MISSION GRANTS PANEL

58. The provision of grant support enables congregations to consider projects, including the employment of staff which might otherwise be beyond their means. This is entirely met by an allocation of United Appeal funds.
59. Allocation of funds from the Irish Mission Fund was over budget

in 2019 – which may be viewed positively in the light of numerous missional projects being enabled. This was balanced by lower grant distribution in the previous year.

60. Mrs Pip Florit manages the grant application process and any enquiries about Irish Mission Fund Grants (mainly towards the employment of face to face evangelists) or Mission Support Grants towards the needs of mission more generally, may be directed to her.

KENNY HANNA, Convener

61. Migrants' ministry

- (a) Following the report of a very positive one-year pilot of the International Meeting Point in North Belfast, a grant has been made in response to the proposal of a longer project. This grant will be allocated towards the employment of an assistant project leader for IMP North Belfast, subject to other necessary approvals, including the Priorities Reference Panel.

62. Rural Chaplaincy Pilot scheme

- (a) The recruitment for a rural chaplain is planned to take place in the next short period. When the appointment is made, the Rural Chaplaincy Panel will report to the Healthcare, Prisons and Forces Chaplaincy Committee.

63. Nightlight Review

- (a) The report of the Nightlight review conducted by Allen McCartney and Jimmy Moore was received by the Committee in February 2020. In implementing the review findings, the Committee accepted that wider strategic thought be given to the continuation of night-time ministry across PCI.
- (b) The clear conclusion of the report was that this ministry could not continue in its present form. The low number of volunteers meant that staff and volunteers were frequently finding themselves in unsafe situations, often on their own. For this reason, and in line with the Review Report recommendations, the Committee took the difficult decision to suspend the work of the Nightlight project with immediate effect.
- (c) The Nightlight Panel was informed, and an informal meeting with staff members was held.
- (d) The matter was referred to the full meeting of the Council in March 2020, when the decision to close the work was taken. Following formal consultations, redundancy terms were agreed with the two members of staff.

- (e) The Committee will consider the wider issue of night-time ministry, not just in the city of Belfast, but in many of the towns and cities north and south where such a ministry is already taking place under the auspices of local congregations.
- (f) The Committee expresses sincere thanks to the two staff members, Linzie Cobain and Brian Simons, who have worked tirelessly and faithfully in this challenging and costly ministry as well as the many volunteers who have played a part in the story of Nightlight over the past 29 years of ministry and who have, over that time, led many to faith and offered the hand of Christ to many who found themselves alone, friendless and far from home.
- (g) The Committee further expresses thanks to the Nightlight Panel and especially its Convener, Rev Danny Rankin, for their work in overseeing the project.

BEN WALKER, Committee Convener

FINANCE AND PROPERTY PANELS

- 64. The Panels express thanks to the Finance Manager Mr Nehru Dass and the Property Support Officer, Mr Graham Patterson, for their assistance in the day-to-day work. The Panels also acknowledge the help and advice they give to congregations on grant applications and property issues, especially in home and urban mission situations.
- 65. The Finance Panel continues to manage the accounts of the Council. The accounts for 2019 show a credit balance at year end. Relevant factors include the number of bequests, and the fact that a number of programmes and projects were not started as anticipated during the year, but will draw funds in 2020.
- 66. The Finance Panel also thanks PW for their continued support while noting with concern that year on year real-terms support is decreasing.
- 67. Grants uptake has shown an encouraging uplift during the year.
- 68. Projects
 - (a) The Finance Panel is aware of the exciting development of Rural Chaplaincy, and during 2020 the budget reflects this opportunity.
 - (b) The Panels seek to encourage the congregation of Maynooth which has been working steadily to meet the requirements of the planning authority after several applications. The Finance Panel has put in place funds to support this project and it is hoped that the application will go through in the current financial period.
 - (c) The Panels are in consultation with the Home Mission congregations of Donabate and Greystones regarding capital grants towards the development of their work.

69. Sale of property

- (a) The Panels have jointly proposed the sale of former Irish Mission Workers houses in Letterkenny and Mullingar. Receipts from these sales will provide capital capacity for projects outlined above.
- (b) The Finance Panel notes with thanks the generous support received from bequests, donations, PW and from the United Appeal, all of which enable the Council to carry on its work.

JOHNSTON LAMBE, Convener, Finance Panel

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the Federal Scheme of governance in place for the congregation at Braniel be set aside, and that governance of the congregation be transferred solely to the Methodist Church in Ireland.
2. That the Federal Scheme of governance in place for the congregation at Taughmonagh be set aside, and that governance of the congregation be transferred solely to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
3. That the General Assembly gives thanks to God for the work of Nightlight, noting with appreciation the 29 years of ministry undertaken by staff and volunteers, and commends the need for sustainable night-time ministry in all its forms across the church to the Strategy for Mission Coordination Committee for further consideration.
4. That the General Assembly note the newly created positions of Rural Chaplain (pilot scheme) and Chaplain to the PSNI (pilot scheme), and commend these initiatives and their post-holders to the prayers of the church.
5. That the work of Home Mission ministers, Deaconesses, Irish mission workers and PCI chaplains in healthcare, prisons, the armed forces, universities and colleges be commended to the Church for prayer, both privately and in services of worship.
6. That the Report of the Council for Mission in Ireland be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

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 first year of working in the new streamlined structure of committees and panels.
 - (b) The work of the following committees and panels in identifying future priorities for envisioning, equipping and enabling congregations:
 - (i) Congregational Life Committee
 - (ii) Congregational Witness Committee
 - (iii) Women's Ministry Panel (including Presbyterian Women)
 - (iv) Children's, Youth and Family Panel
 - (v) Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee (including Youth Assembly Review Proposal - Resolution 1).
 - (c) New resources and support for congregations: The work of the following four task groups:
 - (i) Baptism Resources Task Group
 - (ii) Communicant Membership Resource Task Group
 - (iii) The Remarriage and Inter-Church Marriage Task Group (including Marriage Panel Proposal – Resolution 2)
 - (iv) The Evangelistic and Discipleship Pathways Resource Task Group.
 - (d) New presbytery opportunities. Old problem of communicating with congregations. New home from home.
 - (e) The impact of Coronavirus on congregational life and witness.
 - (f) Appendix: Overview of the Council's major activities in the areas of programmes, events and new resources 2019/20.

New lease of life

3. As the Council for Congregational Life and Witness approaches the 2020 General Assembly it does so with the feeling that it has experienced a new lease of life. To say that comes as the result of a streamlining of the structure of committees and panels might be surprising to some, however this functional change has been a catalyst in opening wider spaces in which to discuss, discern and decide on priorities for the next season of life and work.
4. The streamlining of committees and panels became the occasion to reflect on what the Council has done, collect the thoughts of members on the present challenges facing congregations, and direct thinking to identifying priorities for the next season of ministry. There is much to build on, core pieces of work to carry forward and new ventures to deliver.
5. As a result, the accent of this year's report will fall on where Congregational Life and Witness is going, rather than where it has come from – what is coming next, rather than what has been done in 2019/20. However, in the interest of transparency, accountability and to show the range of activity of Council work, an overview of major activities in the areas of programmes, events and resources scheduled during 2019/20 can be found in an appendix to the report.
6. As the final section of the report will detail, the impact of the Coronavirus meant that the Council's planned calendar of programmes and events had to be cancelled, or postponed, from 18 March 2020 and its resources redeployed in helping congregations respond to a new and severely restricted context for life and witness.

New streamlined structure of committees and panels

7. From June 2019 the Council has transitioned to a new, streamlined structure of committees and panels. This simpler structure sees three committees and two panels oversee the development of the Council's remit as follows:
 - (a) A Congregational Life Committee overseeing the development of the areas of leadership, discipleship, worship, pastoral life and prayer.
 - (b) A Congregational Witness Committee overseeing the development of the areas of evangelism, community witness, good relations and global mission involvement.
 - (c) A Programme, Finance and Coordination Committee receiving recommendations from the other two committees (with additional input from the Children, Youth and Family Panel and Women's Ministry Panel), overseeing budget and encouraging greater coordination of messaging and resourcing of congregations.
 - (d) A Children's, Youth and Family Panel and a Women's Ministry Panel offering age and gender specific input.

8. This journey to a new structure has been carefully prepared and navigated and has resulted in a very positive outcome in terms of greater prioritisation, growing coordination, overall perspective and ability to forward plan. This has been achieved while still continuing to plan and deliver a full programme of events, training and resource production.

New season of work

9. Informed by feedback from the Council and ongoing engagement with presbyteries and congregations, the emerging pathways for developing congregational life, witness, ministry among women, children, youth and families in the Council's next season of life are set out below.

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE

10. Through a series of task and focus groups, as well as discussion in full meetings, the committee has arrived at the following priorities for supporting congregations in developing various aspects of congregational life.

Worship

11. The area of supporting the development of congregational worship is both wide-ranging and difficult to deliver. Recent years have shown that events aimed at envisioning and equipping those directly involved in leading worship have been met with a diminishing response. A Developing Congregational Worship Task Group examined this issue, taking into consideration also a resolution passed at last year's General Assembly (MGA 2019 p 48 res 2), to explore ways to encourage contemporary re-engagement with psalmody.
12. On recommendation of the task group, the committee has decided to pursue a different route: the creation of a digital presence for the support and development of all aspects of the worshipping life of congregations. This will involve dedicated space on the PCI website and creative use of social media opportunities. The initiative will aim to do three things:-
 - (a) Signpost appropriate worship resources for the consideration of congregations;
 - (b) Offer general content reflecting on developing all aspects of congregational worship;
 - (c) Include a particular emphasis on encouraging congregations in contemporary re-engagement with psalmody by gradually offering suggestions reflecting a range of musical styles for use of all 150 Psalms in congregational praise.

13. It is intended that some funding from the Church Hymnary Trust Fund will be used to seed the initial phase of this project.
14. For a second year, an event encouraging the use of the organ in contemporary worship was well attended. Making this part of the annual programme to support worship is anticipated. It is particularly appreciated by smaller congregations with few musical resources and in which the organ remains the primary instrument for accompanying praise. Work continues to complete a CD of musical accompaniment for congregations with no regular musicians.

Prayer life

15. A focus group on Developing Congregational Prayer was drawn together to consider the challenge of creating and sustaining regular patterns of prayer in church life. More particularly, it discussed the issues of encouraging members to find their voice in prayer and envisioning congregations in fresh ways to gather for prayer. The following proposals will be taken forward.
 - (a) Release of some video material on prayer for use in congregational settings and sharing via social media.
 - (b) The production of a suite of short, simple resources to support the development of congregational prayer life, comprising the following:-
 - (i) simple frameworks to guide those leading prayers to encourage development of prayer in public worship;
 - (ii) simple tools to encourage first steps in praying aloud to encourage members to find their voice in prayer;
 - (iii) a variety of simple templates for gatherings for prayer respecting differing congregational personalities to envision congregations with a range of models for gathering in prayer.

Discipleship

16. The development of discipleship among members remains high on the agenda of many congregations and the denomination as a whole. As following Jesus becomes ever more countercultural in today's society, the values our lives express become increasingly odd to others and an opportunity to showcase a different way of living.
17. A Developing Congregational Discipleship Focus Group met to consider how to build on existing work and strike out in new directions. The committee endorsed their recommendations as follows.
 - (a) Provision for an annual programme of Disciple Makers' Network;
 - (b) As appropriate, two small-scale events each year – one to funnel congregations into the network, one to follow on from it;
 - (c) Completion of a fourth scheduled Proximity resource 2020/2021;

- (d) Commissioning of a major Bible study resource entitled 'Expressions', with a wide-ranging application of discipleship and scheduled for release in 2021/22;
 - (e) Commissioning of a project to collect and disseminate stories of the journey of developing discipleship in congregations to encourage momentum and share ideas;
 - (f) To prioritise a focus on supporting congregations in developing children's and youth discipleship.
18. Young adults' discipleship is also recognised as an important part of the overall discipleship jigsaw. Young adulthood represents a season of life in which multiple changes in home, education, work and church often coincide. A Young Adults' Ministry Focus Day explored how discipleship in this transitional stage of life can be best supported. It successfully identified core content for the discipleship of young adults, recommended that the annual Transform event be replaced from 2021 by regional gatherings and that attention be given to increasing the general understanding of the church concerning the particular discipleship challenges of young adulthood.

Leadership

19. The committee discussed priorities in developing leadership in congregations at its February meeting. Regional training events for elders and the Emerge leadership development programme for young adults remain well attended. Those volunteering to spend a year as a PCI Intern in a congregation remains around capacity for the scheme. Nevertheless, there remains a lingering sense of the need to encourage something more fundamental in developing the practice of leadership in congregational life. Central to this is the creation of space for leadership to take a step back and have a discussion about what they are doing, why, how, and what might need to change. In an ever busier world and church life, making time for what might seem as this luxury, is rarely a priority.
20. As a simple, first step towards helping kirk sessions take a lead in this area, the committee has decided to reconfigure the format of regional elders' training for 2020/21. Two pilot evenings will encourage kirk sessions to come and participate together as a leadership body in a programme based on the theme 'All change?' The evenings will be facilitated in such a way as to help session members explore together the challenge of navigating necessary change in their congregational setting.

Pastoral Life

21. For operational reasons, the area of pastoral life has been left until last as an area for further review. It will be the next major focus of the committee in planning for the future.

22. In 2020/21 two pastoral care regional events are planned. These remain some of the Council's best attended events and it is hoped to refresh programme content so that it continues to address presenting pastoral issues experienced in most congregations.
23. The issue of mental health is one which is increasingly before both church and society. The Council draws the attention of members of Assembly to a comprehensive list of help for churches in this area available on the PCI website at: www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Congregational-Life/Mental-Health-Resources-List.aspx.
24. Regional pastoral care training regularly addresses this subject and, this year, training for those involved in youth ministry also included a stream on young people and mental health.
25. Council also draw the attention of the Assembly to the ministry of Fresh Light, the denomination's counselling service available to members and non-members alike. At a time when waiting lists for help of this kind are lengthy, Council has a strong sense that the ministry is not being accessed to maximum effect and would encourage all members to bear it in mind and share it with those in need who they come across in either church or daily life.

PHILIP McCREA, Convener

CONGREGATIONAL WITNESS COMMITTEE

26. The committee has decided to group its messaging and resourcing of congregations under two unifying themes.

Local mission and evangelism

27. The theme identified for local mission and evangelism is, Sharing Jesus Today. It communicates at least three basic messages.
 - (a) Sharing – we have a message worth sharing and evangelism is something we can do. This aspect includes understanding evangelism as a journey and identifying evangelistic pathways in congregational activities offering ways in to church community and ways on in encountering Christian faith; normalising talking about Jesus in age specific ways with the realistic expectation of both positive and negative responses; developing the art of asking good questions; appreciating the value of dropping a simple evangelistic thought or sowing a tiny seed in conversation; helping grow confidence in sharing our faith story.
 - (b) Jesus – we have a message to communicate. This aspect includes equipping the church to communicate the gospel; understanding starting points of hearers with reference to their understanding of Jesus and the gospel in an increasingly biblically illiterate generation; exploring a range of ways into conversations that move gradually towards presenting Jesus.

- (c) Today – we are speaking into a particular culture and micro-cultures. This aspect includes opportunities arising from the presenting issues in society; the community of the church as a gospel witness in itself; knowing our audience(s); speaking into the contemporary expression of divided society across Ireland.
- 28. The committee sense that the change of church culture at which needs to be aimed at might be summarised as changing how members of the church picture, talk about and begin to practise sharing Jesus.
- 29. A number of initial initiatives have been identified to begin to open up this theme.
 - (a) Release of some video material recorded by Andy Frost, a previous guest speaker on evangelism, as the next phase of promoting the *Share* material for use in congregations;
 - (b) Bringing an annual Evangelism conference, currently staged in London, Edinburgh and Manchester, to Assembly Buildings, Belfast on Saturday 3 October 2020;
 - (c) Release of an evangelistic resource for use with those in later life produced in partnership with *Faith in Later Life*, at a morning conference in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, on Tuesday 27 April 2021;
 - (d) Commissioning of a project to produce up to twelve short clips for use in a variety of settings in church life on different aspects of sharing Jesus today.

Involvement in global mission

- 30. The unifying theme for stimulating involvement in global mission, launched at last year's General Assembly, is Global Disciples Go Deep, Go Wide. A Go Deep, Go Wide Task Group continues to explore and develop ways in which to embed this message in denominational and congregational DNA.
- 31. This year saw the launch of a free, downloadable resource entitled Going Well. Through video clips and accessible printed material, it helps congregations prepare well in the area of sending teams on overseas mission trips.
- 32. The next phase of the Go Deep, Go Wide initiative will involve developing simple material for every congregation enabling them to reshape and refresh their involvement in global mission around:
 - (a) seeing themselves as global disciples;
 - (b) forming, or developing, a deep relationship in global mission with a particular person, place or project;
 - (c) highlighting the opportunities for going wide in global mission involvement through the annual appeals of the General Assembly – World Development Appeal; Youth and Children's Project; PW Project.

STEPHEN RICHMOND, Convener

WOMEN'S MINISTRY PANEL

33. The panel continues its work of supporting and stimulating work among women in the local congregation. The unifying theme for its work is *Side by Side*, with a focus on woman-to-woman relational ministry and evangelism. This theme was launched in the autumn with four sell out events in Belfast, Ballymena, Richhill and Londonderry.
34. Momentum will continue to grow through the PW Inspirations resource for 2020/21 which offers PW groups, and others involved in congregational women's ministry, a wealth of material on the same theme.
35. It is anticipated that this theme will continue to form the core message around which women's ministry will collect for the next few years.

Presbyterian Women

36. The Council continues to commend the particular contribution of Presbyterian Women to the life and witness of the wider church. It remains the primary expression of ministry among women in most congregations and, more than that, significantly contributes to prayer and funding for the mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at home and overseas, through generous grants to the Council for Mission in Ireland and Council for Global Mission.
37. The PW Forum in February 2020 was opened to a wider audience than ever before and developed the evangelistic aspect of the *Side by Side* theme, envisioning and equipping those who attended through material from the *Share* resource. This is but one example of how the wider themes of congregational life and witness dovetail with, and can helpfully map across to, the women's ministry element of church life.
38. The Annual Meeting and Evening Celebration on Thursday 9 May 2020 had looked forward to welcoming speaker, Sophie DeWitt, to open up the *Side by Side* theme from Scripture and with encouragement for one to one discipleship in real life settings. Unfortunately these gatherings fell victim of the Coronavirus shutdown. For the moment, they have been postponed with the hope of rescheduling in the autumn. Both afternoon and evening events continue to offer great opportunities for women from near and far to come together for worship, teaching and encouragement.
39. The *Wider World* magazine continues to provide its readership with a creative mix of PW news, ideas for women's ministry, interviews, challenging articles and mission updates. Regrettably, the June edition could not be published due to the Coronavirus pandemic.
40. In addition to the funds raised for the two PCI mission councils, the home dimension of the 2020/21 PW Project will support the work of a CARE NI project supporting those who have experienced miscarriage.

The overseas aspect of the appeal will provide finance for Okhaldhunga Community Hospital in Nepal, which offers essential medical care to pregnant women from surrounding rural communities.

ELIZABETH MOFFETT, Convener

CHILDREN'S, YOUTH AND FAMILY PANEL

41. This panel provides a valuable forum informing the Council's work with children, youth and families, but also providing age specific input into the core areas of its remit. It continues to grapple with some big issues in contemporary children's and youth ministry, as well as how to support parents raising children in a rapidly changing world. Council would particularly draw the attention of members to a new PCI Parents Facebook page, which now sits alongside pages for Children's Ministry Leaders, Youth Ministry Leaders and Young Adults.
42. Members have begun to shape some concrete ideas for children's and youth discipleship resources identified as a priority by the Congregational Life Committee (see paragraph 17 above).
43. Another innovative development is the planned commencement in the autumn of a Children's Ministry Network which will invite congregations to bring groups of children's ministry leaders together three times per year for envisioning, equipping and discussion about how they can be more effective in children's ministry in their congregation.
44. The Panel also informs content of core events and programmes, setting general direction and helping determine key themes and suggesting speakers. Forthcoming themes for the MAD weekend are 'Truth' and 'Not of this world'. Themes identified for Youth Night are 'Equipped' and 'Sent'.
45. This year saw well attended events addressing the subject of the church and boys and young people and sexuality. The former was the outworking of a conversation with Boys' Brigade. As the Council continues to grapple with how to support ministry among men in congregations, this event, starting further back, may have provided many hints for future adult ministry. The latter event was delivered in conjunction with Love for Life. It is anticipated that further work will be undertaken with Love for Life to address the area of young people and sexuality in a range of venues over the next few years. An event on all-age worship is also under consideration.
46. The panel have noted the work done by the Youth Assembly in 2020/21. Rather than stage their annual gathering in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, members of the Youth Assembly undertook to work with Ards, Coleraine and Iveagh presbyteries to facilitate local gatherings of young

people to help them understand more about the role of presbytery and discuss the potential for the voice and participation of young people at the local level.

47. The themes explored were, 'Belonging', 'Pulling Together' and 'Connect 4 More'. Each examined the potential of young people and churches working together at a presbytery or more local level, to further the mission of Christ. Each of the presbyteries involved will reflect on what was heard and aim to follow through as appropriate.
48. The Panel has scheduled time to build on the learning from this work so that the Council can gain a picture of the needs of young people and youth ministry in smaller churches and think about what it might offer by way of envisioning and equipping for new approaches.

SAM FINLAY, Convener

PROGRAMME, FINANCE AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE

49. This committee had the unenviable task of working through all the recommendations from the committees and panels above and considering overall capacity and priorities. Pleasingly, the prioritisation and self-regulation of messages, events and resources in each of the groups that report to it meant that the committee was able to advise that, with careful timetabling, all of the recommendations above can be facilitated in the Council's next phase of operation. The identification of some overarching themes also successfully reduced the number of messages going to congregations, creating greater coordination.
50. The Committee also began to gain a sense of overview of important trends in congregational life and how they need to shape the balance of the Council's work. Some early observations are as follows:-
 - (a) There is no pressing demand for major new Council programmes or events;
 - (b) Standalone core resources for most areas of the remit are available, but it will be important to try to evaluate effectiveness in congregations and some may need updating;
 - (c) The need for a rebalancing of staff capacity to include more work with individual congregations and presbyteries seems to be identified as a priority in the next phase of the Council's work. Specifically, staff may be able to facilitate congregational self-evaluation, an area identified as important by the Congregational Life Committee (see paragraph 19 above).
51. The Committee has adopted a framework of perspectives to properly assess the effectiveness, budgetary cost and value of events and programmes. This includes:

- (a) The realistic target audience for events and programmes within the denomination and its active congregational membership;
 - (b) Numbers attending;
 - (c) Congregations represented;
 - (d) Local catchment for presbytery and regional events;
 - (e) Age demographic, cultures of availability, commitment patterns and attitude to training;
 - (f) Gender trends, which see more women than men in the denomination and in attendance at events;
 - (g) The need to consider value as well as cost;
 - (h) Changes over time that see initiatives plateau;
 - (i) The need to give new things time to grow;
 - (j) Recognition of seasons in which initiatives wax and wane;
 - (k) The need for balanced output across the Council's remit;
 - (l) The need to stop, start, continue and reshape initiatives over time;
 - (m) The need to handle changes to the overall output as gradual gear changes;
 - (n) The wisdom of considering what might replace an initiative being discontinued before stopping it;
 - (o) The Biblical concept of fruitfulness in Jesus' parable of the fig tree in Luke chapter 13.
52. Having examined the Council's core events and programmes over the previous three years, it is pleasing to note that the participation of members and representation of congregations is consistently high. Most initiatives break even, with only a few budgeted to run a small deficit for particular reasons.
53. One change of programme, one experiment and a further exploration of a long running annual event are drawn to the attention of members of Assembly.
- (a) Due to persistently diminishing numbers, from 2020/21, the annual *Transform* young adults' discipleship event will be replaced by two regional young adults' hubs (see paragraph 18 above);
 - (b) Due to an inability to recruit enough participants to run in 2019, the *Children's Ministry Course* will be replaced by a *Children's Ministry Network* for a trial period of one year (see paragraph 43 above);
 - (c) *Youth Night* shows signs of persistently diminishing numbers. The Children's, Youth and Family Panel will explore the possibility of trialing an alternative pilot comprising two separate 'Youth Night' style events delivered regionally at a more appropriate time of year to facilitate greater participation by young people.

54. The committee will shift its focus from programmes and events to reflect upon the effectiveness of the Council's processes for the production and provision of resources for congregational use as a next stage of its work.

Youth Assembly Review

55. During the year the committee undertook one major and significant review. This involved the Youth Assembly programme which, by 2019, had reached its tenth anniversary. Previously called SPUD, this programme for engaging young people in the life and work of the General Assembly and its structures was reviewed in 2016 due to diminishing participation. At that time, a number of significant changes were made to the programme to try to re-establish strength and sustainability. Regrettably, these have not made any appreciable difference to numbers. Consequently, the committee authorised another attempt to reimagine and refresh the Youth Assembly based around testing ideas with the following three key groups of people:-
- (a) the co-chairs of the 2019/20 Youth Assembly Working Group
 - (b) the Clerk of the General Assembly its Business Committee Convener
 - (c) Council staff members who have supported the work of the Youth Assembly since 2016.
56. The advent of the under-30 delegate was also recognised as a significant development. Maximising its potential also became an important feature of the review.
57. The committee were pleased to receive and thoroughly test the following proposal which had already been carefully considered and endorsed by all the key stakeholders above. It represents a worthy legacy of the Youth Assembly and ensures ongoing, effective investment in the principle of youth and young adult participation in the life of the wider church. It also seeks to be realistic in devising a viable process to ensure that voices of younger people are not only platformed and heard, but that their views can actually interact with, and influence, the ongoing work of the General Assembly through its councils. The following proposal is presented to the General Assembly for approval in resolution 1.

Youth Assembly Review Proposal – Investing in the future of youth and young adult participation in shaping the church

Something to celebrate

58. The Youth Assembly, formerly SPUD, has been part of the landscape of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland since 2009. Aimed at facilitating young people to speak into the issues facing the church today, participate in its structures, understand its systems and influence decision making, the voice of the Youth Assembly has grown, developed and matured

over the years. It is something to celebrate, both in terms of how it has enriched denominational life and been significant in the lives of those who have been involved. It has enabled wider perspective in debate, ensured some issues that may have remained marginalised became priorities and encouraged engagement with developments that impact on aspects of ministry and mission in our rapidly changing world. The annual Wednesday evening fringe event has become an established fixture in General Assembly week.

59. Among similar initiatives in other denominations, the PCI Youth Assembly stands tall as a model of good practice. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is indebted to those who have given of their time and effort to chair the Youth Assembly and participate in its organising group. This is especially so as many have done so in the busy seasons of life around major study, examinations and transitioning into working life.

Limitations to acknowledge

60. Over the years the Youth Assembly has also bumped up against some significant limitations. Chief among them is the timing of the General Assembly and the associated scheduling of the release of the Annual Reports. This issue has been a matter of ongoing debate with no obvious alternative emerging that would significantly change the timing of the majority of the business from weekday sitting at the height of the school and university examination season. Consequently only a small number of young people will ever be able to take part in the General Assembly through the Youth Assembly programme. Their ability to significantly engage in advance with major issues emerging in council reports is also limited by the necessity of the post Easter release of the Blue Book.
61. Despite a variety of imaginative programming to try to circumnavigate these issues, they remain stubborn and ultimately insurmountable, meaning that only a very small number of young people ever fully benefit from the opportunity afforded by the Youth Assembly as it relates to the General Assembly, its parent body.

Opportunity to take forward

62. Perhaps the greatest significance of the Youth Assembly programme has been to convince the church of the virtue and value of the voice of young people in its decision making processes. The ongoing establishment of places for an under-30 delegate from every congregation at the General Assembly in 2019, is probably the crowning legacy of the work of the Youth Assembly. It became the channel through which a much wider sea of participation has opened for younger voices to be heard. However, there are now two very similar vehicles trying to achieve the same ultimate end. It is not clear how they relate to one another or, if and why, they both remain necessary. Crucially, experience has shown that it is not possible to grow the Youth Assembly model due to the

limitations noted above and the potential of the inclusion of under-30 delegates is unlikely to be realised without significant, intentional investment.

Investing for the future

63. At this crossroads, is it necessary to choose one path or the other, or is it possible to arrive at a destination that represents the best of both worlds? The following proposal aims to harness the momentum of the Youth Assembly and build upon the potential of developing the opportunity of the under-30 delegates.

Investment in a biannual gathering of young people to discuss issues relevant to the ministry and mission of the church

64. The one piece of the Youth Assembly programme not limited by the timing of the General Assembly, is the gathering of young people to discuss issues they identify as particularly pertinent to them and on which the church needs to pay particular attention to their input. This remains a strong element of what the Youth Assembly contributes to the church's life, thinking and practice. However, the integration of the outcomes of these discussions into the structures of the church and the work of its councils has remained a hard nut to crack. The inclusion of the Youth Assembly Report in the Assembly's Annual Report has been the usual vehicle to try to transition from words to action. However, this has been largely ineffective for a number of reasons. Perhaps the major issue is that before one year's message has had time to be effectively communicated, discussed and embedded, the pressure of delivering next year's programme has already overtaken that process.
65. Consequently, it is proposed to significantly invest in a biannual gathering of young people to discuss issues relevant to the ministry and mission of the church. This will allow adequate time for identification of key issues by young people and effective and attractive publicity of the event. The gap year between events will allow the voice of the gathering to be adequately captured, transmitted to the appropriate council depending on subject matter, and then discussed with them in terms of how it might inform and influence its vision and work.

Investment in the developing the potential of the under-30 delegate opportunity

66. To build the capacity and potential of participation of under-30 delegates to the General Assembly, a new piece of programming is proposed as follows:-
 - (a) From November, the possibility of being an under 30-delegate will be proactively publicised in the wider church and to kirk sessions by all available channels of communication
 - (b) Following the registration of under-30 delegates and the release of the Annual Reports, a Saturday morning event will be held in

Assembly Buildings to which those registered will be invited to a basic programme offering content including, why the General Assembly matters; navigating Assembly business; an overview of reports and resolutions (including discussion, question and answer); how to make a good contribution to the Assembly; a time of prayer for the Assembly.

- (c) The core content of a new Fringe event during Assembly week will centre around a panel of under-30 delegates and other participants and table discussion linked to the subject matter of General Assembly reports and business. It will conclude with a time of prayer for the Assembly.
67. Both of these new initiatives need to be given a period of years to grow and develop momentum. Progress will need to be kept under review. However, it is hoped that these imaginative, significant investments will offer effective contemporary ways to continue to ensure the voice of younger members of our church can be facilitated to enrich its life by speaking, participating, understanding and being involved in decision making.

JANE NELSON, Convener

New resources and support for congregations

68. A number of task groups have been working on resources and support for particular moments in congregational life, including baptism, receiving new communicants and marriage. Another task group has completed work on a resource to help congregations reflect on facilitating ways into church life and ways on in following Jesus.

BAPTISM RESOURCES TASK GROUP

69. Baptism is a great moment in the life of a family, individual and local congregation. Sometimes it is a struggle to convey what we as Presbyterians believe about baptism, why it is important and its ongoing significance on our journey of faith. This task group has completed the content for a suite of resources intended to be used in a range of settings to explain the meaning and significance of the sacrament. There are eight parts to the suite of material:-
- (a) A video clip which provides core material around what the Presbyterian Church in Ireland believes about baptism. This clip also forms part of the content of the other resources below. It could also be uploaded to church websites as a basic explanation of baptism for those enquiring about the sacrament;
 - (b) A leaflet entitled, 'Your child, baptism and growing up in the family of God', intended to be used with parents enquiring about the baptism of a child;

- (c) A leaflet entitled, 'Considering being baptised?', intended to be used with adults enquiring about baptism;
 - (d) A downloadable framework for conversation for a home visit in response to a request for baptism entitled, 'Let's chat about baptism'. This offers suggestions to deepen conversation about the content of the two leaflets above;
 - (e) A downloadable session for use with young people explaining baptism;
 - (f) A downloadable discussion resource exploring the role of kirk session in accompanying those seeking baptism for themselves or their child;
 - (g) A downloadable set of PowerPoint slides for use in a service of baptism to explain simply the sacrament to children present;
 - (h) Four video stories for download which also provide content for various elements of the suite of resources.
70. This has been an extensive piece of work and the Council hopes it will breathe fresh life into the church's appreciation of the sacrament of baptism at every level. The content of the material is almost ready, awaiting the approval of new baptismal vows being presented to the General Assembly by a General Council task group before going to print.

GARETH McFADDEN, Convener

COMMUNICANT MEMBERSHIP RESOURCE TASK GROUP

71. In an age when commitment is often avoided, we need to be clear about what it means to both follow Christ and be a member of his Church. This task group has produced a resource intended to be used with those considering coming forward for full communicant membership of the Church. Ideal for a communicants' class setting or use one-to-one, the booklet is supplemented by video material that opens up conversation about what it means to believe, live as a follower of Jesus, belong to the Church and share in the Lord's Supper.
72. Like the baptism resources, this has been an extensive piece of work involving both refashioning existing material and creating new content. The Council hopes it will aid ministers and those with whom they engage in conversation about committing to Christ and full membership of his Church. The content of the material is almost ready, awaiting the approval of new vows for communicant membership being presented to the General Assembly by a General Council task group before going to print.

WILLIAM HENRY, Convener

REMARRIAGE AND INTER-CHURCH MARRIAGE TASK GROUP

73. A resolution at last year's General Assembly tasked the Council with examining,
- The provision made for guidance and support given to ministers asked to marry a couple where one or both individuals has been married before and is divorced, or, in situations of inter-church marriage, and report to the 2020 General Assembly.*
74. This task group undertook this work, commissioning a survey of ministers to determine what manner of support would be most helpful in the kind of situations where a conversation about marriage may bring complications to the surface. Ten per cent of active ministers from across all 19 presbyteries provided their views. Two main conclusions emerged. Firstly, that the present Remarriage Panel's work was not being widely used by ministers. This was no reflection on the quality of the service provided, more a recognition that the culture in which couples present for, and request, marriage in a church setting has changed and is rapidly changing. Referring a couple to meet with an anonymous body, in many circumstances some distance from home, did not seem to facilitate the most pastorally adept approach to remarriage. Secondly, every situation of remarriage and inter-church marriage has its own unique backstory and surrounding circumstances. It would therefore be difficult to draft effective guidelines to fit every situation.
75. The Task Group concluded that issues around marriage are always best primarily addressed by the minister in conversation with the couple. Ministers surveyed did indicate that they would benefit from a service that enabled them to talk through cases they were finding difficult and to be advised in terms of the content of an effective pastoral conversation in the circumstances presenting to them. Consequently, the Council recommends that the ministry provided by the existing Remarriage Panel be discontinued and a new Marriage Panel be formed to offer support and guidance to ministers on any issue surrounding marriage, including remarriage and inter-church marriage.
76. In presenting this proposal to the General Assembly in resolution 2, the Council draws attention of members of Assembly to the gratitude owed to the many people who have served on the Remarriage Panel over many years. It is envisaged that they, and their years of expertise, will play a crucial part in shaping the work of the new Marriage Panel. Should the resolution be agreed, the Council aims to take steps to commission a new Marriage Panel to commence work by next year's General Assembly.

CHARLES McMULLEN, Convener

EVANGELISTIC AND DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAYS RESOURCE TASK GROUP

77. The task group has completed its work and a resource will be ready for use in the new church year.
78. The Pathways tools aim to help congregations work with Jesus in cultivating a fruitful life and witness. They help leaders and members develop eyes to see what God is doing, ears to hear the growing story of a variety of church organisations and activities, and hands able to shape a healthier future.
79. The tools provided could be used in a variety of ways. Kirk sessions could use them as part of their role of overseeing the overall life and witness of the congregation. Leaders of the organisations could be asked to contribute their insight or feedback, or be brought together to work through the tools together. Each of the tools could form part of a review of a particular aspect of the congregation's work.
- (a) A 'root and branch' tool can help congregations gain a good overview of their activities;
 - (b) A 'foliage or fruitfulness' tool can help congregations explore where pruning might lead to greater fruitfulness.
 - (c) A 'branching out in a changing world' tool can help congregations identify ways in which they are journeying out and helping others journey in and journey on, as well as spot where there are gaps that they might need to fill to create a smooth pathway for evangelism and discipleship.

JONATHAN MOXEN, Convener

New presbytery opportunities. Old problem of communicating with congregations

Presbytery partnership

80. The Council continues to value a growing working relationship with presbyteries. Each year several presbyteries have the opportunity to plan a training event for key leaders from congregations under their care. In 2019/20, Council partnered with the following presbyteries to deliver evenings on the themes as requested below:
- (a) Templepatrick. October 2019 – Theme: Developing a discipling church
 - (b) Coleraine and Limavady. November 2019 - Theme: Teach us to pray... again
 - (c) Route. December 2019 – Theme: Changed days for the church?
 - (d) Newry. March 2020 – Theme: Foundations for faith (children's, youth and family ministry)

81. The planned evenings in Derry & Donegal Presbytery scheduled for May 2020 on the theme, Growing influence - community in church life and presence in the local community, fell victim to the Coronavirus shutdown.
82. Plans are already progressing for events in Armagh, Ballymena, Dromore and Omagh in 2020/21.

Communication with congregations

83. Inadequate channels of communication with congregations remains the single, largest, issue restricting the effectiveness of the Council's work. Council welcome significant developments in the area of social media which have opened up its work to a wider audience. The promise of a revamped website, which will be easier to navigate for users, is also eagerly awaited. However, for the moment, the primary channel for all communication is through the minister. This fails to serve the needs of the Council, ministers, congregations, members or the wider life of the denomination.
84. The Council has done all that it can to circumnavigate these restrictions by the creation of an E-zine highlighting events and resources and the compilation of an electronic catalogue of resources which it had hoped would be launched in time for the General Assembly. This is now unlikely due to the interruption of work as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. However, the Council remains disappointed by the lack of progress in addressing the issue of communication. It notes that the General Council agreed to the appointment of a Communications Strategy Task Group and it strongly urges this task group to complete its work without delay so as to facilitate the urgent matter of putting in place mediums of communication which are fit for purpose as quickly as possible.

New home from home

85. The Council retains a strong sense of its role being to accompany congregations of all sizes and in all settings as they journey together towards a new home for Presbyterian life and witness in Ireland. This journey involves leaving a familiar home in which the local church enjoyed a central role in community and Christian values were uncontested in wider society. The journey demands careful attention to the text of Scripture, facing the realities of the changing context for ministry and mission in both church and world, and the crafting of a texture of life and speech that marries and carries God's grace and truth.
86. The Council continues to set itself to listen carefully to congregations and presbyteries and to try to respond to the needs they identify on their journeys. In doing so, it also draws upon a wide range of Irish Presbyterian experience to create a shared journey in which we can all benefit from one another's insights and stories.

87. These are not easy days for congregational life and witness. However, together as congregations across Ireland, we place our confidence in the Lord of the Church, trusting him to work through ordinary people, in ordinary places, to accomplish his extraordinary work of redemption, in his time, in his way and by his grace.

The impact of Coronavirus on congregational life and witness

88. At time of writing, the full impact of the Coronavirus on the life and witness of congregations is not yet known. The necessary cessation of gathering for core activities of church life such as worship, pastoral life, discipleship, children's and youth ministry, ministry among senior members, has been challenging. However it has also offered the church an unprecedented opportunity to develop its life of prayer and witness in word and deed. Congregations have shown great resilience and creativity in finding ways to minister to one another and reach out in mission to a fearful world.
89. The consequences of the Coronavirus for the Council's calendar of programmes and events was that, from 18 March 2020, the final quarter of the year's activities had to be cancelled or postponed. This includes the Council's major week of events based around the theme *One Another's: Building the community of the church*.
90. Staff time and resources were swiftly diverted into finding new ways of resourcing congregations for life and witness in the strange new reality they faced. This resulted in the creation of the *These Three Remain...* initiative drawing together *Tides* as a daily devotional output, a twice weekly blog to resource congregations for ministry and mission in this unprecedented season of life, and the harnessing of *Let's Pray* to coordinate denominational prayer. This output was delivered by a skeleton staff of Council Secretary, Office Supervisor and one other Executive staff member, as all other council staff were furloughed under the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.
91. Beyond that, as planning begins for the programme for 2020/21, the Council asks for the prayers of the General Assembly as it seeks to navigate the difficult balance of rescheduling cancelled or postponed events and creating space for some of the new initiatives highlighted above. All of this takes place against the backdrop of continuing uncertainty about when congregational life will resume.
92. With so much that felt safe and familiar stripped away, we take confidence in God, reminded that for the church of Jesus Christ, 'these three remain: faith, hope and love.' (1 Corinthians 13:13).

APPENDIX

Overview of the Council's major activities in the areas of programmes, events and new resources 2019/20

NB All events and programmes scheduled from 18 March 2020 were cancelled or postponed due to Coronavirus.

Programme	Venue	Area of remit
September 2019		
Side by Side	Assembly Buildings	Women's ministry
Youth Ministry Course (10 weeks)	Union Theological College	Youth ministry training
Side by Side	Richhill Presbyterian Church	Women's ministry
Youth Worker Roundtables	Assembly Buildings	Youth ministry leadership
Disciple Makers Network (series of 4 meetings September -March)	Assembly Buildings	Discipleship
October 2019		
Presbytery Event (Templepatrick)	Loanends Presbyterian Church	Discipleship
Handling the Word (series of 6 evenings)	Union Theological College	Leadership
Side by Side	Wellington Presbyterian Church	Women's ministry
Equip	Maze Presbyterian Church	Youth and children's leadership
Understood	Assembly Buildings	Evangelism

Programme	Venue	Area of remit
Side by Side	Kilfennan Presbyterian Church	Women's ministry
MAD weekend	Ulster University, Coleraine	Youth ministry
November 2019		
Presbytery Event (Coleraine & Limavady)	Main Street Presbyterian Church, Garvagh	Prayer
Pastoral Care training	Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church	Pastoral life
Elders' Roadshow	First Bangor Presbyterian Church	Leadership
Sally Lloyd-Jones event	Bangor West Presbyterian Church	Children's ministry
Youth Assembly regional event	Newcastle Presbyterian Church	Youth ministry
December 2019		
Presbytery Event (Route)	Trinity Presbyterian Church, Ballymoney	Outreach, leadership and family ministry
January 2020		
Youth Worker Roundtable	Assembly Buildings	Youth ministry leadership
Emerge Leadership Development Programme (series of 4 gatherings and residential)	Lowel Memorial Presbyterian Church and First Ahoghill Presbyterian Church	Young adult leadership

Programme	Venue	Area of remit
Organ in Contemporary Praise	Molesworth Presbyterian Church, Cookstown	Worship
February 2020		
PW Forum	Assembly Buildings	Women's ministry
The Church and Boys	Assembly Buildings	Children and youth ministry
Youth Assembly regional event	Greenwell Street Presbyterian Church, Newtownards	Youth ministry
Youth Assembly regional event	Main Street Presbyterian Church, Garvagh	Youth ministry
Hashtags and Hormones	Assembly Buildings	Youth ministry leadership
Going Deeper, Going Wider	Assembly Buildings	Involvement in global mission
March 2020		
Presbytery Event (Newry)	Downshire Road Presbyterian Church	Children, youth and family ministry
Pastoral Care training (Armagh Presbytery)	Richhill Presbyterian Church	Pastoral Life
Elders' Roadshow (Tyrone Presbytery)	Molesworth Presbyterian Church	Leadership
Youth Workers' Roundtable	Assembly Buildings	Youth ministry leadership
Equip	St James' Presbyterian Church, Ballymoney	Youth ministry leadership

Programme	Venue	Area of remit
Transform	Assembly Buildings	Young adults' discipleship
April 2020		
Kids' Big Day Out	Wellington Presbyterian Church	Children's ministry
Family Holiday	Castlewellaan Castle	Family ministry
One Anothers (weeklong series of events)	Assembly Buildings Union Road Presbyterian Church, Magherafelt	Building the community of church life
May 2020		
PW Annual meeting and conference	Assembly Buildings	Women's ministry
Summer Teams leaders' training	Whitehouse	Leadership
Presbytery Event (Derry and Donegal)	Kilfennan Presbyterian Church Ray Presbyterian Church	Church life and witness
Little Day Out	Castle Espie	Children's ministry
June 2020		
Youth Assembly residential	Derryvolgie Hall	Youth ministry
Youth Night	Assembly Buildings	Youth ministry

Programme	Venue	Area of remit
Summer Teams training	Assembly Buildings	Youth and young adults' ministry
July 2020		
Summer Team	St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Bangor	Youth/young adults' outreach
Summer Team	Sion Mills Presbyterian Church	Youth/young adults' outreach
Summer Team	Dungannon Presbyterian Church	Youth/young adults' outreach
Summer Team	Abbey Presbyterian Church, Monkstown	Youth/young adults' outreach
Summer Team	Seaview Presbyterian Church	Youth/young adults' outreach
August 2020		
Summer Team	Whitehouse Presbyterian Church	Youth/young adults' outreach
Summer Team	Co Cavan	Youth/young adults' outreach
Summer Team	Great Victoria Street Presbyterian Church and Friendship House	Youth/young adults' outreach
Summer Team	First Monaghan Presbyterian Church	Youth/young adults' outreach

New resources 2019/20

Name	Type of resource	Area of church life
Share	Sunday worship and smaller group follow on	Outreach
Inside Out: Welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us	Bible studies with video material	Good relations and outreach
Go Deep, Go Wide	Animation and video stories to encourage and refresh involvement in global mission	Congregational global mission involvement
Going Well	Video clips preparing a congregational team to go overseas	Congregational global mission involvement
Children's Ministry Basics	Short training videos on preparing a lesson, opening the Bible with children and discipline	Children's ministry
One	Material from the MAD weekend	Youth ministry
Called	Material on the 2019 Youth Night theme	Youth ministry
Proximity 3 Habits of a Lifetime	Discipleship material on rhythms of spiritual life for use with one or two others	Discipleship
Side by Side	Booklet setting out vision for relational women's ministry	Women's ministry

Name	Type of resource	Area of church life
Restore	Annual resource pack produced by PW	Women's ministry
Choosing a new Congregational Committee	Leaflet to help congregations elect a new Congregational Committee	Oversight of congregational life

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly welcome the proposal of the Youth Assembly Review and recommend that its programme to invest in the future of youth and young adult participation in shaping the church be adopted and implemented.
2. That the General Assembly welcome the proposal for the establishment of a Marriage Panel, pay tribute to all those who have served in the ministry of the Remarriage Panel and instructs the Council for Congregational Life and Witness to take steps to commission a new Marriage Panel to commence work by next year's General Assembly.
3. That the Report of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

FINANCE AND STAFFING COMMISSION (2019)

Convener: Very Rev Dr C.J.C. McMULLEN

Secretary: THE CLERK

1. The 2019 General Assembly received a report on the then recent decision of the Queen's University, Belfast to close its Institute of Theology, thus discontinuing awarding degrees in theology and ending its partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Union Theological College. As part of the response to this, the General Assembly passed the following resolution:

That in light of recent decisions with regard to Union Theological College:

- (a) *A Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) be appointed, having full and specific Assembly powers:*

- *to consider the recommendations of the Union Theological College Management Committee and/or Council for Training in Ministry and/or other relevant General Assembly bodies;*
- *to make any necessary legal, financial and staffing decisions in regard to Union Theological College;*
- *to bring a nomination for a new Principal of UTC to the 2020 General Assembly for appointment;*
- *to present firm and definite proposals regarding the College's future to the General Assembly for decision.*

- (b) *The membership of the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) be as follows:*

Moderator and Clerk (Secretary); the Very Rev Dr Charles McMullen (Convener); the Very Rev Drs Rob Craig, Noble McNeely, Ian McNie and Frank Sellar; Mrs Catherine Bell CBE, Prof John Gillespie, Prof Paul Hanna, Mr Edgar Jardine CB, Mr James Livingstone, Mr David Thomson and Mrs Rosemary Wilson.

(2019 General Assembly Minutes, page 71, resolution 39)

2. The full Commission met on two occasions, on 27 November 2019 and 13 February 2020, to fulfil the four distinct, but closely related, aspects of its remit, as outlined in point (a) in paragraph 1 above.

3. On 27 November 2019, the Commission received a series of comprehensive reports, including:
 - (a) a detailed update on developments since the 2019 General Assembly from the UTC Management Committee;
 - (b) an overview of the different options for the future of UTC (drawn up by the UTC Management Committee's Review Task Group) including specific recommendations from the Management Committee;
 - (c) a paper on the options regarding the Principalship of UTC;
 - (d) a paper regarding the envisaged necessary restructuring of staffing at UTC, both Administrative and Academic.
4. Following thorough discussion and debate, the Commission, at its 27 November 2019 meeting, made the following decisions:
 - (a) That the appointment of the next Principal for Union Theological College should initially be a three-year internal appointment, carrying with it agreed aspects of the appointee's current teaching responsibilities and the payment of an additional responsibility allowance.
 - (b) That the Clerk of Assembly and Convener of the Council for Training in Ministry should take the steps necessary to identify a potential nominee for consideration by the Commission, prior to nomination to the 2020 General Assembly.
 - (c) That a new outline Administrative Staffing Structure and Academic Staffing Structure be agreed in principle for Union Theological College.
 - (d) That the UTC Management Committee be requested to provide the Commission with a detailed financial projection for 2020 and an outline projection for 2021 onwards.
 - (e) That the Clerk of Assembly and Financial Secretary be requested to identify all possible PCI sources of additional temporary funding, to enable UTC to operate through the current transitional period, prior to having a fully maximised postgraduate and undergraduate student body.
5. At its meeting on 13 February 2020, the Commission received a report from the Clerk of Assembly and Convener of the Council for Training in Ministry, indicating that the Rev Professor Gordon Campbell had agreed to let his name be brought to the Commission for nomination to the 2020 General Assembly as the new Principal of UTC. A draft job description was also presented.
6. The Commission also received reports on details of the finalised Administrative and Academic Staffing Structure for UTC – see Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively. It was agreed that:
 - (a) the UTC Management Committee be authorised to take these changes forward, under the guidance of the Head of Personnel;

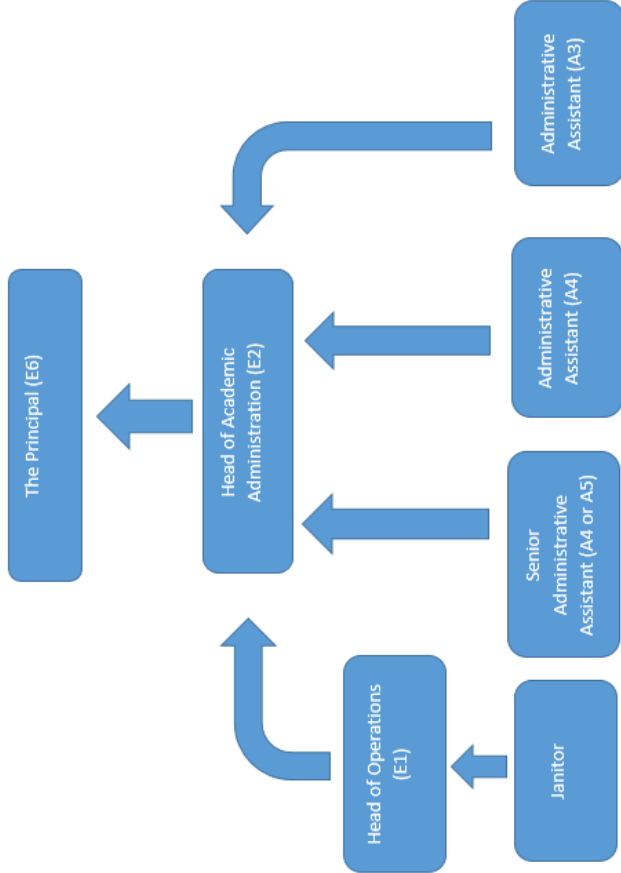
- (b) the appointment of the Head of Academic Administration be prioritised;
 - (c) the final salary gradings for all administrative posts be decided through the Job Evaluation Panel;
 - (d) appropriately revised academic salary grades be introduced from 1 September 2020;
 - (e) the Rev Dr Martyn Cowan and the Rev Dr Zac Cole be moved onto permanent contracts, as outlined, from 1 September 2020;
7. The Commission then met with representatives of the Management Committee, along with Faculty representatives, who presented a vision for Union Theological College (see Appendix 3). Alongside this, financial projections, based on a conservative number of students, were presented (see summary in Appendix 4). These projections, taking into account the previously agreed staffing structure, indicated that after a few years of deficit, (assuming that the United Appeal grant remained at 2019 level), the College should return to financial stability by 2025.
 8. With respect to a possible undergraduate validation partnership, the Management Committee representatives outlined the agreed criteria used in the assessment of up to ten different institutions in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland (see the left-hand column of Appendix 5). After considering how the criteria applied to each institution a shortlist of four universities was drawn up: Gloucester, Middlesex, Open University, St Mary's University, Twickenham. (St Mary's is a Roman Catholic university with over 5,500 students.) While not appropriate to set all four institutions against the criteria in a public document, how St Mary's, Twickenham met the criteria is shown in the right-hand column Appendix 5. It was reported to the Commission that several very positive meetings had taken place, involving representatives of St Mary's, the Faculty and the Management Committee. It was further reported that the Faculty and Management Committee were fully supportive and enthusiastic about the potential of a validation arrangement with St Mary's and unanimously recommended this to the Commission.
 9. The Commission took considerable time to engage with the representatives of the Management Committee and Faculty on the vision document, the financial projections and the recommendation regarding the new proposed undergraduate validation arrangement. A number of detailed questions were asked and answered and justifications for the various recommendations were sought.
 10. When the representatives of the Management Committee and Faculty withdrew, the Clerk of Assembly and Financial Secretary spoke to a document identifying possible PCI sources of additional temporary funding, to enable UTC to operate through the current transitional period, prior to having a fully maximised postgraduate and undergraduate student body (see Appendix 6). The Commission took time to discuss fully these recommendations.

11. Having considered, in detail, all of the matters that had been presented to it, the Commission unanimously made the following decisions:
- (a) That the Rev Professor Gordon Campbell be nominated to the 2020 General Assembly for appointment as the next Principal for Union Theological College for a three-year term commencing on the 1 September 2020.
 - (b) That the draft Job Description for the new Principal be approved, with the Clerk of Assembly being authorised to make any necessary adjustments, as required.
 - (c) That the ‘Vision for Union Theological College’ document be endorsed by the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) and that it be forwarded to the 2020 General Assembly with the strong recommendation that it be received and adopted.
 - (d) That the proposal for a new undergraduate partnership with St Mary’s University, Twickenham, be endorsed by the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) and that it be forwarded to the 2020 General Assembly with the strong recommendation that it be received and adopted.
 - (e) That the recommendations regarding Additional PCI Sources of Financial Funding for Union Theological College be agreed.
 - (f) That the Clerk of Assembly be instructed to write to the General Assembly Trustees with the request from the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019), on behalf of the General Assembly, that a grant of £30,000 per year be made from their Discretionary Fund to Union Theological College, for the five-year transitional period, from the academic year 2020/21 to 2024/25 (inclusive).

APPENDIX 1

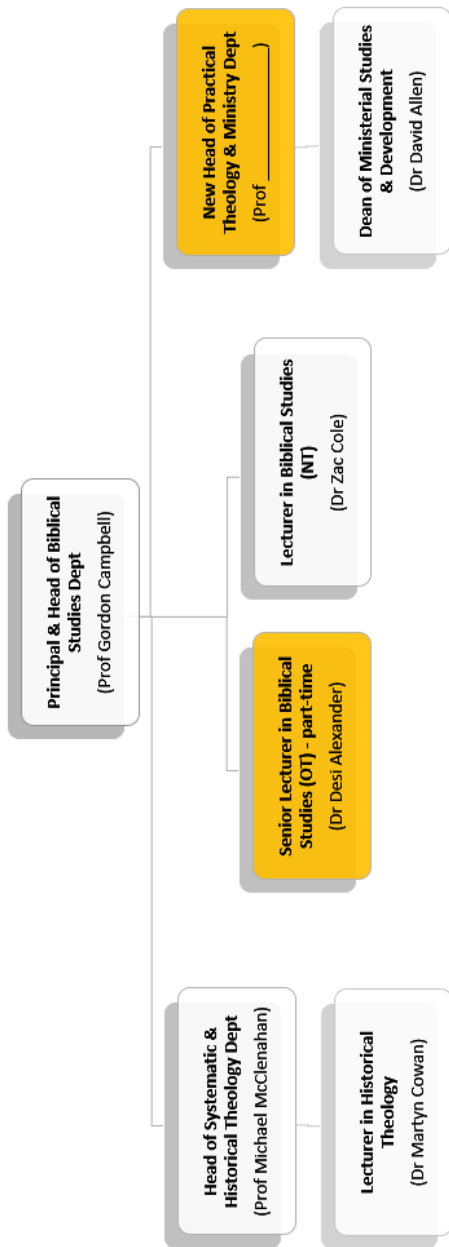
New outline Administrative Staffing Structure for Union Theological College

Note: Gradings are for illustrative purposes only and will be determined by the Job Evaluation Panel.

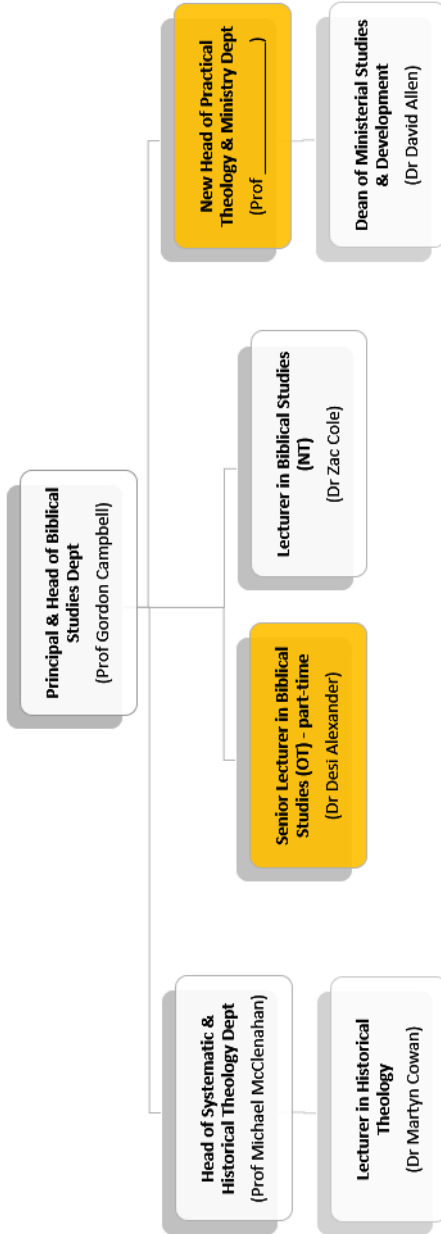


APPENDIX 2

Envisaged UTC Academic Staffing Plans 2020-21



Envisaged UTC Academic Staffing Plans 2021-22



APPENDIX 3

A Vision for Union Theological College prepared for Management Committee and Finance and Staffing Commission

February 2020

Introduction

The Management Committee of the College appointed a Review Task Group (UTCRTG) to explore various options with regard to the future of the College and the wider issues surrounding the provision of training for students for the ordained ministry of PCI.

The wider issues included:

- (a) Providing for the training of ministers through another educational institution and funding some staff in that institution to provide denomination-specific training;
- (b) Permanently withdrawing all undergraduate teaching and operating as a graduate school or institute for ministerial training;
- (c) Seeking a revision of the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland (PTFI) Royal Charter to allow for undergraduate as well as graduate-entry awards.

It was strongly felt that the best way forward is to maintain our own College to provide learning opportunities for both ministerial students and non-ministerial students. While the revision of the PTFI charter would bring some benefits, it is not clear that a revision could secure the approval of the Privy Council or that an extension of the charter to include undergraduate awards would be supported by the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland. The continuation of the work of Union Theological College is the Task Group's preferred option.

This paper is presented to the Finance and Staffing Commission as it considers the future of Union Theological College, its administrative and academic staffing structure, as well as the financial resources required to sustain the College's work and ministry. It should be read alongside the College's Annual Evaluative Report for 2018-19.

For a number of years Union Theological College has expressed its commitments in terms of three goals:

- (a) Equipping students for effective ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland;
- (b) Providing research-informed teaching and innovative approaches to learning and assessment;
- (c) Preparing students to make effective and positive contributions in our society and across the world.

This Vision Paper proposes that these three commitments should be maintained and enhanced as Union College develops its ministry in the short- and medium-term future.

1. Equipping students for effective ministry

The primary task of Union Theological College is to prepare men and women for ministry and service within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Currently, all ministry students meet General Assembly requirements for their training through courses under the oversight of the Council for Training in Ministry. Suitably qualified entrants may also study for an integrated postgraduate award in Theology, under the auspices of the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland (details below).

If the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is to fulfil its mission and extend its ministry of being a biblical, reformed and non-sectarian church in Ireland, then it will need to be resourced and refreshed by a steady stream of ministers and church workers who exercise fruitful and effective ministries. This goal will require not just the successful completion of academic courses in all the sub-disciplines of Theology and Ministry, but will require the nurturing of ministry competencies in spoken and written communication, pastoral and leadership skills, as well as personal and spiritual formation. Union College is committed to the provision of this holistic approach to theological education and ministerial training.

In particular, ministerial training provided by Union College must cohere with the mission and church-planting strategy of PCI. The changing social, political and ecclesiastical landscape of Ireland means that PCI must articulate a clear mission strategy that provides liturgical and doctrinal stability and is not simply activist and pragmatic.¹ This will require some discussion and agreement within the wider church.

In the academic year 2019-20, two main pathways were available for students to satisfy the requirements of the General Assembly:

- (a) For graduate entrants, there is the option of completing a Master of Divinity degree or Master of Theology programme where designated modules in the Church Training Pathway are aligned to enhanced learning outcomes appropriate to master's-level study;
- (b) For non-graduate entrants, the General Assembly requirements are completed by taking the CTM-approved modules only.

All courses for ministry students have an orientation to ministry and pastoral praxis, with CTM requirements across all modules reflecting necessary levels of competency for ministry. All ministry students learn

1 Kenneth J. Stewart, *In Search of Ancient Roots* (London: Apollos; 2017) p253-273

together in their cohort, but those studying for a master's award must demonstrate enhanced competencies aligned to appropriate intended learning outcomes.

Full details of these programmes are available at:

www.union.ac.uk/cmsfiles/Student-hub/Handbooks/MDivProgrammeHandbookV05FINAL20191205.pdf

www.union.ac.uk/cmsfiles/Student-hub/Handbooks/ChurchTrainingPathwayHandbook2019-20V06FINAL.pdf

PCI, as main employer, has a key role in monitoring, reviewing and enhancing the effectiveness of the CTM pathway. External academic advice and moderation supplements this for integrated master's awards.

2. Providing research-informed teaching

As part of its vision, Union College must provide for on-going research and reflection in the foundational sub-disciplines of Theology, and particularly at the interface between theology, church, and the contemporary world.

The most recent Subject Benchmark Statement on Theology and Religious Studies (December 2019) describes this aspect:

The interface between academic study and practising religious communities is complex and significant. Critical analysis may challenge profoundly held convictions producing sharp rejection of academic study, but may also stimulate engagement with contemporary concerns. Such study is a major contributor to community understanding and development and the avoidance or challenging of prejudices arising from misinformation. Contemporary society in the UK has an interest in ensuring that in matters of religion, debate is well informed and of high quality. Such understanding contributes to discussions on topics including international relations, community relations, human rights, social justice, wealth disparity, sustainability, climate change and the impact of the digital revolution. It is important that society has places where thorough and thoughtful engagement with current religious issues (including political, ethical and educational questions) can take place, thus enabling public debate to be resourced appropriately on all sides. The fact that theology and religious studies graduates go into a variety of careers, not only as religious professionals, means that there is a pool of citizens with a sophisticated understanding of religion who are able to contribute to debate in many areas of society.

For this goal to be achieved, Union College must maintain and promote a robust culture of research and reflection whereby Faculty and students may explore significant issues of Christian faith and life on the interface between church and society. This will require:

- (a) The continuing provision of postgraduate programmes at Masters and doctoral levels which foster research in Theology. Already there has been a steady growth in the number of applications for the online Master of Theology in Reformed Theology and for the PhD programme offered under the auspices of the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland (PTFI).
- (b) Individually, in their Departments and collegially, Faculty workloads have involved excessive amounts of administration, detrimental to quality research, publication and research-led teaching in their areas of specialism and expertise. In order to correct this, Faculty workloads require careful management and monitoring.
- (c) Although the output of UTC Faculty is not currently subject to national frameworks for research or teaching excellence, demonstrable active engagement in research and publication is and will remain key to UTC's on-going recognition as an approved alternative provider of higher education.

3. Preparing students to make effective and positive contributions in our society and across the world

As part of the Institute of Theology at Queen's University, the College delivered both undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, but with the termination of that long relationship, the matter of undergraduate provision must be re-considered.

Since the introduction of primary degrees in Divinity or Theology at Queen's University, in the 1970s, UTC has been privileged to welcome many hundreds of school-leavers from NI schools into its student body. Across the same period, most ministry students studied for degrees on the same pathways, learning alongside and from their younger colleagues. The student body has brought diversity, energy and vitality to the College community and contributed dynamically to its life.

Since Theology entrants have come from right across the N. Ireland community, and typically with knowledge and awareness from religious studies at school, it has been a huge part of UTC's mission to prepare generations of QUB Theology graduates to take their place and make their contribution in a broad range of occupations in wider society. Faculty is passionate about furthering this mission into the future. As the Subject Benchmark Statement for Theology and Religious Studies points out:

The experience of studying this subject may contribute to a student's personal development, transforming horizons by engaging with cultures and societies other than her or his own, whether ancient or modern. It may foster a lifelong quest for

wisdom, respect for one's own integrity and that of others, self-examination in terms of the beliefs, values and practices adopted for one's own life, a better understanding of religion's role in geopolitical conflict and, not least, the challenging of prejudices. The multidisciplinary nature of much of theology and religious studies also means that students develop breadth of vision and intellectual flexibility.

- (i) In any new arrangement for the College, there should be a focus on the delivery of an undergraduate degree in Theology. An undergraduate degree in Theology allows young people with a strong aptitude for religious studies at A-level, or an interest in the subject, to continue or take up Theology. Our post-primary schools will continue to need suitably gifted and qualified subject specialists, and the College has important relationships with RE teachers across the sector and has organised a successful RE Sixth Form Forum for a number of years. More generally, young people from across the denominations who seek to think through their faith and apply it in spheres of ministry or other areas of endeavour and work, will continue to need foundational training in Theology. This would enable us not only to prepare potential RE specialists for post-primary schools, but to provide foundational training for those wishing to undertake various types of ministry, as well as for those who aspire to postgraduate research in Theology.
- (ii) With the withdrawal of Theology by QUB, Northern Ireland will soon no longer have any Theology programme open to all school-leavers from across our community. Currently, nine of the top ten (and thirteen of the top twenty) best-performing grammar schools in Northern Ireland are in the maintained sector, with large numbers studying RE at A-level, some of whose teachers are UTC alumni. With its own undergraduate programme, UTC will have a strategic opportunity to build on past experience and encourage the study of faith, theology and religion in a climate of mutual respect and intelligent, informed debate.
- (iii) A new validation relationship for undergraduate degrees will create the possibility of Union College delivering undergraduate learning experiences in a more flexible way. In recent years we have developed online postgraduate programmes under the auspices of PTFI, as well as delivering some undergraduate modules through an intensive course of study. This experience, and the expertise we have developed, means that Union College is now able to respond to the increasing demand for flexibility in higher education.

- (iv) In considering this matter, the Review Task Group of the Management Committee drew up a list of desirable criteria by which it would assess possible validation partners. In collaboration with QUB, UTC delivered Theology as the franchising institution for the University's degree programmes, although mostly retaining freedom for the design and content of courses. With any new partner, validation will be sought for UTC's own degree programme(s), developed fully in line with the College's own approved policies and designed, delivered and reviewed under the sole aegis of the Faculty.
- (v) In line with the College's policies, and with particular attention to the Programme Design and Review Policy, any proposed new undergraduate programme must:
- Fit with the College's mission and strategic aims and form a coherent offering with other existing and planned programmes within the College;
 - Present a business case for financial viability of the programme, taking into consideration market trends, competitor activity, and anticipated student demand;
 - Designate whether the Faculty or a department will take the lead for the programme development;
 - Designate a proposed external examiner and other relevant sources of externality;
 - Have the necessary resources to ensure a high-quality student learning experience.
- (vi) It is anticipated that once a new validation partner is approved by the General Assembly, we will seek approval of a new undergraduate programme in a timely way to allow students to enter in September 2021. Key issues to be addressed in that process will include UCAS recognition and Department for the Economy (NI) course designation.

Conclusion

We believe that by the academic year 2023-24, Union College will achieve the goal of being financially stable and adequately resourced as it:

- (a) Produces appropriately trained students for PCI ministry, through bespoke CTM courses;
- (b) Pursues research and publication in the main areas of Theology;
- (c) Promotes existing master's and doctoral courses in Theology, and develops new ones;
- (d) Provides access to Theology for undergraduate students drawn from across the Northern Ireland community and beyond.

In commending this vision for UTC, we encourage the Finance and Staffing Commission to keep the wider mission and vision of PCI in view, and offer the General Assembly clear and considered guidance on how the vision for UTC's mission articulated above may be resourced and implemented, both financially and educationally. We recognize that it will require leadership, co-ordination, and a renewed dependence on the Lord of the Church. As part of PCI, the Faculty and administration of Union Theological College believe that they have a key role to play and are eager to be involved in this great project of advancing Christ's kingdom in Ireland and across the world.

APPENDIX 4

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
INCOME	1,118,034	1,155,741	990,850	888,790	991,915	1,057,220
EXPENDITURE	1,172,600	1,174,500	1,198,833	1,097,833	1,082,833	1,082,833
(DEFICIT) / SURPLUS	(54,566)	(18,759)	(207,983)	(209,043)	(90,918)	(25,613)
CUMMULATIVE DEFICIT		(73,325)	(281,308)	(490,351)	(581,269)	(606,882)

Note: The Cumulative Deficit at the end of the 2024/25 academic year is partially offset by the opening 'unrestricted cash balance' on 1st January 2020 of some £139,000.

APPENDIX 5

Criteria for a Validation Partner with comment on how St Mary's, Twickenham, meets those criteria

1. Assurance of confessional identity and Christian ethos of UTC	They have a clear understanding of their own mission and have full appreciation of the mission of UTC. They are clearly committed to preserving the confessional identity of both institutions and share many of our convictions e.g. personal formation, ethical issues.
2. Clear interfaces established between PTFI programmes, Ministry Training Pathway and UG validation/collaboration	Clear understanding of UTC's mission and that validation/collaboration will have no impact on the integrity and content of PTFI programmes and Ministry Training Pathway.
3. Additional Intellectual resources available for teaching and research supervision	Institute of Theology with 12 full-time faculty. Significant resources available for enhancement of Learning and Teaching. Joint teams for PGR supervision clearly possible. Positive indications about UTC's recruitment and development of adjunct faculty.
4. Regulatory Oversight, including QAA compliance	Good evidence of their compliance with the Quality Code. Significant support and advice available to UTC to enhance its compliance and enhancement.
5. Track record of successful partnerships with other institutions	Yes. Particular connections with institutions preparing students for ministry. They understand clearly the interface between academic qualifications and preparation for ministry.
6. Clarity on the nature of the relationship, including governance.	They have undergone a thorough review of their own governance structure since 2015 and have significant personnel resources which will ensure a robust and workable agreement. Generally "light touch" after initial agreement.
7. Financial impact and additional services required at UTC	Admissions process would be cooperative and require online support from UTC. Additional students services will need to be provided directly or "bought in" (disability, well-being, careers and employability). [Remainder of this comment redacted for commercial reasons]

<p>8. Enhancement of UTC's mission</p>	<p>Significant opportunities for UTC to develop its mission as UTC determines e.g. a flexible undergraduate programme, possibility of foundation year to widen access and/or Liberal Arts programme.</p>
<p>9. Risks and obstacles</p>	<p>Relationship might be misunderstood as having a theological/ecclesiastical dimension. Need to explain clearly to stakeholders the exclusively educational/academic nature of the relationship and how management of course content and method of delivery resides entirely with UTC faculty.</p>
<p>10. Benefits and bonuses</p>	<p>Good public example of cooperation at high level between two faith-based institutions of HE. Enhancement of recruitment among able students from the maintained sector.</p>

APPENDIX 6

ADDITIONAL PCI SOURCES OF FINANCIAL FUNDING

1. The 2019 General Assembly expressed a clear commitment to the future of its Theological College, putting in place a programme of work to enable firm and definite proposals regarding the College's future to be brought to the 2020 General Assembly for decision.
2. At the same time, the 2019 General Assembly delegated authority to the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) "*to make any necessary legal, financial and staffing decisions in regard to Union Theological College*".
3. At the meeting of the Commission on 27 November 2019, the following decision was taken:

That the Clerk of Assembly and Financial Secretary be requested to identify all possible sources of additional temporary funding, to enable UTC to operate through the current transitional period, prior to having a fully maximised postgraduate and undergraduate student body.

4. Having considered the financial projections drawn up by the UTC Management Committee (presented to the Commission on the 13 February – see summary in Appendix 4), the following sources have been identified to provide the necessary transitional funding over a five-year period from the academic year 2020/21 to the academic year 2024/25 (inclusive):
 - (a) That the fee paid to UTC on behalf of each Ministry Student be increased by £1,000 as an ongoing adjustment.
 - On the basis of the projections of student numbers, this will realise the following each year: £24,000 + £29,000 + £25,000 + £24,000 + £24,000 = £127,000

This would be covered from reserves in the Students' Bursary Fund.

- (b) That the Support Services Committee annual charge for central services be rebated by £60,000 per year for five-year period.
 - This will realise £60,000 each year giving a total of £300,000

This would be covered from the Incidental Fund by increase in the assessment, balanced by an anticipated reduction in the amount of assessment needed by other funds, leaving an overall neutral effect on the assessment rate for congregations.

- (c) That the General Assembly Trustees be requested to make a grant of £30,000 per year (from their Discretionary Fund) for the five-year period.
 - This will realise £30,000 each year giving a total of £150,000

This would equate to the annual interest available from the Trustees Discretionary Fund.

TOTAL PROPOSED ADDITIONAL TRANSITIONAL FUNDING:

£114,000 + £119,000 + £115,000 + £114,000 + £114,000 = £576,000

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the 'Vision for Union Theological College' document (Appendix 3) be received and adopted.
2. That the proposal for a new undergraduate partnership with St Mary's University, Twickenham be received and approved.
3. That the Rev Professor Gordon Campbell be appointed as Principal of Union Theological College, for a three-year term, commencing on 1 January 2021.
4. That the Report of the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.
5. That the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) be thanked for its services and discharged.

COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

Convener: Rev N.J. McCULLOUGH

Secretary: Rev T.J. STOTHERS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Ministerial Studies and Development Committee reports on its oversight of the selection and training of students for the ministry including the recommendation of six new students.
2. The Ministerial Studies and Development Committee reports on Applications and Flexible Pathways.
3. The Union Theological College Management Committee reports on the Quality Assurance Agency, staff, students, finance and the Union Theological College Review Task Group. All of the work in these areas, but especially that of the Review Task Group, has been undertaken in the light of the changed relationship with Queen's University, Belfast.
4. The Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee reports on transferring ministers and requests to retain the status of ministers without charge and of licentiates not serving an assistantship.
5. The Deaconess Training and Selection Panel reports on its oversight of the deaconesses presently in training.
6. The Accredited Preacher and Auxiliary Ministry Panel reports on current and future courses.
7. The Pastoral Care of Ministers and their Families Panel reports on its encouraging and resourcing role.
8. The Conciliation Panel reports on its work of providing conciliation and conciliation training for the church.

Convener's Introduction

9. At the time of writing, the Council has met three times since the last General Assembly. The standing committee continues to meet in video conference during the current restrictions.
10. As would be expected, the coronavirus pandemic has resulted in many alterations to plans and postponements of events under the Council's oversight. Tribute is paid to the staff of Union Theological College (UTC) who have sought to help students through a difficult period and ensure the continuation of their education.
11. A large part of the Council's work has involved matters consequent on the changed relationship with Queen's University, Belfast; with the implementation of new teaching programmes, including increased

provision for online learning; and relating to the remit of the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) appointed by last year's General Assembly. These matters are reported on under the UTC Management Committee.

12. Once again, there has been an enormous amount of work undertaken behind the scenes - in the Council and its committees, panels and task groups, in the College and its Faculty and administrative staff, and in the wider church.

Ministry Applicants

13. While the number of people applying to become students for the ministry has been encouraging, it is still significantly below the level hoped. The Council continues to call the Church to pray earnestly for the supply of a stream of students for the ministry and urges ministers and elders in particular to continue to see the encouraging of suitably gifted and qualified people towards ministry as a vital part of their work.

Gratitude

14. This year will see the retirement of the Very Rev Professor Stafford Carson as Principal. The church is in his debt for the superb leadership he has exercised and the Council is deeply grateful for his work. Rev Jim Stothers will also retire from his role as Deputy Clerk and Secretary to the Council. The Council is also deeply grateful for the steady and unstinting service that the Deputy Clerk has given.

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 September 2019 - June 2020 there are 20 students in receipt of grants, all of whom are studying at Union Theological College, Belfast. The cost to the fund of grants, fees and all other expenses for this period will be in the region of £325,000. This is being met through offerings at services of licensing, of ordination and installations of ministers and elders and through personal and congregational donations as well as congregational assessment. Thanks are due to all members of the Church who generously support the Students' Bursary Fund.
17. At time of writing, services have been suspended because of the coronavirus crisis. Inevitably, this will have consequences for the Students' Bursary Fund and other funds of the Church. It will be all the more important, therefore, that when, in the providence of God, services are resumed, all those who have responsibility for planning a

service of licensing, or of ordination and installation, ensure full use is made of the Students' Bursary Fund literature, especially the Gift Aid envelope. (Experience has shown that where literature is handed out at an earlier service, those attending the special service are more likely to make use of the Gift Aid scheme.) When the Coronavirus crisis restrictions are lifted, this literature again will be available from reception in Assembly Buildings. It would be appreciated if any unused literature could be returned following the service.

MINISTERIAL STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

18. Twelve students commenced ministerial training this autumn, giving a total of 20 students currently in training with two deferred and due to start this September. A schedule of students is shown as Appendix 1.

Applications

19. Eight candidates for ordained ministry were interviewed by two panels consisting of A: Revs Gordon Best (Chairman), Dr Paul Bailie and Alastair McNeely, Very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson, and Miss Anne Taylor; and, B: Revs Daryl Edwards (Chairman), Robert Beggs and Gary Glasgow, Mrs Isobel McAuley, and Rev George McClelland.
20. As with many planned events this year, these interviews have had to be held in difficult circumstances, but the committee and panels have worked very hard to ensure that the process has maintained both its rigour and fairness.
21. Having completed this process, six are being nominated to the General Assembly.
22. As the General Assembly approved the revised interview pathway last year, those who apply in 2020 will be treated accordingly. This means there is no requirement any longer to take the Accredited Preacher's Scheme before application, with residentials and placements fulfilling that role in future.

Flexible Pathways

23. Last General Assembly saw the introduction of the flexible pathway for applicants with significant previous theological education and/or experience in pastoral ministry. It was noted that the Council Convener and Secretary should not be a part of this panel so that they can be independent in the event of any appeals. Rev David Leach and Mrs Isobel McAuley have agreed to serve on this panel.
24. One previously accepted student, who had requested a deferral, asked for a flexible pathway. A pathway was agreed and this student is expected to commence his studies in September.

Encouragement of Applications

25. The three short videos planned from last General Assembly have been completed and will be available shortly on a range of platforms. These films, which highlight the experience of ministry, the importance of encouragement from local congregations for people to apply, and the range of roles ministers play in our church, will help to stimulate conversations with people about the prospect of ordained ministry.
26. Another 'Ministry Taster Day' is planned for the autumn with the aim of encouraging further applications for ministry. Serving ministers will talk about the life in PCI after ordination and staff from UTC will explain the training process. In the past, these days have drawn in many men and women and begun conversations that have in many cases led to applications to explore the possibility of ministry in PCI. We pray that this day will be used by God in similar ways.

Summer Placements

27. Understandably, the summer placements of first and second year students have had to be cancelled. Plans have been made for those eligible, but not yet called to a congregation, to not be disadvantaged by the current situation.

Licentiates

28. Fourteen licentiates became eligible for call on 1 September 2019.

Post-ordination Conferences

29. The post-ordination conference planned for May with Marcus Honeysett and a team from Living Leadership has had to be cancelled. It is being rescheduled for 2022. In 2021 Zach Eswine, author of 'The Imperfect Pastor', is booked in to lead the conference on spiritual formation.

Pre-retirement Conferences

30. These conferences continue to be greatly appreciated by attendees.

ANDREW FAULKNER, Convener

UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

31. In what has been a challenging year for the College, the Management Committee wishes to put on record its thanks to all who played their part in preparing for a new future for Union College. Thanks are especially due to the academic and administrative staff who have borne the brunt of much of the work.

Quality Assurance Agency

32. The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) report received in the summer of 2019 indicated that the College has met requirements in the four main areas. Some recommendations have been made and these are being implemented. On the recommendation of the Teaching and Learning Panel, the Committee has agreed various protocols with regard to e.g. academic structure, risk management, programme development and administrative support.
33. Also in line with QAA requirements, a Periodic Review of the College has been implemented, reporting in the first instance in 2021.

Staff

34. It was with deep regret that the Committee learned of the death in the autumn of a member of the administrative staff team, Mrs Caren Johnston, after illness. Temporary provision was made to cover her area of work.
35. A Task Group, including PCI's Head of Personnel and student representatives, was appointed to ensure the appointment of full-time academic staff takes account of the diversity and needs of all students in order that individual students are able to develop and achieve their academic, personal and professional potential.
36. Task Groups were appointed to make recommendations on a Strategic Administrative Support Post and to carry out a First Stage Review of Academic Staffing.

Students

37. With the lack of a first-year undergraduate intake in September 2019, overall student numbers were significantly reduced and the total number at College is now 125. This includes twenty ministry students and six A-level students.

Finance

38. Discussions with Queen's University, Belfast, led satisfactorily to the provision of a compensatory amount in recognition of the cost to the College in the 'teach-out' of Queen's students already enrolled on courses taught at UTC, and a rebate on validation fees.
39. The Committee is grateful for a bequest of £121,997 from the estate of the late FGB Robinson.
40. Further information related to finance is given in Par 49 of this report and Par 10 and Appendix 6 of the report of the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019).
41. The College's United Appeal request submitted this year remains at the same level as last year, that is, £357,000.

42. Two new members were welcomed to the Finance, Property and Administration Panel, Mr Glyn Forbes and Mr Ian Long. The Rev David Leach is thanked as he stands down as Convener of the Teaching and Learning Panel.

UTC Review Task Group

43. Matters concerning the future of the College have been a major item of business this past year and the Management Committee has had regular reports from the Task Group. The Committee places on record its appreciation of the expertise, time and commitment that members of the Task Group have given over the past year.
44. It has continued the work reported on to the 2019 General Assembly and built on that, covering matters which include:
- (a) Relationship with Queen's University, Belfast
 - (b) Online programmes
 - (c) Undergraduate Provision
 - (d) Governance Structure
 - (e) QAA and the outworking of its 2019 report.
 - (f) Tier 4 Visas
 - (g) Finance
 - (h) Staffing
 - (i) Supplementation of 1881 Charter of Presbyterian Theological Faculty Ireland
 - (j) Amendment of Union Theological College 1978 Act
45. The work of the Task Group enabled the UTC Management Committee to draw up recommendations for presentation to the 2019 Finance and Staffing Commission appointed by last year's General Assembly (see Par 1 of the report of the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) for details of its remit).
46. The Task Group examined in depth four possibilities for the future of the College: discontinue provision of a primary degree in theology; amend the PTFI charter, or seek undergraduate degree awarding powers for UTC; partnership with a university without a theology department; partnership with a university with a theology department. A significant number of meetings were held with in-depth consideration of all four options. After considering the benefits and disadvantages of all of these, the Task Group recommended, and the Committee agreed, that partnership with a university with a theology department would provide the most benefits and the least disadvantages.
47. The Task Group and Management Committee took significant time to consider the administrative and academic staffing structures necessary for UTC to deliver this vision for moving into the future. The outcomes of these detailed discussions were presented to the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) for its consideration.

48. With respect to possible validation partnerships, up to ten other institutions in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland were considered against agreed criteria. After considering how the criteria applied to each institution, a shortlist of four universities was drawn up: Gloucester, Middlesex, Open, St Mary's University, Twickenham. St Mary's is a Roman Catholic university with over 5,500 students. Several meetings have taken place, involving representatives of St Mary's, the Faculty and the Management Committee. Faculty and Management Committee are fully supportive and enthusiastic about the potential of a validation arrangement. (See Par 8 and Appendix 5 of the report of the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019).)
49. Representatives of the Management Committee, along with Faculty representatives, met with the Finance and Staffing Commission on 13 February 2020 and presented a vision for Union College - see Appendix 3 of the report of the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019). Alongside this, financial projections based on a conservative number of students were presented. These projections indicated that, after a few years of deficit, the College should return to financial stability by 2025.
50. The Commission considered the recommendations of the Management Committee and the Commission's decisions (taken with its delegated authority) and its recommendations to the 2020 General Assembly may both be read in the report of the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019).
51. The Management Committee has noted the decisions that have been taken by the Finance and Staffing Commission (2019) and has begun to take steps to implement these as appropriate. The Management Committee, and the College as a whole, await the outcome of the 2020 General Assembly regarding the Commission's recommendations, and stresses the urgency of a clear decision, one way or the other, regarding the future of undergraduate provision within Union Theological College.

IVAN PATTERSON, Convener

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES COMMITTEE

52. The Committee met five times since the 2019 General Assembly.

Enquiries

53. Eight people contacted the RMLC during the year for information about transferring to the ministry of PCI. Four of these have, to date, followed through with formal enquiries.

Transferring Ministers

54. Rev Andras Gilicze, a minister in the Hungarian Reformed Church, completed a two-year period of assistantship at Stormont (Belfast) in February 2020. Having satisfied the Committee in all formal assessments, he was declared eligible to be called as a minister of PCI.
55. Rev Laszlo Orban, an ordained minister of the Hungarian Reformed Church (in Romania), commenced a two-year assessed assistantship in Joymount, Carrickfergus on 1 October 2018. His training and formal assessment continues, with a view to eligibility for a call in October 2020.
56. Rev Enrique Tagle Aguiar, an ordained minister in Havana Baptist Church, Cuba, commenced a two-year assessed assistantship in 1st Carrickfergus on 1 April 2019, with a view to eligibility for call in April 2021.
57. Mr Derek French, a PCI global mission worker in Spain, who had been approved, in principle, for reception as a Transferring Licentiate, took the decision to remain as a missionary in Spain.
58. Rev Mariann Gilicze, an ordained minister in the Hungarian Reformed Church, was interviewed on 18 October 2019, and received as a transferring minister. She will subsequently be assigned to an assessed two-year assistantship.
59. Rev Trevor Kane, an ordained minister in the Free Church of Scotland, was interviewed on 20 January 2020, and subsequently received as a transferring minister. He was due to commence a two-year assessed assistantship but this has had to be put on hold.

Applications to be received as Transferring Ministers

60. Rev Stuart Burnham, an ordained minister in the Irish Baptist Church, was interviewed on 20 January 2020, but was not received at this time as a transferring minister.
61. Rev Jason Lingiah, an ordained minister in the United Free Church of Scotland, has completed an exploratory week, but his situation is currently on hold due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
62. Mr Mark Haugh, originally from Northern Ireland and theologically trained in the Presbyterian Church in America, has been declared of equivalent status to that of a licentiate in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and has applied to transfer to PCI. His situation is currently on hold due to the COVID-19 restrictions.
63. A request from the Council for Mission in Ireland concerning two Church of Scotland Army Chaplains considering applying to become ministers within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland whilst continuing as chaplains, is currently under discussion with CMI.

Request from Faculty re. Written English Levels of Transferring Ministers

64. While it has not yet presented a significant problem, the Committee was requested to consider a formal test of the standard of written English of applicants whose first language is not English, and who wish to transfer to PCI. Having examined various available tests, it was decided that each applicant should be considered on an individual basis.

Ministers without Charge and Licentiates not in Assistantship

65. Under the Code, Par 219(4), presbyteries seek authorisation through the Committee for the retention of licentiates not serving an assistantship under Code Par 219A, and of ministers without charge. Reporting forms have been amended to serve in a better way the purpose of gathering relevant information. The Committee is grateful to Clerks of Presbytery for making annual returns in good time so that requests may be received in time for recommendations to be included in the Report Book. The list of recommendations is included in Appendix 2.

Former Ministers and Licentiates

66. Consideration has been given to the situation of former ministers or licentiates of our church who have resigned, and were not made a minister without charge by their presbytery or given credentials. Such former ministers and licentiates have no route back into ministry in the Code, other than by way of Memorial. Overtures which will change the Code to give them such a route are included elsewhere in this Report Book.

Requests for Permission to Preach in Vacancies

67. Following formal applications, appropriate accompanying documents and written requests from the relevant vacancy conveners, two applicants were interviewed and granted permission to preach in vacant congregations – viz.: Rev Mark Ellis to preach in Hamilton Road, Bangor, and Rev Will Ackles to preach in Arklow.

ALBERT BAXTER, Convener

Recognised Ministries

Rev Dr WJP Bailie, Mission Africa, writes:

68. Mission Africa (The Qua Iboe Fellowship) is one of Ireland's oldest mission agencies, currently in its 133rd year of operation. Mission Africa continues to pray that God might continue to be pleased to use the mission for His sovereign purposes. It will surprise no-one that our Gospel work has been severely disrupted by the world crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

69. 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 amongst disadvantaged and marginalised populations, such as women, children and the elderly. These ministries are carried out in partnership with various evangelical African denominations, and often like-minded mission agencies. Mission Africa is a member of Global Connections (Evangelical Missionary Alliance) and Mission Agencies Partnership. I am particularly pleased to report warm relations with the Council for Global Mission.
70. The mission continues its work against a background of financial challenge, a diminishing interest in foreign mission amongst western Churches and at a time when many within the Church cannot adequately distinguish between mission and aid and development work. Nevertheless, we continue to send out full time missionaries and operate a short-term programme of teams and medium term placements. We also continue to operate branches in Scotland and England.
71. 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 in Africa and I am currently developing plans for police and military chaplaincy in Africa.
72. I am also grateful to be able to record that my status as a Minister in recognised service permits me to play an active role within my Presbytery (Ards), the Council for Training in Ministry and the subsidiary committees of the CTM. I am particularly glad to serve the Church through part-time teaching of Old Testament at Union Theological College, and ACF chaplaincy. I was honoured to be one of the Moderator's Chaplains for 2019-2020.

Rev Dr Ruth Patterson, Restoration Ministries, writes:

73. Throughout this past year Restoration Ministries has kept on its quiet work of prayer, spiritual direction and retreat-giving, all of which are important, if largely hidden, contributors to the making of peace. This also continues to be nurtured by the eight Faith and Friendship groups throughout the North.
74. In our 33rd year of pilgrimage as Restoration Ministries, I can say with more conviction than ever, and with a deep humility, that the signposts to the peace and reconciliation for which we all yearn are as they have always been: listening, building relationships, being attentive to our own inner journey (including the vital process of forgiveness), doing the little things with great love – and prayer - which is, in essence, our love relationship with God.

DEACONESS SELECTION AND TRAINING PANEL

75. Student Deaconesses Paula Burrows and Louise Davidson have completed their third-year placements in the congregations of Ballygrainey and Bangor West respectively. Sylvia Santos-Bryce is on maternity leave which will come to an end on 31 May 2020. All three students have completed the academic elements of their training, and are set to graduate in May 2020.
76. The programme for training future deaconesses has been thoroughly reviewed with input from students, teaching staff, PW and the Council for Mission in Ireland. Future student deaconesses are to receive a certificate in recognition of their studies from the Council for Training in Ministry rather than from Union Theological College, as at present. This is similar to the situation for student ministers.
77. The Panel has been in the process of selecting three new trainee deaconesses who would have been due to commence study in September 2020. This study will now commence in September 2021.
78. The Panel has been involved in a wider discussion on the topic of a non-gender-specific diaconate and considered the areas of overlap between such and the current post of auxiliary minister. The issues raised present both great challenges and opportunities for our denomination as we seek to re-imagine ministry in the 21st century. It is understood that the Council for Mission in Ireland hopes to report on this to this year's General Assembly.

ROBIN BROWN, Convener

ACCREDITED PREACHER AND AUXILIARY MINISTRY PANEL

Auxiliary Ministry Scheme

79. After a lapse of four years, an Auxiliary Ministry Course commenced in January 2020 with nine candidates who had successfully completed the required interviews. This course was due to be completed by the end of 2020 however, due to the current restrictions, the course has been paused.

Accredited Preacher Scheme

80. 2019/2020 Course – Eighteen students have successfully completed their course with two others still working towards completion. This year's Service of Accreditation has had to be cancelled. Successful students will receive their certificates of accreditation by post.

81. 2020/2021 Course – The planned interviews for admission to the course had to be cancelled and the course itself has now been postponed until 2021.
82. Reaccreditation training for accredited preachers was due to take place in April but also had to be postponed.

OSSIE McAULEY, Convener

PASTORAL CARE OF MINISTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES PANEL

83. The 2019 General Assembly formalised within the Code of the Church the central role that presbytery has in seeking to provide pastoral care for ministers and their families. The Panel is conscious of the role now entrusted to it to encourage and resource presbyteries in this aspect of their work.
84. Over the past year the Panel has been seeking to develop its encouraging and resourcing role within the Church.
85. In November, representatives from the Panel attended a presentation outlining the work of Inspire Workplaces. This confidential and independent professional counselling service is currently available as a support to all ministers within PCI and their families. Details of the service are on the internet at www.inspirewellbeing.org/our-services/inspire-workplaces. Work is ongoing as to how such resources can be highlighted across the church, and how additional resources can be found which will assist in nurturing pastoral care across our Church for ministers and their families.
86. In December, the Panel was invited to contribute an article to the Presbyterian Herald, outlining the ways in which our Church now seeks to support, pastorally, ministers and their families. This article created a welcome opportunity to affirm presbyteries in their caring role and the Panel has been encouraged by feedback from individual ministers and presbytery representatives following publication.

NIALL LOCKHART, Convener

CONCILIATION PANEL

87. The Conciliation Service continues to support congregations dealing with conflict and has worked on a number of different cases throughout the year since June 2019. Alongside this, the Service has provided training to licentiates and new deaconesses, and at presbytery and local congregational levels.

88. The Conciliation Panel is committed to ensuring a high quality service to PCI and conciliators take part in update and development training twice a year, usually in April and October. For each case, the conciliators involved are supported by a supervisor, with whom they meet regularly. The Panel is aware of a need to expand its pool of supervisors and will be exploring ways of doing this in the year ahead.
89. Part of the Conciliation Service's remit is, 'Facilitating difficult conversations as people work through issues.' To date, this has largely been done in the context of casework. However, individuals within the Conciliation Service have received a small number of requests to support ministers, elders and congregations to discuss together themes around which there may be diverse and strongly held views. In order to more effectively respond to such requests, training on the specific theme of 'Difference and Dialogue: Facilitating Difficult Conversations' was delivered to a group of conciliators in February 2020. This adds a third strand to the Service's work, alongside conciliation cases and training delivery.

MARY POTTER, Convener

QUALIFICATIONS PANEL

90. The Panel operates under Par 217(7)(d) of the Code and in accordance with General Assembly Reports 2006, pages 223-224. Thus:
- The Committee will normally recognise degrees awarded by:*
- (i) *Any University or faculty in Great Britain or Ireland incorporated by Act of Parliament or Royal Charter (Code par 217 (1)(a)(i)).*
 - (ii) *An American University or Seminary that has full ATS accreditation.*
 - (iii) *A University in another country which, in the judgement of the Committee, is of an academic standard equivalent to 1 or 2 above.*
- The Panel will also recognise:*
- (i) *Degrees and professional qualifications accepted as fulfilling the General Assembly's requirements for ministerial training, eg BA; MA; BSc.*
 - (ii) *Other degrees and appropriate professional qualifications related to Ministry from recognised institutions.*
 - (iii) *State awards, decorations and honours, eg MBE; TD.*
91. The Panel initiated an annual survey among ministers asking for corrections and additions to the list of qualifications and awards shown in their entry in the Directory. Arising from this survey, the Panel considered twenty requests for recognition of academic qualifications,

six requests for recognition of 'professional qualifications related to Ministry from recognised institutions' and one request for recognition of 'state awards, decorations and honours'.

92. Most of the requests were for qualifications and awards that have previously been recognised and are listed in the 2019 Directory, and so were granted. The remainder are listed below.
- (a) Request for recognition for academic qualification granted:
 - Diploma in Clinical and Pastoral Counselling (University of Paisley, now University of West of Scotland)
 - (b) Request for recognition for academic qualification not granted:
 - D.Min. (Canada Christian College)
 - (c) Requests for recognition of professional qualifications related to Ministry from recognised institutions granted:
 - Fellow of the Royal Historical Society
 - Fellow of the Higher Education Academy
 - (d) Requests for recognition of professional qualifications related to Ministry from recognised institutions not granted:
 - Chartered Chemist
 - Member of the Royal Society of Chemistry
 - Chartered Scientist
 - Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society
 - (e) Request for recognition of state awards, decorations and honours not granted:
 - Pax Christi International Peace Prize
93. The Panel considered a paper on the matter of accreditation in countries other than the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and the United States of America and Canada, to assist it in judging the academic standards of universities in such countries.

NIGEL McCULLOUGH, Convener

APPENDIX 1**SCHEDULE OF STUDENTS**

ARDS	Paul Bradley Andrew Frazer Wallace Moore	Union Union Union
ARMAGH	Mark Hawthorne Richard Hill	Union Union
BALLYMENA	Billy Abwa Martin Delaney Matthew Kelso Mark Rodgers	Union Union Union Union
NORTH BELFAST	Stephen Cairns Stephen Gaston Matthew Horner John McCracken	– Union Union Union
SOUTH BELFAST	Paul Lutton	Union
EAST BELFAST	Philip Boyd Neil Stewart	Union Union
COLERAINE & LIMAVADY	James O'Neill	Union
DOWN	Thomas Moore	Union
DROMORE	Tom Finnegan Stephen Kerr Andrew Martin	– Union Union
OMAGH	Jeff Gawn	Union

APPENDIX 2

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

Ards

Rev C.D. Mawhinney to be retained as minister without charge.

Armagh

Rev J.W.P. McConnell not to be retained as minister without charge.

North Belfast

Rev Dr L.E. Carroll to be retained as minister without charge.

Mr David McCarthy to be retained as licentiate.

Rev Samuel Newell to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev W.A. Shaw to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev W.M. Smyth to be retained as minister without charge (retired).

Rev F.W. Vincent not to be retained as minister without charge.

South Belfast

Rev Dr L.H. Eagleson to be retained as minister without charge for one further year and that the Clerk of Assembly be asked, if appropriate, to initiate discussions with Dr Eagleson and including the Linkage Commission and South Belfast Presbytery.

Rev J.D. Maxwell not to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev K.M. Mbayo to be retained as minister without charge for one year, and that the Secretary enquire whether there is any means of her being able to transfer under the care of the Methodist Church in England.

Rev Dr P.G. McDowell to be retained as minister without charge.

East Belfast

Rev J.M. Casement to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev W.J. Harshaw to be retained as minister without charge (retired).

Rev Dr D.J. Montgomery to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev Dr M.J. Welsh to be retained as minister without charge.

Carrickfergus

Mr C.M.S Barron to be retained as licentiate.

Rev T.N. Bingham to be retained as minister without charge.

Coleraine and Limavady

Rev Dr R.A. Kane to be retained as minister without charge.

Derry and Donegal

Rev S.W.K. Glendinning to be retained as minister without charge.

Down

Rev Dr B.C.G. Black to be retained as minister without charge.

Dromore

Rev W.J. Todd to be retained as minister without charge.

Monaghan

Rev D.J.M. Boyle to be retained as minister without charge.

Newry

Rev A.D. Mullan to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev B.A.H. Wilson to be retained as minister without charge.

Route

Rev Peter Turton to be retained as minister without charge for one year.

Templepatrick

Rev J.A. Gordon to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev J.L. Tosh to be retained as minister without charge.

Tyrone

Rev T.J. Conway to be retained as minister without charge.

Rev W.I. Ferris, to be retained as minister without charge.

NOTE: Since last year, the following are no longer listed as a minister without charge or licentiate.

Deceased

North Belfast: Rev C.I. McKnight

Derry and Donegal: Rev J.C. Teeney

Resigned

South Belfast: Rev J.A. Peacock

Route: Rev Dr Victor Dobbin

Status changed to Minister Emeritus

Tyrone: Rev J.M. Gracey

Ordained and Installed

Templepatrick: Mr J.R. Kernohan (by Derry & Donegal Presbytery)

Installed

East Belfast: Rev B.J.Walker (by South Belfast Presbytery)

Route: Rev R.J. Gilkinson (by South Belfast Presbytery)

No request to retain received from presbytery

Derry and Donegal: Rev D.A. Edgar; Rev K.G. Patterson

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly request ministers, elders and other church members to look out for men and women who may be gifted for the Ordained Ministry and to encourage them to consider whether God is calling them to this work; and that the Assembly pray that the three new videos, along with the planned Ministry Taster Day, may be useful in stimulating thought, conversations and applications.

- (a) 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	Congregatoion	Presbytery
Andrew Ferguson	Dundonald	East Belfast
Ellis Hanna	Trinity Boardmills	Down
Matthew Houston	Wellington	Ballymena
Scott McMenemy	First Portadown	Armagh
Graeme Read	Pettigo	Omagh
Michael Wylie	Carnmoney	North Belfast

- (b) That, in accordance with the Flexible Training Pathways For Ordained Ministry pilot scheme adopted by the General Assembly (Reports 2019 pages 268-270), the following pathways be approved:
- (i) Matthew Houston: amended three-year pathway and full assistantship;
- (ii) Michael Wylie: complete one year as a student and then serve a 14-month licentiatehip in a congregation as assigned through the Assignments Panel.

2. That the General Assembly commend the academic and administrative staff at Union Theological College for the enormous amount of work undertaken to enable the College to meet the challenge of developing new programmes and arrangements following the recent change in relationship with Queen's University, Belfast.
3. Consolidated Resolution:
 - (a) That the assessment for the Ministerial Development Programme be set to raise £130,000.
 - (b) That the assessment for the Students' Bursary Fund be set to raise £175,000.
4. *That the recommendations in Appendix 2 concerning those whose retention as licentiates and ministers without charge has been sought by presbyteries be adopted.**
5. *That the General Assembly express their appreciation of the Very Rev Dr Stafford Carson for his work as Principal of Union Theological College and wish him a long and happy retirement.**
6. That the Report of the Council for Training in Ministry be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Convener: Rev DANIEL KANE

Secretary: THE CLERK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Council for Public Affairs met formally on two occasions since the 2019 General Assembly to receive reports from its committee, panels and task groups; considering responses to public consultations; and discuss its wider strategy of engagement on issues of public significance. This was supplemented by an overnight conference, Building on Solid Ground, in September 2019 to take time to reflect and consider the work of the Council. A meeting in March 2020 was not held due to restrictions in place because of the Covid-19 global pandemic.
2. The State Education Committee (paragraphs 17-32) oversees matters of state education in Northern Ireland. The committee's main work is to consider educational developments and transmit thinking to the Transferor Representatives' Council, through which the Presbyterian Church in Ireland works with the Church of Ireland and the Methodist Church in Ireland on matters of education policy in Northern Ireland, and to provide support to transferor governors.
3. The Peace and Reconciliation Panel (paragraphs 33-39) handles matters of public policy that are relevant to peacebuilding and reconciliation. The panel has been considering its work for the medium to longer term in light of the publication of *Considering Grace: Presbyterians and the Troubles* and the forthcoming centenaries.
4. The Republic of Ireland Panel (paragraphs 40-45) is responsible for overseeing matters of public policy in the Republic of Ireland.
5. The Dealing with the Past Project Task Group (paragraphs 46 – 52) is responsible for taking forward the project agreed by the 2016 General Assembly to record and examine Presbyterian responses to the Troubles. This culminated in November 2019 with the launch of *Considering Grace: Presbyterians and the Troubles*. A conference to explore the themes emerging from the book and to launch a congregational resource has been postponed.
6. The Northern Ireland Executive Formation Act Task Group (paragraphs 53 – 61) was established by the Council to respond to the Northern Ireland Office consultations on abortion and same-sex marriage following the introduction of legislation at Westminster.

Introduction

7. Navigating the major cultural and moral shifts in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland presents us with huge and on-

going challenges along with numerous opportunities to step into graciously confident gospel engagement in the public square. To do this successfully requires godly wisdom and gospel confidence. Speaking truth into this fundamentally changed landscape continues to be our discipleship imperative as followers of Jesus. This is a task the Council takes on with utmost diligence bearing in mind that, as believers in Jesus Christ, we are mandated to be heavenly minded people speaking to the world about heavenly issues. God's love in Christ is still the core message which compels us and it is still the main plea for the whole of Ireland.

8. The public square across Ireland has changed significantly over the past five to ten years with legislative and cultural change taking place at a rapid rate. In September 2019 the Council held an overnight conference with Dr Natan Mladin from Theos ThinkTank. *Building on Solid Ground* was an opportunity to consider the principles, postures and practices of graciously confident gospel engagement in the public square. A draft report from this event is included at Appendix 1. This was due to be considered at the March meeting which had to be cancelled, and the Council will consider this proposal at a later stage.
9. In July 2019 the Westminster government passed the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act which was necessary given the failure of the Northern Ireland political parties to form an Executive. What should have been a very short and procedural piece of legislation became the catalyst for the most far-reaching social changes in the areas of abortion and marriage. Many congregations and individuals contributed to the public consultation on abortion, the results of which were published at the end of March 2020. Despite the ongoing global pandemic and the huge pressure on the resources of the health service, the legislation to change radically Northern Ireland's abortion framework was introduced. This was a very sad day and we continue to pray that opportunities can be found to bring fundamental changes to this new regulatory framework for abortion services in NI.
10. With these new challenges came renewed co-operation with other denominations and organisations and we look to continue those relationships in other policy areas in the weeks and months that lie ahead.
11. The launch of *Considering Grace: Presbyterians and the Troubles* was a key milestone for the Council this year. I want to commend the work of Rev Tony Davidson and the Task Group in bringing the project to this stage. The response to the book from within PCI, other denominations and wider society has been humbling and encouraging. We continue to pray that Considering Grace will contribute to both healing and forgiveness within our own congregations, and to the discussion in wider society on dealing with the past. In that regard PCI continued to engage with government on matters relating to legacy, including its proposals for a payment for victims and revised suggestions around legacy.

12. On 31 January 2020 the UK formally exited the United Kingdom with a transition period of 12 months. The full impact of Brexit has yet to emerge, and may be further delayed given current global events. However, as an all-island denomination it was important that the Moderator had an opportunity to hear from those in border communities who would be particularly affected. In October 2019 Dr Henry met with a range of Presbyterian people in the presbyteries of Armagh, Newry and Monaghan, from fishermen to farmers and business people, for the purpose of listening to views on the current situation and offering pastoral support.
13. In January 2020 the Moderator undertook another listening exercise, this time with the Chief Executive and Chairperson of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. Against the backdrop of increased pressure on the health service, this provided an opportunity for Dr Henry to gain insight into the challenges, but also to acknowledge and commend the work of hospital chaplains.
14. January 2020 also saw the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland with Ministers appointed to the Executive and the NI Assembly providing its scrutiny function through plenary sittings, written and oral questions, and committees. Even before Covid-19, the political and financial challenges before the newly appointed ministerial team were significant. As a church, we continue to pray for our political leaders both at a national and local level.
15. As Convener, I want to place on record my deep appreciation to Karen Jardine for the immense wealth of experience in public policy matters and the deep understanding of Biblical teaching she brings to these complex and nuanced issues. The Council is hugely indebted to her for her unstinting commitment to the role of Public Affairs Officer and the gracious, Christ-like manner with which she engages across a wide spectrum of elected political representatives, government officials, representatives of various bodies and the leaders of other Churches and Christian groups.
16. Thanks should be recorded to all who have served on Council, especially those who have taken on added responsibilities as conveners of the Committee, panels and task groups. In particular, on behalf of the Council, thanks are expressed to Mr Edgar Jardine for his huge contribution to the leadership of the Peace and Reconciliation Panel. Edgar brought a tremendous wealth of commitment, experience and knowledge to this strategic role for which the Council is profoundly grateful. He should be assured of our prayers for his ongoing responsibilities in other areas of public life and continued good health.

STATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

17. Since the last General Assembly, the work of education has continued to be at the forefront of PCI's engagement with public affairs and the State Education Committee and its members have contributed to the policy landscape within education.
18. The SEC has met on three occasions since the last Report and has considered the following:
 - (a) The RE Core Syllabus;
 - (b) The reconstitution of Controlled Schools' Boards of Governors;
 - (c) Transferor Governor training and support;
 - (d) The appointment of representatives to key stakeholder groups;
 - (e) The work of the Transferor Representatives' Council (TRC);
 - (f) The work of the Controlled Schools' Support Council (CSSC);
 - (g) Transgender Guidance for schools;
 - (h) The Relationships and Sexuality Education curriculum;
 - (i) Education, equality and human rights;
 - (j) Awareness-raising at congregational level of the work of PCI within education;
 - (k) Support and appreciation for educational professionals;
 - (l) The future direction of the SEC, including:
 - (i) the frequency of meetings;
 - (ii) alternative methods of communication;
 - (iii) broadening its base through a panel of expert practitioners who can be called upon for subject-specific guidance.

The Transferor Representatives' Council

19. The TRC is the main mechanism through which PCI responds to educational issues and advocates on behalf of faith and Christian values within education. Throughout the year, the Executive Committee has focussed on the issues above, along with:
 - (a) support for Transferor Governors – production of a Transferors' handbook; training roadshows; engagement with Education Authority on reconstitution;
 - (b) representation within the education sector e.g. DE Area Planning Steering Group, EA Transgender working group;
 - (c) Controlled Schools' Support Council – representation on the CSSC board; input to the Ethos Toolkit; input into collective worship;
 - (d) reviewing and revising the Core RE Syllabus with representation from the Catholic Church;

- (e) continuing the development of a model for Jointly Managed Church Schools (JMCS) in partnership with the Catholic Trustees;
 - (f) engaging with other education bodies;
 - (g) engaging with the re-established NI Assembly, especially with the Education Committee.
20. Current priorities for TRC include:
- (a) continuing to be pro-active in representing the rights of the child to have the best possible education;
 - (b) support for Transferor Governors through advocacy and training. This year, training events were held across Northern Ireland on the theme of A Moral Maze, working with the Evangelical Alliance and Love for Life to upskill governors on taking policy decisions on sensitive issues;
 - (c) encouraging the delivery of RE as an integral part of the NI curriculum at both primary and post-primary level;
 - (d) supporting collective worship as an integral part of school life at both primary and post-primary level;
 - (e) continuing to explore the Jointly Managed Church Schools model with the Catholic Trustees, and establish the legal parameters for putting such a school in place.
 - (f) ensuring the churches have a voice in the development of RSE resources.

Representation

21. Between meetings, the work of the SEC continues through a number of individuals. The Public Affairs Officer (PAO) of the Council for Public Affairs, Karen Jardine, has continued to act as Education Secretary for PCI within the TRC structures. She has worked tirelessly on behalf of SEC, attending regular meetings of the three education secretaries and, with them, writing policy statements, responding to consultations and representing the TRC (along with the officers and other members, as available, and required) at a variety of meetings, events and conferences of key educational stakeholders.
22. The SEC Convenor chairs meetings and reports to CPA. He has also been called upon to engage in media work and as a speaker, and has worked with the PAO in responding to consultations, advising on policy and, where required, dealing with issues from clergy, presbyteries and other Transferor representatives. This year he was elected as Vice-chair of the TRC and, as a Board Member and Vice-chair of CSSC, is active on the Council, sits on its Education Committee and was highly involved in the creation and dissemination of its Ethos Toolkit. He also sits on its Collective Worship Working Group. In his role as SEC Convenor he has attempted to build upon and initiate relationships with external stakeholders and is regularly asked to attend educational

meetings to present a faith-based perspective. In February, he ran two seminars at the Scripture Union NI Schools' Ministry Conference.

23. Rev Dr Colin McClure plays a vital role in the work of Religious Education, co-chairing the CCEA RE Advisory Committee, which has taken on the recent task of updating the RE curriculum. Following a decision from the Department of Education to conclude the important work of the Committee, the SEC was heartened by the support of the church leaders in successfully lobbying for its retention.
24. In September, the TRC approved the nomination of one of our delegation, John Wilkinson, as its representative to the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland.
25. On the Board of the Education Authority, Rev Robert Herron and Mr Edgar Jardine are experienced and respected in their fields and both had strategic committee chairmanships on the Board. Both have the sincerest gratitude of the SEC for the many hours which they have put into this work, and special thanks go to Edgar Jardine following his stepping down from EA; his input at the very highest level of educational administration was of exceptional value.

Coronavirus Impact

26. As this Report is written, it seems strange and unsettling to comment on a normality which now seems so remote and yet was only weeks ago. The arrival of the Coronavirus to our nations has challenged all we held as important and turned our reality on its head.
27. Our education system works from a collaborative, social model where teaching and learning happen with others and individual work was mainly a consolidation of this. The virus changed this: although teachers and pupils are absorbing new technological skills, the very nature of 'learning' has been challenged and only time will tell what the impact of this will be.
28. Our schools, which had been places of safety and refuge for so many, suddenly became places where the invisible enemy could spread at will. Closing them closed off the ability for socialisation and a sense of collective belonging, yet, perhaps even more than before, schools have become havens: in the weeks leading up to closures, it was schools which provided normality for families and children in the midst of abnormality and, during the lockdown, it is schools which are providing the care for the children of those who were caring for our society.
29. Our Chairs of Governors – so many of them Transferors – spent evening after evening in discussions with our principals, trying to understand how guidance (which invariably came after 5pm) translated to their schools. With things changing on a daily, sometimes hourly, basis it was up to them to make clear decisions on ongoing provision for children who would be at home, closures of schools, extraordinary provision for the children of key workers, and all of this is in the midst of uncertainty over the health, wellbeing and availability of staff.

30. Our teachers, as always, are rising to the challenge. In the midst of their own fears and mainly without personal protection equipment, they wore the emotional masks that kept up the spirits of children. In the final few weeks of schools being open, they juggled this with their teaching, along with creating a new style of pedagogy. As the Chancellor made his incredible gestures, the perception of teachers has shifted from potentially being castigated for still having an income, to those who should be lauded for putting themselves in harm's way each day.
31. Our children, who should be enjoying the most care-free days of their lives, are not immune from the fears of society. For many, the 'new normal' is positive, but for many others staying at home does not ensure the friendship, individual educational provision, emotional stability, physical recreation and personal safety which going to school provides. For older young people, this period has brought with it an unparalleled sense of insecurity and purposelessness as all they have worked towards is in question.
32. With so much uncertainty, we pray that God will continue to make His presence felt in the lives of our pupils and families, school staff and governors. In the midst of so much personal tragedy which has come from Coronavirus, there are many positive examples of our society coming together; in education this is also the case, as people have continued to ensure that the hearts and minds of our children and young people are cared for and developed. Our prayer must be that God will surround these endeavours with His blessing and that, as with the rest of society, we will emerge stronger and more focused on Him and on each other.

DR ANDREW BROWN, Convener

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PANEL

33. The Peace and Reconciliation Panel welcomed the opportunity to participate in the workshop "Building on Solid Ground" organised by the Council for Public Affairs in September 2019. The Panel presented a paper which reflected on the rapidly changing context in which the Church is called to witness. A number of key themes emerged which will set the context for the Panel's work in the medium term. These included ensuring that PCI remains a positive, hopeful voice in the community, building relationships within and between communities, and identifying opportunities to be the voice of the Church in the public square.
34. The Panel has progressed one of the themes emerging from "Building on Solid Ground". This was in the form of a workshop on 12 March involving Panel members, researchers and practitioners, brought

together to examine the potential for engaging young people in peace building. Two decades on from the Good Friday Agreement, a generation has grown up without the day-to-day lived experience of the conflict, but who remain affected by it.

35. An emerging theme from the workshop was the need to broaden the debate from one which focused principally on the sectarian divide to one which explored “the common good”. The CPA’s work on a Vision for Society, adopted by the General Assembly in 2016, although still not well known in the church or beyond, provides a scriptural basis for “working together for the common good.”
36. In the summer of 2019, “Sectarianism in Northern Ireland: A Review”, written by Professor Duncan Morrow, was published under the auspices of the Sir George Quigley Fund, established in memory of the former Ulster Bank Chairman. The purpose of the Review was to research the adverse consequences of sectarianism on Northern Ireland’s economic and social life, and the feasibility of introducing measures to replace division and promote reconciliation between different sections of the community. In November 2019 members of the Panel participated in a seminar for faith groups hosted by the Ulster Bank to consider the recommendations of the Review as they applied to churches. A formal response to the Review has been issued by the ICC and Inter-Church Meeting which acknowledged the important leadership role that Christian Churches play alongside other sectors in promoting reflection and reconciliation.
37. The ‘New Decade, New Approach’ agreement, which was the basis for the re-establishment of the institutions of government in Northern Ireland, makes reconciliation central to the Executive’s approach, with an emphasis on the principles and practice of citizen and community engagement. There is recognition of the need to tackle sectarianism, prejudice and hate in seeking to eliminate discrimination. The agreement also commits the UK Government to work alongside the Executive to mark the centenary of Northern Ireland in 2021 in a spirit of mutual respect, inclusiveness and reconciliation. There will be opportunities for PCI to contribute to these initiatives.
38. While the focus of government, both north and south, has been dominated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), has brought forward proposals for dealing with the past which would make significant changes to those in the Stormont House Agreement on which the Council responded in a recent public consultation. The NIO proposals would result in a much smaller proportion of historic cases being investigated (only those where there is new compelling evidence and a realistic prospect of prosecution) and a sharper focus on reconciliation and information recovery for victims who suffered during the Troubles. The UK Government plans to initiate an intensive period of engagement on the proposals.

39. Finally, as I conclude my time as Convener, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton and to Rev Daniel Kane for their leadership of the Council for Public Affairs, to the Public Affairs Officers Gavin Norris and Karen Jardine who serviced the panel, and to panel members for their participation and contribution.

EDGAR JARDINE, Convener

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND PANEL

40. Presbyterians may be a small minority in the Republic of Ireland but their distinctive witness and influence continues to be recognised in the public square. In July 2019 the Moderator was therefore pleased to represent PCI, along with the Public Affairs Officer, at a plenary meeting hosted by An Taoiseach which included representatives from Churches, Faith Communities and other Non-Confessional Organisations. Specifically, the Convener raised the matter of the implementation of the new abortion framework in the Republic of Ireland, following anecdotal evidence that suggested that while abortions may now be legal they were no longer rare. While the plenary meeting provided an opportunity to hear the views and opinions of other faith, and non-faith, communities on this and other issues like immigration and education, it was encouraging to note An Taoiseach's commitment that this plenary discussion was not a replacement for other church-state dialogue.
41. A Task Group to review pastoral care for women in pregnancy crises following the referendum on the Eighth Amendment and subsequent change in legislation started (?) was established under the auspices of the General Council and its remit expanded to consider the legislative changes in Northern Ireland. The report of the Supporting Families in Challenging Times Task Group is available with the reports from General Council. While anecdotally it has been reported that a significant number of abortion procedures have taken place in the Republic of Ireland, official statistics had not yet been released at the time this report was prepared.
42. The Panel has actively been taking time to develop its thinking on approaches to PCI's involvement in education in the Republic of Ireland. Rev Dr Gerry Clinton and Mr Bill Thompson were nominated to serve as representatives on the Secondary Education Committee, and Rev Daryl Edwards and Rev Jean Mackarel were nominated to serve on the Cavan Board of Education. The Panel is grateful to each for giving of their time in this way.
43. In September 2019 the Convener participated in the "Building on Solid Ground" event organised by the Council for Public Affairs. It provided an opportunity to take time to reflect on the broader work of the Panel

and the changed context across the island of Ireland for engaging in the public square.

44. Other matters under consideration by the Panel include more meaningful engagement with newcomer communities to Ireland so that their views and concerns can be represented when PCI has an opportunity speak into the public square.
45. The Panel continues to explore ways in which PCI congregations can work effectively together, and with other churches, on key issues of concern for civic society like migration and other socio-economic issues on which the Church should be heard.

TREVOR MORROW, Convener

DEALING WITH THE PAST PROJECT TASK GROUP

46. After more than three years' work, *Considering Grace - Presbyterians and the Troubles* by Gladys Ganiel and Jamie Yohanis was published by Merrion Press. The book contains over 100 stories from ministers, victims and survivors, security forces personnel, emergency responders and health care workers, quiet peacemakers, politicians, those who left Presbyterianism and finally, critical friends.
47. *Considering Grace* was launched officially in Belfast on Tuesday 5 November with regional launches in the North West (6 November); Ballymena (13 November); Armagh (21 November); and Enniskillen (27 November). The Moderator also took the opportunity during his tour of the Tyrone Presbytery in November to host an evening to listen to victims of the Troubles. Rev Tony Davidson joined him and during the evening they were able to explore some of the emerging themes from the book.
48. Over 2,000 copies of the book have now been sold and the launch events created opportunities to witness to God's grace on local and national media. There has been a series of events looking more closely at lessons gleaned from the book in Queen's University Belfast, the Four Corners Festival, and the St Patrick Festival in Armagh.
49. Plans were in place to hold a conference in March 2020 – *Considering Grace: Unpacking the Impact* with keynote speakers Canon David Porter, Chief of Staff and Strategy to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Very Rev Dr Stafford Carson, Principal, Union Theological College. Resources for congregational use and to support ministerial training were also to be launched. Given the emergency situation which has arisen due to COVID-19, this has now been postponed.

50. *Considering Grace* will be a useful reference for future generations seeking to understand this troubled part of our history. However, it is hoped that *Considering Grace* will be used as a resource to reflect not only on PCI's past but also its future, as we seek to be faithful to the gospel in a divided and changing society. The book raises further questions about the need for lament after trauma, ongoing intergenerational pastoral support for victims, and a thoroughly active, biblically-based approach to peace making in our context.
51. While *Considering Grace* was written primarily by Presbyterians, it is not just for Presbyterians. It is hoped that the book will be read across the community leading to a better understanding of our history and beliefs and stimulating other faith groups to tell their stories.
52. I would like to thank all who made the project possible including:
- (a) Task Group members – Rev Bill Addley, Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton, Rev Daniel Kane; Catherine Bell, Valerie Stewart and Sam Pollock;
 - (b) Contributors – all who took time to participate and have their story recorded;
 - (c) Co-authors – Dr Gladys Ganiel, Dr Jamie Yohanis;
 - (d) Academic Advisory Group – Very Rev Dr Stafford Carson, Professor Ian McBride, Professor Duncan Morrow, Dr Ethel White, Gillian Wylie;
 - (e) Moderator Advisory Group – Very Rev Drs Stafford Carson, Rob Craig, Trevor Morrow, Charles McMullen, Noble McNeely, Frank Sellar - along with Rev Trevor Gribben and Very Rev Dr John Dunlop;
 - (f) Resource Development – Dave Thompson and those who participated in the focus groups;
 - (g) Funders – Department of Foreign Affairs and an additional funder;
 - (h) Merrion Press – Conor Graham, Maeve Convery, along with other staff;
 - (i) Public Affairs Officers – Gavin Norris, Karen Jardine supported by staff in the General Secretary's Department;
 - (j) Press and Media Support – Mark Smith, Rebecca McConnell.

TONY DAVIDSON, Convener

NORTHERN IRELAND EXECUTIVE FORMATION ACT TASK GROUP

53. At the October meeting of the Council for Public Affairs, a Task Group was set up to respond to the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) consultations on abortion and same sex marriage. The consultations occurred following the passage of legislation at Westminster, the Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act, which placed a duty on the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to change the law in Northern Ireland in both areas. PCI's position has always been that these matters should be dealt with by locally elected representatives in the devolved institutions.
54. The task group met on two occasions and comprised: Rev John Mullan (Convener), Rev Daniel Kane (Council Convener), Miss Karen Jardine (Public Affairs Officer), Mr Mark Baillie, Mr David Smyth and a medical professional (abortion consultation only).

Abortion Framework

55. The NIO consultation on a new framework for abortion services in Northern Ireland ran from the end of October until Monday 16 December 2019.¹ The proposals sought to alter radically abortion provision in Northern Ireland, far beyond what is available in the rest of these islands.
56. Out of love, compassion and care for women, unborn babies, and families in crisis situations, the unusual step was taken to encourage the whole church to respond to this consultation. Guidance documents were prepared to help presbyteries, congregations and individuals in this regard. It was a great encouragement to see so many Christians making their voice heard and the unity across organisations and denominations. In total, the NIO received over 21,000 responses to its proposals. In its response to the consultation exercise, the NIO acknowledges that 79% of those that made a submission registered their opposition to the change in law.
57. It is therefore with a sense of shock to find that, while the nation is in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the NIO has proceeded with the implementation of its proposals, largely unaltered from those put forward in its consultation paper. The legislation introduces a new abortion framework to Northern Ireland which has been described as "the most liberal in Europe". With no protection for conscientious objection in relation to the administrative and management aspects of abortion provision, it is possible that some of the NHS staff currently risking their lives in this crisis, may feel they have no other choice than to leave their jobs.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a-new-legal-framework-for-abortion-services-in-northern-ireland>

58. A separate task group formed under the General Council is actively considering ways in which PCI congregations and members can better support women and families who find themselves experiencing pregnancy crisis, pregnancy loss and the challenges of caring for a loved one with a disability from birth.
59. A copy of the consultation response from the Council for Public Affairs on behalf of PCI can be found on the PCI website at <https://bit.ly/2z9c25s>

Same-sex marriage

60. The NIO did not consult on the introduction of same-sex civil marriage but there was an opportunity to respond to the proposed regulations for same-sex religious marriage. We are thankful that the proposed ‘triple-lock’ offers significant protection to religious organisations and officiants who do not wish to solemnise same-sex marriage. Sadly there is no similar accommodation for the protection of religious conviction in the public square, directly impacting Christian businesses and council employees.

Presbyteries were encouraged to respond to this consultation supporting the protections offered and highlighting the increased privatisation of the Christian faith.

A copy of the consultation response from the Council for Public Affairs on behalf of PCI can be found on the PCI website at <https://bit.ly/3foH7mv> At the time of drafting this report the outcome of this consultation, which concluded on 23 February 2020 was, as yet, unknown.

JOHN MULLAN, Convener

APPENDIX 1

BUILDING ON SOLID GROUND – GRACIOUSLY CONFIDENT GOSPEL ENGAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SQUARE

Context

In September 2019 the Council for Public Affairs, along with representatives from its committee, panels and task groups met together to plan and pray about its priorities and programmes for the next period of time.

Under the title ‘Building on Solid Ground – Graciously Confident Gospel Engagement in the Public Square’ Dr Natan Mladin, a researcher from Theos², invited us to think about the principles, postures and practices of the Church in this regard. Each of the Council’s Conveners provided input and challenge from the perspective of their respective groups, which acted as a catalyst for discussions on the Council’s priorities and programme.

Dr Mladin posed a number of questions for consideration by the Council including:

- What is our cultural moment?
- How does PCI influence ‘upstream’?
- Where does PCI seek to influence, aside from mainstream politics, e.g. in the arts, business, creation care?
- What kind of public acts might be required e.g. generosity, patience, forgiveness?
- Does PCI value the importance of listening as a sacred, counter-cultural act?
- What role does discipleship have in formation for cultural engagement?
- How prepared is PCI for the developing age of Artificial Intelligence?

Principles

The Vision for Society Statement received by the General Assembly 2016 places peacebuilding at the heart of Christian discipleship and PCI, and calls us to:

- grace-filled relationships in the power of the Holy Spirit as ambassadors of Christ’s kingdom in a broken and divided world;

² <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/>

- promote the counter culture 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.

Postures

The Council’s engagement in the public square is:

- 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.

Practices – suggested structure

Committee/Panel	Remit	
State Education Committee Convener:	Transferor Representative Council Governors	RE Curriculum Representation Policy development
Peace and Reconciliation Panel Convener:	Dealing with the Past Considering Grace follow up Legacy	Future Ireland conversation Citizenship Political engagement
Republic of Ireland Panel Convener:	Education Civic engagement Political engagement	Future Ireland conversation Citizenship
Human Dignity Panel Convener:	Beginning of life End of life Equality	Human Rights Artificial Intelligence Domestic Violence/ Coercive Control legislation Criminal Justice

Welfare and Wellbeing Panel Convener:	Welfare Housing and Homelessness Debt Poverty	Anti-Poverty Strategy Illegal lending in communities Ageing Loneliness
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Practices - Operational matters

(a) Items of Council business

Conveners will be requested to provide a written update of the work under their respective remit in advance of the Council meeting, with options or recommendations for consideration as appropriate. During the meeting Conveners will be invited to highlight specific areas of interest, or issues on which a decision from the Council is required. Any other member of the Council who wishes a specific matter to be included on the agenda should notify the Convener in advance.

(b) Dealing with urgent business

From time to time business will arise, outside the Council's normal structures and before the next meeting of the Council, which will need to be addressed urgently. It is recommended that the Council Convener, Council Secretary and Public Affairs Officer be authorised to deal with such business and report back to the Council at the next meeting. This small group will be authorised to appoint other small task groups to deal with urgent business as appropriate. It will often be the case that urgent business cannot be addressed by organising a meeting, and so those involved must be readily available via phone and email.

(c) Working with other churches and organisations

The Council for Public Affairs is authorised by the General Assembly to speak on behalf of PCI on matters of public policy. Whilst maintaining its own voice in the public square, the Council will continue to build partnerships on different levels with other Churches and organisations as appropriate. There will also be a variety of non-Christian organisations with which it will be useful to meet and build relationships, to help us develop our positions on issues of public policy.

(d) Developing expertise

There exists within our congregations across Ireland, as well as within the structures of the Council, a wealth of experience and expertise on a range of matters. The Council should continue to be pro-active in identifying those individuals who are willing and able to develop PCI's view in the public square, through an informal relationship with the Council.

(e) **Communication**

There are two main audiences to whom it is important that the work of the Council is communicated. First, there is the general public who will be informed about the work and views of PCI on matters in the public square through press releases, statements and other media including, for example, opinion pieces. The second main audience is ministers and members of PCI. A summary of the Council meeting will be provided to direct presbytery nominees to facilitate communication to presbyteries. Other avenues should be explored to communicate the work of the Council including:

- (i) increased presence on Twitter when attending events
- (ii) better use of existing communication tools e.g. PCI blog and website
- (iii) where appropriate, direct communication to ministers

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly welcome the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive and the devolved institutions following the ‘New Decade, New Approach’ agreement, recognising the collective responsibility of all in civic society including the churches to pursue the common good; and seek to support and encourage our locally elected representatives, and other leaders in society, as they begin to emerge from and deal with the aftermath of the Covid-19 crisis.
2. That the General Assembly express its deep regret and disappointment that the Northern Ireland Office ignored the views of nearly 80% of the 21,000 respondents to its consultation on a new abortion framework; renew its call for investment in the provision of comprehensive perinatal care services across Ireland; and encourage locally elected Ministers and MLAs to resist attempts to further liberalise legislation here through the introduction of ‘telemedicine abortions’, and to do all within their means to consider ways in which this legislation can be amended.
3. That the General Assembly welcome the protections for churches and religious organisations with regard to same-sex marriage as outlined in the consultation proposals, but express concern at the lack of protection given to the freedom of conscience for those such as registrars and other local council employees, as well as wedding venue proprietors, photographers, florists, wedding car hire firms and others providing wedding services who may wish to express a moral or religious objection to same sex marriage.

4. That the General Assembly commend the work of the Dealing with the Past Task Group in its publication of *Considering Grace: Presbyterians and the Troubles* and encourage congregations to make use of the supporting resource material once it becomes available.
5. That the General Assembly express its appreciation to the keyworkers including those in the health service, carers, teachers, retail and distribution workers, and the many others who have contributed to the response to the Covid-19 crisis across Ireland.
6. That the General Assembly note the progress that has been made on developing the concept of Jointly Managed Church Schools and encourage further development and exploration in this regard.
7. That the General Assembly affirm its support for all working within the education sector and encourage those who have dealings with schools' staff and governors to be thoughtful, honourable and kind in how they speak to and about them in person or on social media.
8. That the Report of the Council for Public Affairs be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

OVERTURES

OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

GENERAL

Purpose – to change the order of permissions for requests from former ministers and licentiates for restoration of status; and to give temporary standing to former ministers and licentiates applying to be made eligible for a call

Anent Par 72(j) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 72(j) of the Code be deleted, and the following substituted in its place:

- (j) receive licentiates and ministers without charge having satisfactory credentials from another Presbytery in the Church or from the Reception of Ministers and Licensates Committee; and receive and report applications for admission from licentiates and ministers in active duty or ministers without charge of another Church;

LINKAGE COMMISSION

Purpose – to take account of the fact that ministerial expenses have been replaced by allowances.

Anent Par 128(5)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 128(5)(b) of the Code, the words “ministerial expenses” be deleted and the words “ministerial allowances” be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 198(9) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 198(9) of the Code, the words “Expenses and house allowance” be deleted and the word “Allowances” be substituted in their place.

COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

Purpose – to formalise the generally assumed duty of presbyteries to provide pastoral care for their ministers and to change the duties of the council in respect of pastoral care of ministers and their families to a more appropriate wording.

Anent Par 69(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 69(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

69. (2) The Presbytery shall, so far as lies within its powers, observe the laws and directions of the Assembly and ensure that those subject to its jurisdiction and within its fellowship do likewise.

Anent Par 73 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 73 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

73. The Presbytery shall -

- (a) see that ministers preach the Word faithfully to their congregations, regularly visit the families under their charge, visit the sick, promote peace and temperance among the people, adopt means for the instruction of the young in Gospel doctrine and the distinctive principles of the Presbyterian Church, encourage education and missionary enterprise and discharge all other duties of the pastoral office;
- (b) see that the duties of the eldership are properly discharged and that elders are suitably equipped;
- (c) require that Kirk Sessions maintain two services each Lord's Day, unless the Session decides otherwise, and that they make provision where practicable for the holding of meetings during the week for praise and prayer and the religious instruction of the people;
- (d) ensure that a minister or licentiate in active duty shall not accept any paid public appointment, unless it be of an occasional kind, without the consent of his Presbytery and the Linkage Commission. A breach of this rule shall amount to contumacy, for which the Presbytery shall proceed against the offender;
- (e) ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the pastoral care of ministers and their families.

NEW OVERTURES

GENERAL

1. **Purpose** – tidying up: to give effect to the resolution of the General Assembly in 2018: ‘That the prayer of the memorial be granted and that the names of deaconesses, senior lecturers, auxiliary ministers, lay agents and missionaries under its care who, since its last report, have died, retired, resigned, or have been commissioned and/or appointed by Presbytery, with respective dates, be included, henceforth, in the annual report of Presbytery; and that the Clerk of the Assembly present overture(s) to the 2019 General Assembly to amend Par 260 of The Code, accordingly and to mirror additionally the requirements of Par 260(d).’ (MGA 2018 p44)

Anent Par 260 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 260 of the Code, the following sub-paragraphs be inserted after Par 260(e), and that subsequent sub-paragraphs be renumbered:

- ‘(f) the names of deaconesses, senior lecturers, auxiliary ministers, lay agents and global mission workers under its care who, since its last annual report, have died, retired, resigned, or have been commissioned, inducted and/or appointed by Presbytery, with the respective dates;
 - (g) the names of deaconesses, senior lecturers, auxiliary ministers, lay agents and global mission workers under its care who, since its last annual report, have resigned their office, or have been suspended or deposed, or have been declared to be no longer holding their office;’
2. **Purpose** – to change the age of entitlement to retire for congregational ministers from 65 to 66 and to remove the clause re retirement at 64 which is not essential to the meaning of the understanding of the paragraph.

Anent Par 223(1) and (2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 223(1) and (2) of the code, the number ‘65’ be deleted and the number ‘66’ substituted in its place.

Anent Par 223(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 223(3) of the code, the words ‘congregations, including those who have reached 64 years of age,’ deleted and the word ‘congregations’ substituted in their place.

COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

1. **Purpose** – tidying up: to remove a requirement for a presbytery to prescribe a student for the ministry a piece of trial before licensing – this paragraph should already have been removed following a resolution of the 2019 General Assembly (GAR 2009 p217, Appendix III Par 4 and MGA 2009 p84, Resolution 4.)

Anent Par 207(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 207(3)(first instance) of the Code be deleted.

2. **Purpose** – tidying up: to clarify that a reference of good health and character are required for former ministers and licentiates seeking to return to PCI.

Anent Par 219(5)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 219(5)(a) of the Code the word ‘good’ be inserted before the word ‘health’.

3. **Purpose** – tidying up: to make it clear that Par 219(5)(d) is not included in the reference to ‘foregoing sub-paragraphs’ in Par 219(6).

Anent Par 219(6) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 219(6) of the Code, the words ‘foregoing sub-paragraphs,’ be deleted and the words ‘foregoing sub-paragraphs (5)(a)-(c),’ substituted in their place.

4. **Purpose** – to allow a means for ministers who have resigned from the ministry to have a route back in.

Anent Par 220 of the Code

It is hereby overtured that in Par 220 of the Code, the following sub-paragraph be added after Par 220(4):

‘(5) When, under the foregoing sub-paragraph, a minister has resigned or is loosed from his charge, and neither becomes a minister without charge, nor receives credentials, application for restoration as a minister without charge, or to be declared eligible to receive a call on a temporary basis, may be made to the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee, following, as applicable, the same procedures as in Par 219(5).’

Anent Par 219A of the Code

It is hereby overtured that in Par 219A of the Code, the following subparagraph be added after Par 219A(iv):

- ‘(v) A licentiate who has resigned, or had license withdrawn, may make application to the Reception of Ministers and Licentiates Committee for restoration as a licentiate, or to be declared eligible to receive a call on a temporary basis, following, as applicable, the same procedures as in Par 219(5).’

COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION

Purpose – in accordance with already agreed General Assembly policy, to replace, where appropriate, references to ‘missionary’ or ‘missionaries’ with ‘global mission worker’ or ‘global mission workers’.

Anent Par 72(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 72(d) of the Code, the words ‘missionary elders’ be deleted and the words ‘elders appointed as global mission workers’ substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 72(e) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 72(e) of the Code, the word ‘missionaries’ be deleted and the words ‘global mission workers’ substituted in its place.

Anent Pars 115(1) and 115(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 115(1) and 115(2) of the Code, the word ‘Overseas’ be deleted and the word ‘Global’ substituted in its place.

Anent Par 199(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 199(1) of the Code, the words ‘the overseas Mission field’ be deleted and the words ‘the work of global mission’ substituted in its place.

Anent Pars 199(1)(b), 202(7) and Appendix 4A of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 199(1)(b), 202(7) and Appendix 4A of the Code, the word ‘missionary’ be deleted and the words ‘global mission worker’ substituted in its place.

Anent Pars 201(1), 202(3), 202(6), 278(4), 290(4), 290(6) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 201(1), 202(3), 202(6), 278(4), 290(4), 290(6) of the Code, the word ‘missionaries’ be deleted and the words ‘global mission workers’ substituted in its place.

Anent Par 278(3)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 278(3)(a) of the Code, the word ‘Overseas’ be deleted and the word ‘Global’ substituted in its place.

Anent Par 278(3)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 278(3)(b) of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place.

‘(b) develop a strategy on global mission, including partnership with Churches outside Ireland, and sending personnel;’

Anent Par 289 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 289 of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place.

‘289. Global Mission

- (1) Global Mission is to be regarded as an integral part of the life and nature of the Church. The policy of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is to fulfil its calling to this work by acting in association with Churches and Societies round the world, as mutually agreed from time to time.
- (2) Individual works of global mission spring from personal experience of the love of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, which in obedience to the Lord’s command desires to make this love known to others, win them to faith in Christ and to his service and, by his grace, to enlarge and build up some part of the universal Church.’

Anent Par 290(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 290(1) of the Code, the words ‘service overseas’ be deleted and the words ‘the work of global mission’ substituted in their place.

Anent Par 290(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 290(3) of the Code, the words ‘an overseas’ be deleted and the words ‘a global mission’ substituted in their place.

Anent Par 290(5) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 290(5) of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place.

- ‘(5) When someone is called as a global mission worker, and the spouse does not receive a call, but desires to be recognised as participating in the work of mission, the Presbytery shall arrange that, at the service of ordination, installation, or commissioning, the spouse shall also be commissioned.’

Anent Par 291 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 291 of the Code be deleted and that the following be substituted in its place.

- ‘291. (1) While outside Ireland, the location and work of global mission workers shall be the responsibility of the partner Church or Society under which they are serving, in consultation with the global mission workers and the Council for Global Mission.
- (2) Global mission workers normally shall serve as members of the local Church concerned, and under its direction, discipline and control, but without prejudice to their relationship with the Council for Global Mission or to their continuing membership in a Presbytery of the Church in Ireland; and no decision of any Church court outside the Presbyterian Church in Ireland affecting their ecclesiastical status shall take effect in the Church until confirmed by the General Assembly.
- (3) The ordination, installation, commissioning, resignation or retirement and any investigation of a complaint or action affecting the ecclesiastical status in Ireland of global mission workers or full time workers of the Church serving outside Ireland, shall rest with the Presbytery in whose membership or under whose care they have been placed after full consultation with the Council for Global Mission.’

Anent Par 331(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 331(2) of the Code, the words ‘an overseas missionary’ be deleted and the words ‘a global mission worker’ substituted in their place.

Anent Par 331(2)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 331(2)(b) of the Code, the words ‘in the case of such a missionary, by the Council for Global Mission or in the case of such a ruling elder in special work other than as an overseas missionary by the appropriate Assembly Council;’ be deleted and the words ‘in the case of such a global mission worker, by the Council for Global Mission or, in the case of such a ruling elder in special work other than as a global mission worker, by the appropriate Assembly Council;’ substituted in their place.

LINKAGE COMMISSION

Tidying up in light of advice from the General Assembly Solicitor: all overtures are in connection with ministerial income from manse property and from investments.

1. **Purpose** – to remove references to ‘glebe’

Anent Par 82(3) and 82(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 82(3) and 82(4) of the Code, the word ‘glebe’ be deleted.

Anent Par 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 137 of the Code, the words ‘or glebe’ be deleted.

Anent Par 195(11)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 195(11)(c) of the Code, the words ‘with the glebe (if any)’ be deleted.

Anent Par 195(11)(c)(iii) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 195(11)(c)(iii) of the Code, the words ‘outside the glebe area,’ be deleted.

Anent Par 195(11)(c)(ii) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 195(11)(c)(ii) of the Code be deleted and the following sub-paragraph be renumbered as (ii).

Anent Par 225(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 225(3) of the Code, the words ‘or glebe’ and the word ‘, glebe’ be deleted.

Anent Par 348(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 348(1) of the Code, the words ‘or glebe,’ be deleted.

Anent Appendix 5 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 5 of the Code, the words ‘together with the use of the glebe (if any)’ be deleted.

2. Purpose – to add definitions related to manse property and ministerial income

Anent Par 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 137 of the Code, after the definition of “church building” and “church premises”, the following definition be added:

“congregational property” means all property both real and personal held upon trust for a congregation and includes the church building and the manse property;’

Anent Par 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 137 of the Code, after the definition of “financial year”, the following definition be added:

“Ministerial Investment Income” means any income derived from congregational property which is due and payable to the minister of the congregation by virtue of the terms of any trust or bequest and any income to which a minister of a congregation is entitled by virtue of being the minister of the congregation;’

Anent Par 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 137 of the Code, after the definition of “solicitor or barrister” and “qualified as a lawyer”, the following definition be added:

“stipend” means the sum of (a) the Ministerial Investment Income (if any) and (b) the sum which, apart from the Ministerial Investment Income, a congregation resolves to pay to its minister, but that no Ministerial Investment Income shall apply under this definition if the minister was called to the charge before 5th June 2020;’

3. Purpose – to include Ministerial Investment Income as Assessable Income

Anent Par 235(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 235(1) of the Code, a new sub-paragraph (g) be inserted as follows (with subsequent sub-paragraph being renumbered as (h)):

‘(g) Ministerial Investment Income received except where the minister was called to the charge before 5th June 2020, or was written into an earlier call by the Linkage Commission;’

RESOLUTIONS

Overtures on the Books

1. That the Overture anent Par 72(j) of the Code, having lain on the books for one year, be enacted as the law of the Church.
2. That the Overtures anent Pars 128(5)(b) of the Code, having lain on the books for one year, be enacted as the law of the Church.
3. That the Overtures anent Pars 69(2) and 73 of the Code, having lain on the books for one year, be enacted as the law of the Church.

New Overtures

General

Purpose 1

1. That the Overture anent Par 260 of the Code be received and placed on the books.
2. That the Overture anent Par 260 of the Code be made an Interim Act.

Purpose 2

3. That the Overtures anent Pars 223(1) and 223(3) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
4. That the Overtures anent Pars 223(1) and 223(3) of the Code be made Interim Acts.

Training in Ministry

Purpose 1

5. That the Overture anent Par 207(3) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
6. That the Overture anent Par 207(3) of the Code be made an Interim Act.

Purpose 2

7. That the Overture anent Par 219(5)(a) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
8. That the Overture anent Par 219(5)(a) of the Code be made an Interim Act.

Purpose 3

9. That the Overture anent Par 219(6) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
10. That the Overture anent Par 219(6) of the Code be made an Interim Act.

Purpose 4

11. That the Overtures anent Pars 220 and 219A of the Code be received and placed on the books.

12. That the Overtures anent Pars 220 and 219A of the Code be made Interim Acts.

Global Mission

13. That the Overtures anent Pars 72(d), 72(e), 115(1) and 115(2) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
14. That the Overtures anent Pars 72(d), 72(e), 115(1) and 115(2) of the Code be made Interim Acts.
15. That the Overtures anent Pars 119(1), 199(1)(b), and 202(7), Appendix 4A, Pars 201(1), 202(3), 202(6), 278(4), 290(4), 290(6), 278(3)(a), 278(3)(b), 289, 290(1), 290(3), 290(5), 291, 331(2) and 332(2)(b) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
16. That the Overtures anent Pars 119(1), 199(1)(b), and 202(7), Appendix 4A, Pars 201(1), 202(3), 202(6), 278(4), 290(4), 290(6), 278(3)(a), 278(3)(b), 289, 290(1), 290(3), 290(5), 291, 331(2) and 332(2)(b) of the Code be made Interim Acts.

Linkage Commission

Purpose 1

17. That the Overtures anent Pars 82(3), 82(4) and 137 of the Code be received and placed on the books.
18. That the Overtures anent Pars 82(3), 82(4) and 137 of the Code be made Interim Acts.
19. That the Overtures anent Pars 195(11)(c), 195(11)(c)(iii), 195(11)(c)(ii), 225(3), and 348(1) and Appendix 5 of the Code be received and placed on the books.
20. That the Overtures anent Pars 195(11)(c), 195(11)(c)(iii), 195(11)(c)(ii), 225(3), and 348(1) and Appendix 5 of the Code be made Interim Acts.

Purpose 2

21. That the three Overtures anent Par 137 of the Code be received and placed on the books.
22. That the three Overtures anent Par 137 of the Code be made Interim Acts.

Purpose 3

23. That the Overture anent Par 235(1) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
24. That the Overture anent Par 235(1) of the Code be made an Interim Act.
25. That Section 5 of the Report of the General Council be noted and remitted to the planned Special Assembly.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STANDING COMMISSION**

REPORTS

SECTION B

**Reports and Resolutions submitted
in advance of the September 2020 meeting**

2020 STANDING COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ANTICIPATED SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

BACKGROUND PAPER

1. The April 2020 Virtual General Assembly made the following decisions:
 - (a) The next Stated General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, convened to meet in Belfast, on Monday 1 June, 2020, be cancelled.
 - (b) All necessary business of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, including any business needing to be conducted at a 2020 Annual Meeting of the General Assembly, be conducted through a '2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly', which shall meet, either in person or by electronic means, on one or more occasions as required.
 - (c) The 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly shall have full authority and power to conduct all business that the General Assembly itself has full authority and power to conduct through powers given to the General Assembly by any and all sections of the Code.
 - (d) The 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly be requested to:
 - (i) Receive all reports and take all decisions that the Standing Commission itself deems necessary for the conduct of the business of the General Assembly, of its Commissions and Councils, and of the Church as a whole. Decisions taken shall have the standing of full and final decisions of the General Assembly itself.
 - (ii) Remit to a Special Meeting of the General Assembly, ideally to be held at a suitable time in the autumn of 2020:
 - *all non-urgent business that the Standing Commission deems appropriate;*
 - *full reports from General Assembly Councils and Commissions;*
 - *a full report from the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly.*

2. At its meeting on 10 August 2020, the Clerk of Assembly reported to the Standing Committee of the General Council that it is now almost certain that the anticipated Special Meeting of the General Assembly will not be able to be held, during 2020 or indeed in early 2021. In response, and after detailed discussion, the Standing Committee passed the following resolution:

Noting that it will almost certainly not be possible to hold the anticipated Special Meeting of the General Assembly during 2020 or in early 2021, that the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly meet (in the Assembly Hall, or if necessary, on Zoom or MS Teams):

- at 10.00am on Thursday 3rd September to deal with:
 - Linkage Commission – Dissolution/Amalgamation
 - Prof/DMSD posts at UTC
 - Any other necessary business
 - Consider Special Assembly OR further Standing Commission
 - Authorise drafting of ‘2020 Report Book’ and ‘2020 Minute and Statistics Book’ (for late Nov)
 - at 10.00am on Thursday 22 October, if deemed necessary, to deal with:
 - The business referred to the Special Assembly and other necessary business
 - Possible changes to the Code to put in place a set of ‘emergencies procedures’
 - Contingency plans for the 2021 General Assembly
3. The 2020 Standing Commission therefore firstly has to decide whether to move forward continuing to anticipate a Special Assembly towards the end of 2020 (or at the start of 2021) OR to hold a further meeting of the 2020 Standing Commission as provisionally anticipated by the Standing Committee of the General Council.
4. If the latter course of action is decided upon, then a further meeting of the 2020 Standing Commission (provisionally anticipated for Thursday 22 October 2020) would:
- (a) Deal with the business remitted to the anticipated Special Assembly
 - (b) Authorise the drafting of ‘2020 Report Book’ and ‘2020 Minute and Statistics Book’ (for publication probably in late November)
 - (c) Deal with any other necessary business that arises
5. This further meeting of the 2020 Standing Commission could also:
- (a) Consider and enact, as interim acts, possible changes to the Code to put in place a set of ‘emergencies procedures’ for the General Assembly

- (b) Give preliminary consideration to contingency plans for the 2021 General Assembly
6. It would be important to decide how decisions taken by the 2020 Standing Commission, both at this 3 September meeting and any future meeting, are communicated to the wider Church.

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly agrees that, because of the ongoing restrictions relating to the Covid-19 Pandemic, that it will not be possible to hold the anticipated Special Meeting of the General Assembly in late 2020 or early 2021.
2. That the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly agrees to hold a further meeting on Thursday 22 October 2020 to deal with:
 - (a) The business referred to the Special Assembly and any other necessary business;
 - (b) Possible changes to the Code to put in place a set of ‘emergencies procedures’ for the General Assembly;
 - (c) Contingency plans for the 2021 General Assembly.
3. That Clerk of Assembly be instructed to:
 - (a) Draft the necessary papers referred to in resolution 2 above, to facilitate the work of the 2020 Standing Commission;
 - (b) Make necessary preparations for the drafting of a ‘2020 Report Book’ and ‘2020 Minute and Statistics Book’.

2020 GENERAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMISSION

ADDITIONAL REPORT OF THE LINKAGE COMMISSION STANDING COMMISSION

THURSDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2020

Kilcooley and West Church, Bangor

Following discussions with the Kirk Sessions of these Congregations and the Presbytery of Ards, the Linkage Commission has agreed to the Presbytery's request that Kilcooley Congregation be dissolved, or amalgamated with the Congregation of West Church, Bangor.

The Kilcooley Church Extension cause began worship in the local Primary School in November 1968, before moving to a multi-purpose Hall that was opened on 15 October 1970. Having grown considerably over the intervening years, full congregational status was given on 16 January 1983. The congregation has sought to be a witness for Jesus Christ in the local area and has been served by many dedicated office-bearers and members over these years. They have had a particularly effective outreach through their Mums and Tots Group and also through their Café. The heart of the members beats strongly for those they seek to serve but regrettably, with advancing age and the lack of "feet on the ground", they find themselves in a situation where they cannot financially, or with sufficient personnel, carry on this work by themselves. They are keen, however, that weekly services and other activities be retained on the Kilcooley site as a witness to the local community.

The vibrant and growing local congregation of West Church, Bangor, which was given full congregational status the year before the work in Kilcooley was started, has, through its Kirk Session, a heart for outreach and mission to the locality which includes Kilcooley, where it have already has some very helpful involvement. It has identified both personnel and resources to take this vision forward, and is to be commended for this. It has further identified the need to retain premises on the Kilcooley site and have weekly services of worship and other activities. Discussions between the two Kirk Sessions and with the Ards Presbytery and the Linkage Commission have been both positive and harmonious and the Linkage Commission believes that

this new configuration will best serve the advancement of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ in this area of Bangor.

JAMES LIVINGSTONE, Convener

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the congregation of Kilcooley be, as appropriate, dissolved, or amalgamated with the congregation of West Church, Bangor, on 31 December 2020, or other suitable date, on terms set by the, Linkage Commission.
2. That the additional report of the Linkage Commission Standing Commission be received.

2020 GENERAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMISSION

ADDITIONAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION STANDING COMMITTEE

Thursday 3rd September 2020

1. During the last few months informal conversations have taken place, involving PCI's relief and development partners Christian Aid and Tearfund, around the potential and possibilities for a denominational appeal for the 2020/21 year. From these conversations, and also following prayerful consideration on the part of the Global Mission Council Convener, Secretary, and the Convener of the Global Development Committee, alongside discussions within the Council for Global Mission (CGM) Standing Committee, the following options have emerged for consideration:
 - (a) that in the current unprecedented circumstances the running of a World Development Appeal or similar is set aside for the 2020/21 year
 - (b) that a World Development Appeal takes place following the usual format
 - (c) that the 2020/21 Appeal takes the format of a Special Appeal with the global coronavirus pandemic being the basis for justifying such an Appeal and shaping its focus
2. The CGM Standing Committee remains sensitive to and aware of the financial implications of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown restrictions attendant upon it on congregations and also upon families and individuals across the denomination. Notwithstanding, the Standing Committee would also wish to keep faith with the Council for Global Mission's commitment to be global disciples sharing God's heart for the world, declaring good news and demonstrating God's love, particularly to those who are marginalised and vulnerable. As such, the Standing Committee would hold to the conviction that there are many across the denomination who share that commitment to be 'global disciples' and who demonstrate that commitment, in a practical way, through their support of PCI's annual development appeal and through their support of other emergency/crisis appeals.

3. With that in mind, and also bearing in mind the truly global nature and impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the opportunity it presents to stand in real solidarity with brothers and sisters in the majority world, it would seem that this is not the time to do nothing. However, it might equally seem, that neither is this the time to simply do what has been done before in the shape of a 2020/21 World Development Appeal. The CGM Standing Committee would, therefore, wish to suggest option iii above for consideration.
4. Given the scale and scope of the Covid-19 pandemic, there would seem to be a strong sense of the timeliness of a special Appeal, perhaps taking the format of a Moderator's Christmas Appeal. Such an Appeal would, of course, be couched in the broadest sense in terms of a response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but could also be positioned to consider the economic impact of the pandemic (e.g. the plight of migrant workers returning home in Nepal and Myanmar), the challenges presented to global healthcare systems, and the plight of refugees (e.g. in contexts such as South Sudan, Syria, and Bangladesh). Around the Advent season and within the context of the familiar Christmas story such an Appeal might offer the opportunity, if deemed appropriate, to link in to the Moderator's theme for the year, through considering not only what "*Home' for Christmas*" might look like in local contexts this year, but what it might look like for global neighbours in the Covid-challenged contexts in which they find themselves.
5. The CGM Standing Committee would also propose that the funds raised through any such Appeal would be split three ways – one third being allocated to each of PCI's relief and development partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund, and one third being distributed to PCI partner churches and organisations. Such a pattern would maintain continuity with the position taken when £60,000 of funding was released in early May 2020. Should such a proposed Appeal seem a timely and acceptable way forward, the wider church would require to be informed of the decision not to proceed with a World Development Appeal in the standard form this year and of the alternative trajectory being proposed. This might be done via Presbyteries and Presbytery agents. Then, in due course, simple materials, similar to those issued for a Special Appeal (i.e. consisting of a short series of PowerPoint slides and prayer points) might be issued to ministers to be incorporated in Advent/Christmas services at their discretion and as they might sense it to be appropriate in their congregational context. In the current context, it is not proposed to produce printed material (similar to the normal World Development literature) with the exception of special pre-printed envelopes, ideally with brief information on the back.
6. The CGM Standing Committee commends this report and the proposal contained therein for the prayerful consideration of the General Assembly Standing Commission, as it seeks to discharge the responsibilities entrusted to it in the uncharted and frequently changing landscape which is 'home' to each and every one of us in this

season of life and witness - a season in which God continues to invite His people to share His heart for the world, declaring good news and demonstrating His love.

REV DR LIZ HUGHES, Convener, Council for Global Mission

REV UEL MARRS, Secretary, Council for Global Mission

RESOLUTIONS

1. That the General Assembly Standing Commission authorise a Moderator's Christmas Appeal (as proposed by the Council for Global Mission Standing Committee) along with the preparation of necessary materials for use at congregational level.
2. That the Additional Report of the Council for Global Mission Standing Committee be received.

2020 GENERAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMISSION

ADDITIONAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY STANDING COMMITTEE

1. The Committee has given detailed consideration to some forthcoming staffing needs in Union College, relating to the areas of Ministry and Practical Theology. A catalyst for this has been the relinquishing of their posts by the Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development (who is taking up another position within the structures of the Church, and by the Principal and the Professor of Practical Theology, who are due to retire. All of these changes will have taken place by this time next year.
2. A paper, which is the outcome from the discussions that have taken place, is Appendix A to this report.
3. It begins with an **introduction** that explains recent developments, both in ministerial training and in the oversight and regulation of awards in Theology delivered by Union College. There follows a section that lays out some of the **present context**, where existing arrangements in relation to Practical Theology and Ministry have been reviewed in light of the forthcoming staffing vacancies. Then comes a **proposal** for aligning staffing roles in Union College, in the areas of Ministry and Practical Theology, with ministerial training needs. This proposal includes the establishment of an Institute for Ministry within the College. In the Standing Committee's view the proposal, with regard to Ministry and to Practical Theology, best enables the College to fulfil its role and responsibilities in the training of ministers for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland into the future: other options were considered but not adopted, and these are included in appendices. The proposal made here is innovative, yet seeks to maintain and enhance ministerial training for the denomination without diminishing it in any way: General Assembly requirements for ministry already lie outside any academic award, yet are closely combined with Theology awards typically achieved by ministry students. The proposal does not envisage the appointment of a professor to the Chair of Practical Theology in 2021, yet its flexibility is such that it intentionally allows for filling the chair in future, if deemed desirable, including by any lecturer who might progress to a professorial chair.

NIGEL McCULLOUGH, Convener

APPENDIX A

TRAINING FOR MINISTRY – FUTURE STAFFING NEEDS IN UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

25 August 2020

Introduction

1. Over the next 12 months, the Principal, Professor of Practical Theology and Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development are due to leave their posts. Since all three colleagues comprise the entire Practical Theology Department, and contribute significantly to the delivery of Ministry Training, this will bring important changes to the life and work of both Union Theological College and the Council for Training in Ministry. It is therefore opportune to consider carefully how staffing roles and training needs might be most effectively aligned in the future.
2. Training of ministers for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland – the core mission of the College and primary responsibility of the Council – has been the object of on-going consideration and evolution over the last 12-24 months.
3. In terms of the end-goal, it is increasingly recognised in both pastoral training contexts and the relevant literature that the aim of preparation for ministry is not simply to teach students to know about theology and ministry. Rather, the purpose of ministry training is to provide a foundation that equips and prepares ministers as fully as possible to be effective practitioners, thus enabling them, under God, to have long-term, effective ministries. This will involve the teaching of theology and ministry, but also training in the competencies of the role, and opportunities for spiritual development and shaping of character more and more into the image of Christ, the Head of the Church. Whereas, traditionally, preparation for ministry has involved two parallel strands - rigorous knowledge-focussed academic study , alongside in-depth experience-based placements – both the College and the Council now recognise that these and a third element, of personal and spiritual formation, need to be interwoven into what might be described as integrated ministerial training.
4. In addition, in a context of increased QAA oversight and regulation of the College’s credit-bearing awards, it has become increasingly apparent that many General Assembly requirements for ministry training do not sit naturally within this framework but merit non-award provision instead. At the same time, non-award provision is the appropriate context for addressing ministerial students’ need to develop competency for the main functions of ministry and undertake spiritual formation that shapes life and character. As “Church modules”, these are regarded as no less crucial and remain rigorous, but no longer come under QAA (whether via QUB or PTFI). Rather, they sit within

the designated training pathway for the Church’s trainee ministers. Most ministerial students continue to study for awards, now under PTFI and typically on either the MDiv or MTh pathways. Successful completion of such awards, under the oversight of PTFI, continues to enable students to meet core General Assembly requirements relating to the Bible, Theology and Church History; CTM equivalents are also available for any student not undertaking an award.

5. The early feedback from both Faculty and students on this pattern of training is extremely positive, leading to an increasing desire to move further to integrated ministerial training.
6. The desire to make further progress on this is the primary impetus in a re-think of staffing needs, and the subsequent proposal in this document that:
 - (a) an Institute for Ministry be established.
 - (b) a person be appointed to the position of Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry immediately,
 - (c) a Lecturer in Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology be appointed to coincide with the retirement of the Professor of Practical Theology.
7. Careful weighing of the above factors accounts for the difference between this proposal and that which was brought to the General Assembly Standing Commission in June 2020 by the Finance and Staffing Commission. The details of the proposal are given after the present context has been outlined.

Present Context

8. For the past seven years, the Practical Theology Department has had three full-time members of staff with the following main responsibilities in Practical Theology and ministry training.

Executive Principal and Professor of Ministry

- This was a new post, considered to be both academic and Church, although there was no PhD requirement.
- Ministry Formation Seminars
These were pioneered by the Principal, covering areas of practice such as leadership, discipling, Presbyterian practice and polity etc. The Principal was module coordinator, and responsible for most teaching of these.
- Homiletics 1 – module coordinator, teaching.
- Module coordination and teaching in some QUB courses, e.g., Church, Ministries and Society.
- Lead role in ministry student pathways.
- Significant administration in College, Faculty, QUB, Quality Assurance Agency [QAA], Church.

Professor of Practical Theology

- An academic post [as defined by the holder needing a PhD, and being able to teach and supervise to terminal level].
- Head of Practical Theology Department.
- Programme Coordinator in PGDip Min [now closed], Youth programmes [now closed].
- Module coordinator for many Practical Theology modules under QUB and now CTM. Significant teaching, and responsibility for adjunct faculty input into modules.
- Significant number of undergraduate Practical Theology dissertations in QUB – discontinued from summer 2021.
- Responsible for ministry training elements that are under Practical Theology – Homiletics, presentation skills, leading worship etc.
- Traditionally perceived as ‘guarantor’ of ministry practice within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, ensuring the maintenance and development of ministry training and the competence of ministerial students.

DMSD

- A non-academic post [as defined by the post-holder not requiring a PhD], traditionally an experienced minister.
- A member of Faculty, but primarily a link person between College and Church and with both congregations/presbyteries and students/assistants.
- Few, if any, teaching duties.
- Lead person in ministry enquiries, applications, selection; ministry student pastoral conversations, placements; licentiate training; ministerial development [post-ordination training, in-service training, sabbatical, pre-retirement conference].
- Lead person in Accredited Preacher and Auxiliary Ministry Schemes, under the AP&AMS Panel.
- Significant role in deaconess selection and training.
- Significant Church administration, but traditionally very little academic administration.

Future Proposal

9. In a context where a positive development towards integrated ministerial training is on-going, and where three members of staff will soon leave their posts, the College and Council have devoted their attention to aligning staffing roles and ministerial training needs in such a way as to enable the College to deliver fully on its role as a theological college into the future.

10. The following option is the proposal of the Council for Training in Ministry Standing Committee.¹
11. The immediate appointment of a Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry; the subsequent appointment of a Lecturer in Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology to coincide with the retirement of the Professor of Practical Theology. A Job Description and Personnel Specification for the former post, and a provisional Job Description and Personnel Specification for the latter post are included in Appendices 2 and 3.

Institute for Ministry

12. It is proposed to set up a new Institute for Ministry (IFM) within Union Theological College, as an expression of the College's on-going commitment, in evolving circumstances, to the formation and education of ministers and Christian leaders for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and beyond. Under the leadership of its Director – who will work in tandem and in concert with Faculty colleagues – this Institute, like the academic Departments in the College, will come under the umbrella of Faculty and thus form an important and integral part of Faculty's delivery of training for ministerial students.
13. Ministry is service and service is at the heart of discipleship and the Christian life. The IFM will nurture those who have responded to God's call and are preparing for ministry. It will support them as they grow in their faith and discipleship, through their training, helping form their hearts and minds and develop the competencies for ministry that they will need.
14. Union College prepares students for ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and helps facilitate and resource their post-ordination training and the ministerial development programme. The IFM will bring all these elements of foundational and in-service training for ministry together into one entity. The Institute will also facilitate those who wish to serve within PCI in other capacities, or those from other churches or fellowships who may seek training for ministry.
15. In leading the Institute in the pursuit of these goals, the Director will call on the expertise of suitably experienced and qualified ministry practitioners from beyond the College to deliver a range of College-based and Church-based learning experiences – from the traditional to the technology-rich – that will encourage effective and fruitful ministry.

1 Other options were considered and are included in Appendix 1. CTMSC deemed these to have less merit.

16. Summary of posts and roles

Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry

This post covers significant elements of the roles currently carried out by the Principal and the DSMD, and some current tasks of the Professor of Practical Theology.

- No requirement for PhD.
- Experienced and proven practitioner in the Ordained Ministry
- Leads Institute for Ministry
- Coordinate Ministry Training Programme. This will involve teaching in at least one of the main competencies of ministerial training: homiletics, pastoring, leadership, spiritual formation and resilience.
- Also, overseeing the use of experienced and gifted practitioners in all essential areas of ministerial training and practice.
- Lead in ministry training pathways, under the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee.
- Church's guarantor for preaching and other competencies necessary for effective ministry.
- Takes responsibility in Ordained Ministry for
 - enquiry, application, interview
 - pastoral lead with students
 - placements
 - licentiate training
 - administration and delivery of post-ordination training
 - promotion and administration of ministerial development programme
- Link person for those who wish to serve in other capacities within PCI, as well as those from other churches or fellowships who seek training for ministry.
- Minimal responsibility for deaconesses and for the AP/AM schemes.
- Minimal or no involvement in pathways to academic awards.

Lecturer in Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology

This post covers significant aspects of the current Professor of Practical Theology

- Requirement for PhD but not ordination.
- Ability to coordinate and teach modules in one or more areas of theology, e.g., ethics, for CTM, PTFI and St. Mary's.
- Not head of a department.

- Ability to serve in existing academic departments and in the proposed Institute for Ministry
- Some administrative responsibility
- Wider involvement in church, and public square.
- Writing/research, both in Church publications, and also academically.

Advantages of this option

- Simplicity
 - There is only one relevant College department rather than the two in Option C [Appendix 1].
- Clarity and Emphasis
 - The creation of a new entity entitled Institute for Ministry mirrors its primary focus, and for both posts, of delivering practical and pastoral training for ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
 - The designation Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry denotes major qualifications, competency and experience in ministry, emphasising the importance that the College and the Council, on behalf of the Church, attach to the role.
 - Regarding QAA, it clearly draws a distinction between award bearing and non-award bearing programmes with the Ministry Department being a function of the Church and not under QAA.
- Finance
 - The overall cost is reduced with one E5 salary and one E3 salary.
- Flexibility
 - The reduced financial commitment in the appointment of a Lecturer provides more flexibility for the College and Council to respond to future staffing needs as they arise.
- Diversity
 - The appointment of a Lecturer allows greater opportunity for applications from people who are female; younger; from outside PCI.
- Practicality
 - The new Head of Academic Administration will offset the reduction in administrative input, as the Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry will have little, if any involvement in award-bearing administration.

- PhDs that formerly fell under the Practical Theology Department will be facilitated through other departments and through the use of Senior Research Fellows. These are being introduced across the College to allow for development in this area under PFTI.
- The link with St Mary's will much more easily provide breadth and diversity of modules in Practical and Pastoral Theology than would have otherwise been the case. Flexible delivery [blended and intensive modules] will add to this.
- The lecturer will be able to work across departments as well as in the institute as appropriate to his/her qualifications.
- If the Lecturer has a suitable speciality, e.g. Ethics, it would allow for very helpful involvement in the wider church and the public square.

Challenges posed by this option

- Explaining to the wider Church how this innovative proposal in no way diminishes ministerial training but maintains and enhances it for the denomination.
- Explaining to the wider Church how requirements for ministry that already lie outside any academic award combine with Theology awards which ministry students typically also achieve.
- Explaining to the wider Church the proposal's flexibility, namely, how the non-appointment of a professor to the Chair of Practical Theology in 2021 still allows for the chair to be filled in future, if deemed desirable, including by any Lecturer who might progress to a professorial chair.

17. Request

The Council seeks the approval of the General Assembly Standing Commission to:

- (a) Appoint a Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry as above, and in accordance with the appended draft Job Description and Personnel Specification, subject to the advice of the Head of HR.
- (b) Appoint a Lecturer in Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology as above, and in accordance with the appended provisional draft Job Description and Personnel Specification. The precise title, details of the Job Description and Personnel Specification are to be finalised following the appointment of the Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry and consultation with Faculty. The appointment is to coincide with the retirement of the Professor of Practical Theology, planned for 31 July 2021.

APPENDIX 1

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED BY THE COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY STANDING COMMITTEE

Option B

Professor of Practical Theology and Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development with unchanged roles within one Practical Theology Department

This would revert to the situation pre-2014, before the creation of an Executive Principal post. The Professor of Practical Theology and DMSD would have essentially unchanged job descriptions.

Advantages of this option

- Clear understanding in Church, CTM and College of roles and responsibilities.
- Role of Professor of Practical Theology maintains the optics of the Church guarantor of preaching etc. for its trainee ministers.
- Continuity makes it is easier for the wider Church to recognise the maintenance of these functions if they remain the responsibility of the Professor of Practical Theology.
- Role of Professor of Practical Theology maintains the discipline/department within Faculty, within programmes at all levels, and research.
- It also allows the Practical Theology Department to contribute to programmes in the same way as other departments at undergraduate, masters and doctoral levels.
- The status quo also allows the DMSD to function within a recognised job description, giving continuity to Faculty, College and Church. The role has fulfilled a very positive function since its inception, albeit one which contains elements that are hard to quantify, as much of its effectiveness depends on relational or “soft” functions, spread over wide areas – in terms of ministry, from first enquiry through to retirement.

Challenges posed by this option

- The changes in administration, oversight and regulation in the past 24 months have brought a new distinction, or even separation, between Practical Theology, as an academic discipline, and ministerial training – hence the removal of much of the latter from award-bearing, QAA-overseen programmes.

This has placed twin demands upon the Professor, which up to this point have been difficult to meet, and which are very likely to become more difficult in the future, not least with the loss of one member of the Department – the Principal.

- The Professor of Practical Theology must head a department which it is hoped will function in the same way as the other two, meeting all of the administration, oversight and regulatory challenges of award-bearing programmes and modules. The burden of this in the PT Department is much greater on the Professor than counterparts in the other departments, because the DMSD is intentionally not an academic, and therefore not able to contribute to this in the way that the other Faculty members are in the departments of which they are a part. It should be emphasised that there is absolutely no suggestion here that the role of DMSD should be changed to allow for this.
- In addition, in order for the PT Department to function in the same way as the other two departments, a significant step forward is required from where the Department currently stands: both of the other departments have MTh programmes; modules in the MDiv; and increasing numbers of PhD students, none of which is true of PT. The PT Department would need to move forward in these areas as well as, perhaps, in developing a DMin programme; future undergraduate provision is also an issue.²
All of this is, in itself, a big task.
- Alongside this, under the current job description, the Professor of PT must also oversee the further development of non-award-bearing, competency-based CTM modules, and maintain the rigour and importance of these: in the expanding programme of the College; in the priorities of students; without the considerable input of the current Principal, as Professor of Ministry; in such a way as satisfies the requirements of the General Assembly through its Council for Training in Ministry, and ultimately produces competent and effective ministers.
- This is, in itself, also a big task, because only the first steps have been taken towards competency-based learning with much work still to be achieved. The size of the task is increased further with the introduction of flexible pathways and the need, desire and ability of some students to study aspects of ministry that are in addition to the standard

² This sketch of where the Department of Practical Theology currently stands, relative to other departments, is a reflection of the increasing magnitude and complexity of demands placed upon it, and developments involving it, over the past 12-24 months; this is no reflection upon the current members of the Department.

General Assembly requirements in order to be more fully prepared for contemporary ministry.

- There is a widespread recognition that Practical Theology and Ministry Training have come to include many different elements, meaning that no longer realistic for one person to have detailed knowledge of, and competency in, them all. Rather, what is needed is a coordinator who will oversee a programme and the use of different people to deliver the various elements of it. The coordinator may be competent to deliver one element, but will have a clear overview of what is needed, and of who and how this can be delivered to students effectively. There is no necessity for this person to have a PhD, rather an experienced and proven ministry practitioner is preferable.
- Cost – the salaries of a Professor and a Dean are greater than a Professor and a Lecturer.
- Reduces flexibility regarding future staff appointments due to larger financial commitment.
- There are very few qualified candidates for a Professor of Practical Theology within PCI at present, with none of them being female or younger.

In summary, under current structures, and for existing staff, it has become much harder, than even just a few years ago, to deliver satisfactorily both academic Practical Theology and integrated ministerial training. This trend will continue in future.

Therefore, the CTM Standing Committee concludes that, while this model previously functioned well, and past and present incumbents served faithfully, it is no longer suitable for present and future demands.

Option C

Professor of Practical Theology and DMSD with changed roles, in two departments – a Practical Theology Department and a separate, but related, Ministry Department

In light of the increasing distinction between Practical Theology and Ministry Training, and the greater magnitude and complexity of both, a separate Ministry Department is created. This department is responsible for CTM modules, training pathways of ministry students and competency outcomes. While separate, the two departments are closely related.

PT Professor

- Retains all award-bearing PT roles and responsibilities.
- Head of PT Department, professorial chair.
- Required to have PhD.
- Ordination requirement retained.

- Development of PT in award-bearing programmes at all levels, research.
- Member of Ministry Department.
- May be module coordinator and/or deliver CTM modules.
- Writing/research, both in Church publications, and also academically.

DMSD

- Head of Ministry Department.
- May have changed job title – Director of Ministerial Training or even Professor of Ministry.
- No requirement for PhD.
- Normally an experienced and proven ministry practitioner.
- Ministry Training Programme Coordinator.
- This will involve teaching in at least one of the main competencies of ministerial training: homiletics, pastoring, leadership, spiritual formation, resilience.
- Also, overseeing the use of experienced and gifted practitioners in different areas of ministerial training and practice.
- Lead in ministry training pathways, under Ministerial Studies and Development Committee.
- Becomes Church's guarantor for preaching and other competencies necessary for effective ministry.
- Likely to be module coordinator in a number of modules CTM and to be involved in delivery of some.
- Member of PT Department.
- Retains all responsibility in Ordained Ministry for
 - enquiry, application, interview
 - pastoral lead with students
 - placements
 - licentiate training
 - ministerial development programme
- Limited deaconess responsibility.
- Limited APS/AMS responsibility.
- Very limited/no involvement in award-bearing programmes and administration.

Advantages of this option

- Allows twin demands of Practical Theology and Ministry Training to have individual focus and to develop much more fully, while retaining the clear link between them.

- Removes the unrealistic expectation of one post-holder being responsible for the oversight of both.
- Assures the Church that the role of guarantor of competency-based ministerial training is maintained, by an experienced practitioner.
- Allows rigour and importance of CTM modules to be maintained with Faculty and students.
- Re QAA, it draws a distinction between the two functions, their departments and heads, and emphasises that ministry training is not to be considered as being under QAA.

Challenges posed by this option

- Explaining to the wider Church that this proposal maintains and enhances ministerial training, rather than in any way diminishing it.
- Explaining to some in the wider Church that many requirements for ministry already lie outside any award, and will continue to do so.
- Cost – the salaries of a Professor and a Dean are greater than a Professor/ Head and a Lecturer.
- Reduces flexibility regarding future staff appointments due to larger financial commitment.
- There are very few qualified candidates for a Professor of Practical Theology within PCI at present, with none of them being female or younger.

The CTM Standing Committee recognises that this option has the potential of adequately meeting the needs of College and Church going forward, both in guarding and enhancing ministerial training, and in the wider work of the College. However, this option is deemed inferior to the preferred option in meeting the combined criteria of simplicity, clarity and emphasis, finance, flexibility, diversity and practicality.

APPENDIX 2

DRAFT PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION AND JOB DESCRIPTION FOR PROFESSOR OF MINISTRY AND DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE FOR MINISTRY

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPOINTMENT PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

Job Title:	Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry
Location:	Union Theological College
Responsible to:	The Secretary of the Council for Training in Ministry and to the Principal of Union Theological College for line-management and for work within the College
Salary:	E5 (£39,647 - £48,314 per annum)

CRITERIA

1. Qualifications and Knowledge

Essential

- Ordained Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland *
- A degree in Theology (or equivalent qualification)
- Knowledge of the ethos, practice, structure and governance of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- The ability to teach ministry students in one or more of the following: homiletics, pastoring, leadership, spiritual formation, resilience
- Knowledge of social and political change in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the consequent challenges and opportunities of ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and the implications for ministerial development
- Appropriate IT skills (e.g. a working knowledge of Microsoft Office)

Desirable

- The ability to teach ministry students in homiletics
- A post graduate qualification in theology or ministry
- Evidence of continuous professional development

2. Relevant Experience

Essential

- At least 7 years proven experience in a full-time significant Christian leadership role, at least 5 of which as the lead minister in a congregation of PCI
- Experience in facilitating ministry formation
- Proven administrative ability e.g. organisational skills, report writing etc.
- Experience of promoting and managing positive change
- Experience of effective collaborative team working
- Experience of effective leadership
- Experience of relating to a range of personnel and agencies within and outside of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Experience of working within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's current Council and Committee structures

Desirable

- At least 10 years proven experience in a full-time Christian leadership role, at least 7 of which as the lead minister in a congregation of PCI
- Experience as a Supervising Minister of the effective monitoring and evaluation of ministry formation
- Experience of counselling
- Experience of mentoring and discipleship on an individual basis
- Experience of teaching or lecturing in an academic environment

3. Personal Attributes

Essential

- The ability to coordinate the programme of training for students for the ordained ministry
- The ability to contribute to the spiritual and ministry formation of students for the ministry
- Enthusiastic and committed to the recruitment and formation of the ordained ministry within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Excellent communicator, written and verbal, in both informal and formal settings
- Well-developed relational skills in both informal and formal settings
- Exemplar in personal and spiritual life of the values of the Church
- Discreet and confidential, as appropriate, in practice
- The ability to inspire, motivate and encourage others
- Ability to work under pressure
- The ability to work co-operatively as part of a team

4. Physical Requirements

Essential

- Health – such as to allow for attendance reliability and work proficiency (reasonable adjustments will be made for those with a disability)

5. Special Circumstances

Essential

- Willing to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith in terms of the General Assembly's formula:

“I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code (Chapter 1, Pars 12-14), to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith”

- In full sympathy with the doctrinal position and ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Committed to implementing all decisions and policies of the General Assembly
- Respectful of the diversity of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, including theological diversity
- Willing to be flexible in working arrangements and hours
- Available for travel within Ireland and abroad, related to the duties of the position
- Access to a car for work purposes and willingness to obtain insurance for business use

- * The essential nature of this post requires that the successful candidate be a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as provided for under excepted occupations in the Fair Employment Treatment (NI) Order 1998.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry
Council:	Training in Ministry, Union Theological College
Salary:	Scale E5 (£39,647 - £48,314 per annum)
Responsible to:	The Secretary of the Council for Training in Ministry and to the Principal of Union Theological College for line-management and for work within the College.

Main Function of Job:

To contribute to the Christian ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland through the delivery of the duties outlined.

To be an active member of the General Assembly's staff team, contributing to the effective administration of its functions and assisting in the development of strategies and plans for the delivery of its agreed objectives in a manner of keeping with Christian ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Under the Leadership of the Secretary of the Council for Training in Ministry and the Principal of Union Theological College to assist with the implementation of decisions of the General Assembly relevant to the Council and to carry forward its delegated responsibilities.

Under the direction of the Secretary of the Council for Training in Ministry, and of the Principal of Union Theological College, and of the Council and its relevant Committees, to co-ordinate:

- the selection process, the training programme, and the oversight of the ongoing progress and probationary periods of candidates for the Ordained Ministry;
- Post-Ordination Training of Ministers
- the Ministerial Development Programme.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

The Ordained Ministry

1. To encourage suitable candidates to offer for the Ordained Ministry, recognising that both men and women shall be eligible for nomination as students for the ministry and for ordination on the same conditions (Code Par 215(1)). This will include the preparation of suitable materials, taking part in careers conventions, and through deputation.
2. To meet prospective candidates personally and to process enquiries and applications.

3. To liaise with Presbyteries in the selection, oversight and pastoral care of students.
4. To be responsible to the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee and its Convener for the oversight and delivery of all aspects of the annual selection process for the Ordained Ministry, including the arrangement and co-ordination of applicants placements and courses; the arrangement of vocational and other testing etc.
5. To be responsible to the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee and its Convener for the organisation and co-ordination of the formal panel interviews of Applicants for Ordained Ministry:
 - (a) to present recommendations to the Council;
 - (b) to offer pastoral care and advice to those not recommended, or deferred;
 - (c) to facilitate reviews;
 - (d) to administer the pre-theological requirements;
 - (e) to offer advice in relation to courses and exemptions etc. for approved candidates.
6. To be responsible to the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee and its Convener for the training pathways of students for the Ordained Ministry.
7. To be responsible to the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee and its Convener for the coordination of the programme of training for students for the Ordained Ministry, and to ensure that the programme fulfils the requirements of the General Assembly.
8. The post will also have a teaching element at least one of the following: homiletics, pastoring, leadership, spiritual formation, resilience.
9. To be responsible to the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee and its Convener for the oversight of students for the Ordained Ministry during their period of theological training and preparation; taking the lead in the coordination and review, and the delivery of a pastoral role in this respect:
 - (a) to meet with students on a regular basis and mentor students as appropriate;
 - (b) to oversee and implement the formal assessment process with regard to ministerial formation for students in each year of study, including reporting with recommended action plans to the appropriate panels and committees;
 - (c) to liaise with Presbyteries with regard to progress of all students under their care;

- (d) to arrange all placements for students, to oversee these placements and the assessment of them and to oversee and administer the assignment process, acting as Convener of the Assignment Panel of the Council for Training in Ministry;
 - (e) to liaise with Supervising Ministers and Student and Licentiate Assistants regarding both formal assessments and other issues that require attention, dealing with matters of concern and reporting the appropriate conveners, committees and Presbyteries.
10. To be responsible to the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee and its Convener for the planning and oversight of the course of part-time study required for Licentiates of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
 11. To be responsible to the Ministerial Studies and Development Committee and its Convener for the promotion of ministerial development and for the administration of Post-Ordination Training and the Ministerial Development Programme. This will involve taking the lead responsibility for the oversight, co-ordination and delivery (when appropriate) of the Post-Ordination Scheme and other courses as required.
 12. To oversee, generally, all ministerial students (including those studying outside of Union Theological College) and where appropriate students for other ministries within the Church, throughout their years of study. To make arrangements for placements and to ensure that assessments take place and that the Assembly's regulations are fulfilled.
 13. To assist the Principal of Union Theological College in ensuring that all ministerial students have the opportunity to grow in grace and godliness.
 14. To liaise with Presbyteries, Councils, and other agencies and denominations, as appropriate, in relation to the above responsibilities.

Other responsibilities

15. To provide Executive support to the Accredited Preacher and Auxiliary Ministry Panel in the administration of the Accredited Preachers Course and the Auxiliary Ministry Scheme; being involved in:
 - (a) formulating course requirements and development opportunities together with ongoing review of courses and training schemes
 - (b) the co-ordination and oversight of applications, interviews and selection of candidates for both schemes;
 - (c) the co-ordination of training and ongoing assessment of candidates on both schemes;

- (d) the co-ordination of ongoing accreditation of Accredited Preachers, and any related issues.
16. To carry out duties and responsibilities as a member of Faculty of Union Theological College, as required by the Principal, playing a full role in the day to day life of the College, including:
 - (a) To share with members of the College Faculty in the general administration and management of the College.
 - (b) To teach in the College within a subject area in which he/she may be suitably qualified and in particular in the area of ministry.
 - (c) To participate in general promotional work for the College
 17. To keep up to date with regard to on-going developments in the theory and practice of Ministry Formation and to feed back as necessary to the appropriate bodies within the Council for Training in Ministry
 18. To be involved in other aspects of the work of the Council for Training in Ministry (including membership of Committees and Panels as required), or other Councils of the General Assembly (including attendance at events), as deemed appropriate to the post and the requirements of the Council for Training in Ministry.
 19. To contribute to the overall organisational effectiveness and to perform any other duties as deemed appropriate by the Secretary in line with the requirements of the General Assembly or the Clerk of the General Assembly.
 20. To adhere to the Equal Opportunity Policy and to promote equality of opportunity where possible, and to work in accordance with other relevant workplace policies and procedures e.g. Health and Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy.

APPENDIX 3

PROVISIONAL DRAFT PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION AND JOB DESCRIPTION FOR LECTURER IN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY/PASTORAL THEOLOGY/MINISTRY

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

Job Title:	Lecturer in Practical Theology & Pastoral Theology (3 years in first instance)
Location:	Union Theological College
Responsible to:	The Principal of Union Theological College
Salary:	E3 (£32,530 - £39,647)

CRITERIA

1. Qualifications and Knowledge

Essential

- A PhD in a relevant area (to be specified at a later date) from a recognised university or academic institution
- Willingness to obtain a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (if not already held)

Desirable

- A recognised qualification in ministry (not necessarily ordained)
- Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education

2. Relevant Experience

Essential

- 2 years' experience of leadership in a Christian congregation or para-church organisation
- Proven administrative competence e.g. organisational skills, report writing, etc.
- Appropriate IT skills and experience

Desirable

- Previous experience of teaching in an academic or educational environment
- Previous experience of providing pastoral care

3. Personal Attributes

Essential

- The ability to teach and to supervise the academic work of undergraduate and postgraduate level students
- A commitment to academic excellence in the development and delivery of courses of study
- A commitment to undertaking academic research
- A commitment to continuous professional development
- The ability to contribute to the spiritual and ministry formation of students for the ministry
- Good communicator, written and verbal, in both informal and formal settings
- Well-developed relational skills in both informal and formal settings
- The ability to work co-operatively as part of a team
- The ability to inspire, motivate and encourage others
- The ability to work under pressure
- The ability to work creatively and to use initiative

4. Physical Requirements

Essential

- Health – such as to allow for attendance reliability and work proficiency (reasonable adjustments will be made for those with a disability)
- Dress and appearance – must be acceptable to management within the working environment

5. Special Circumstances

Essential

- A personal Christian faith, normally demonstrated by active membership of a Christian congregation (the essential nature of this post requires that the successful candidate be a Christian as provided for under excepted occupations in the Fair Employment Treatment (NI) Order 1998)
- Must evidence an understanding of, and commitment to, working within the Christian ethos and doctrinal framework of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- Respectful of the diversity of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, including theological diversity
- Willing to be flexible in working arrangements and hours to suit the needs of the post

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Lecturer in Practical Theology& Pastoral Theology (3 years in first instance)
Council:	Council for Training in Ministry
Salary:	E3 (£32,530-£39,647)
Responsible to:	The Principal of Union Theological College

Main Function of Job:

To contribute to the mission and vision of Union Theological College by providing high-quality teaching, as well as academic and pastoral support for students, and thereby to participate in the Christian ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. To develop and deliver appropriate high-quality teaching for both ministerial training and for other programmes delivered by Union Theological College.
2. To contribute to the spiritual and ministry formation of students for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland;
3. To contribute to the life of the College as a community of learning, worship and faith;
4. To share in the pastoral care of both students and residents of the College;
5. To take part in the management and general administration of the College, as requested by the Principal;
6. To work in accordance with relevant workplace policies and procedures e.g. Health and Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy, and Equal Opportunity Policy.
7. To undertake such other duties as are appropriate to the post as the Principal of UTC or the Council for Training in Ministry may require.

RESOLUTIONS

1. Having considered the forthcoming vacancies in the roles of Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development and Professor of Ministry (on 31 October and 31 December 2020 respectively):
 - (a) that approval be given to the merger of these two roles into a new enhanced role of Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry in Union Theological College;

- (b) that the draft Job Description and Personnel Specification for the Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry be as outlined in Appendix 2 of the additional report of the Council for Training in Ministry, subject to the advice of the Head of HR and any necessary amendment;
 - (c) that the General Council Standing Committee be authorised to appoint a Task Group to take forward the process to bring a nomination, as soon as is practicable, for the appointment of the Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry by the General Council (or if necessary its Standing Committee), acting on behalf of the General Assembly as authorised by Par 272(3) of the Code.
 2. Having considered the creation of the new enhanced role of Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry, and the forthcoming vacancy in the role of Professor of Practical Theology (on 31 July 2021):
 - (a) that approval be given to the establishment of a Lectureship in Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology in Union Theological College.
 - (b) that the provisional draft Job Description and Personnel Specification for Lectureship in Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology be as outlined in Appendix 3 of the additional report of the Council for Training in Ministry, with the details, including the precise title for the lectureship, to be finalised by the Council, following the appointment of the Professor of Ministry and Director of the Institute for Ministry and consultation with Faculty, and subject to the advice of the Head of HR.
 - (c) that the Council for Training in Ministry Standing Committee be authorised to appoint a Task Group to take forward the process to bring a nomination for the appointment of the Lecturer in Practical Theology and Pastoral Theology by the Council for Training in Ministry (or if necessary its Standing Committee), so that the nominee can take up post to coincide with the planned retirement of the Professor of Practical Theology on 31st July 2021.
 3. That the additional report of the Council Training in Ministry Standing Committee be received.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMISSION

REPORTS

SECTION C

Additional Reports and Resolutions submitted in advance of the February 2021 meeting

NOTE: Resolutions not dealt with by the General Assembly Standing Commission but referred for consideration by the 2021 General Assembly have a note to that effect below them.

2020 STANDING COMMISSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REPORT FROM THE FEBRUARY 2021 MEETING AND DECISIONS TAKEN ON BEHALF OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AUTHORITY TO MEET

1. It was noted that the Special Meeting of the General Assembly, held online on 11 April 2020, among other things, decided the following:

All necessary business of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, including any business needing to be conducted at a 2020 Annual Meeting of the General Assembly, be conducted through a '2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly', which shall meet, either in person or by electronic means, on one or more occasions as required.

The Standing Commission had met from 1 to 3 June 2020 and on 9 September 2020, and it had been found necessary for it to meet on this further occasion to conduct further business.

2. Following approval of the Agenda by the Standing Commission, the following decisions were taken.

Reception of reports of Councils and Commissions to the General Assembly

1. That the Reports of the General Assembly's Councils and Commissions, having been noted in June 2020, be received.

Consideration of remitted resolutions

Council for Global Mission

1. That the General Assembly, not underestimating the challenges, yet with confidence in Christ, re-affirm disciple-making and church-planting in Southern Europe as an important strand of the mission to which PCI is called and approve the core principles and specific recommendations for disciple-making and church-planting in Porto and Bilbao for out-working by the Global Mission Committee, in consultation with the Council for Mission in Ireland.

The above resolution was passed by the General Assembly Standing Commission.

2. That in light of our responsibility to be good stewards of creation, the General Assembly task the Trustees, after taking advice in setting standards of evaluation, to review PCI's present investment policies with particular attention to companies engaged in fossil fuel production, with a view to taking steps towards divestment and reporting back to the 2021 Assembly.

The above resolution, which was an amended version of the original, was referred to the 2021 meeting of the General Assembly for decision.

Linkage Commission

3. That a Responsibility Allowance be introduced for those Additional Pastoral Personnel posts where a kirk session agrees there is a need to recognise the additional supervisory nature of a particular post. Such Responsibility Allowance to be restricted to a figure of up to 5.5% of Basic Ministerial Minimum.

The above resolution was referred to the 2021 General Assembly.

4. That the General Assembly instruct the General Council to set up a Task Group, which will report back to the 2021 General Assembly with the remit to examine the relativity of salaries, paid to Additional Pastoral Personnel, Deaconesses and Irish Mission Workers.

The above resolution was referred to the 2021 General Assembly.

Council for Training in Ministry

5. That the recommendations concerning those whose retention as licentiates and ministers without charge has been sought by presbyteries be adopted.

The above resolution was referred to the 2021 General Assembly.

6. That the General Assembly express their appreciation of the Very Rev Dr Stafford Carson for his work as Principal of Union Theological College and wish him a long and happy retirement.

The above resolution was passed by the General Assembly Standing Commission.

General Council

7. That the General Assembly express their appreciation of the Rev JS Stothers for his work as Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly and Deputy General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and wish him a long and happy retirement.

The above resolution was passed by the General Assembly Standing Commission.

8. That the proposal outlined in paragraphs 3-9 and the recommendations in paragraphs 10, 11 and 13-15, of the Holding Trustee Task Group be approved.

The above resolution was referred to the 2021 General Assembly.

9. That the recommendations of the Report of the Decision Making and Dissent Task Group be adopted.

The above resolution was referred to the 2021 General Assembly.

10. That the vows contained in Appendices A, B and C of the Report of the Vows for Full Membership and Baptism Task Group be approved as the authorised vows for use within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for respectively:

- admission to communicant membership on profession of faith;
- use for the baptism of infants;
- use for the baptism of believers.

The above resolution was referred to the 2021 General Assembly.

11. That the recommendations of the Making the General Assembly More Accessible Task Group be adopted.

The above resolution was referred to the 2021 General Assembly.

United Appeal

For information the additional report is included in Schedule A

1. That grants to Councils for 2020 be set at 90% of the amounts previously reported to the General Assembly to reflect an initial adjustment (of £370,000) for the impact of Covid-19.
2. That the Appeal for 2021 is set at a “normal” level (being the same level as 2020), i.e., a Gross Appeal of £3,600,000, but this be reduced by £300,000 for savings as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on Council activities, giving a Net Appeal of £3,300,000.
3. That grants to Councils for 2021 be as set out in this report at a total of £2,948,000.

Membership and Convenerships of Councils, Commissions and Committees

1. That the year 2020-21 be set aside for counting the service of all conveners and members of Councils, Commissions, and Committees.
2. That Mr Martin Hampton be appointed as Convener of the United Appeal, and Rev M Catney be thanked for his service.

Way forward if a future General Assembly cannot be held

For information the additional report is included in Schedule B

1. That the revised report on the way forward if a future General Assembly cannot be held be received and its recommendations adopted.

The following Schedules are provided for information

SCHEDULE A

Amended report of the United Appeal

(NOTE: This is the amended version after the debate and decision at the Standing Commission)

THE UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE

REPORT TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMISSION

19 February 2021

Acting Convener: Mr Martin Hampton

Financial Secretary: Mr Clive Knox

1. The United Appeal Committee met on two occasions since the last meeting of the Commission in June 2020
 - Thursday 4 February 2021 – to review the 2020 accounts, the response to the 2020 Appeal and to confirm grants to Councils for that year.and
 - Thursday 11 February 2021 – to consider and agree recommendations regarding the level of the 2021 Appeal and grants to Councils.

The 2020 Appeal

2. The Committee wish to express its thanks to those congregations that supported the United Appeal in 2020. In light of the restrictions that were in place for much of 2020, meaning congregations were unable to meet in their church buildings for worship, the Committee was encouraged by the response and give thanks to God for his faithful provision. When contributions for the 2020 Appeal were closed at the end of January 2021, £3,057,174 (2020: £3,302,058) had been received towards the Appeal Target of £3,600,000. The total budgeted income as presented to the General Assembly for 2020, which takes account of the impact of late contributions to the Appeal, trust fund income and donations was £3,548,000. The total income received for 2020 as shown in the year end accounts was £3,306,790 (See Appendix 1).

3. The Committee noted that by the closing date of the Appeal 66 congregations (2019: 14) had not contributed to it and that approx. 62% (2019: 57%) of the income for the year was received in December 2020 and January 2021. Since the closing date for the Appeal a further £103,384 (2020: £148,399), at the date of this report, has been received and this will be reflected in the 2021 accounts.
4. The Committee considered grants to Councils for 2020. All Councils had at the end of 2020 been asked to prepare revised budgets for 2020 and 2021 and to amend their grant requests from the United Appeal. These adjustments were to reflect costs saving as a result of changes to Council activities during the coronavirus pandemic as well as income from the Job Retention Scheme (re the furloughing of staff).
5. The agreed practice for the allocation of grants to Councils is that a grant of 7.5% of their agreed grant (as presented to the General Assembly) is allocated each month with 10% retained until the response to the Appeal is known. For 2020 the Committee agreed that grants of 90% be awarded for the year and that any further adjustment for Council 's revised budgets be reflected in the proposals for the 2021 Appeal. The original grants to Councils as approved by the General Assembly in 2019 for 2020 and the grants awarded are as follows:

	Grant for 2020 (per GA Reports)	Grants awarded for 2020
	£	£
Mission in Ireland	1,065,000	958,500
Global Mission	1,065,000	958,500
Congregational Life and Witness	720,000	648,000
Training in Ministry	375,000	337,500
Social Witness	245,000	220,500
General – Creative Production	230,000	207,000
TOTAL	3,700,000	3,330,000

This meant that grants to Councils for 2020 were reduced in total by £370,000.

6. Appendix 1 is a summary of the Income and Expenditure account for 2020 reflecting these grants and show that during 2020 there was a deficit of £55,985 which compared to a budgeted deficit of £162,000.

The 2021 Appeal

7. When the General Assembly Commission met in June 2020 it deferred a decision regarding the 2021 Appeal and Grants in anticipation of a meeting of the General Assembly in the Autumn of 2020. This did not take place. The General Assembly Standing Commission now needs to reconsider these matters.
8. At the end of 2020 all Councils were asked to submit revised budgets for 2020 and 2021. The United Appeal Committee met on 11th February 2021 to consider these and an Appeal for 2021. The revised request from Councils for 2020 and 2021 were as follows:

	Revised grant request for 2020 £	Revised grant request for 2021 £	TOTAL £
Mission in Ireland	781,500	901,500	1,683,000
Global Mission	1,000,000	1,020,000	2,020,000
Congregational Life and Witness	450,000	600,000	1,050,000
Training in Ministry	375,000	375,000	750,000
Social Witness	245,000	245,000	490,000
General – Creative Production	140,000	190,000	330,000
TOTAL	2,991,500	3,331,500	6,323,000

9. If these revised grant requests are compared with what might be regarded as “normal grants” (as per the amounts originally approved by the General Assembly for 2020) this gives an indication of the financial impact of Covid-19 on Councils.

	Normal Grants* for 2020 and 2021 £	Revised Grants for 2020 and 2021 (as above) £	Reduction (Covid Adjustment) £
Mission in Ireland	2,130,000	1,683,000	447,000
Global Mission	2,130,000	2,020,000	110,000
Congregational Life and Witness	1,440,000	1,050,000	390,000
Training in Ministry	750,000	750,000	-
Social Witness	490,000	490,000	-
General – Creative Production	460,000	330,000	130,000
TOTAL	*7,400,000	6,323,000	1,077,000
Adjust. to Social Witness request re JRS etc.			45,000
TOTAL REDUCTION / SAVING			1,122,000

**(2 years annual grants of £3,700,000 equates to £7,400,000)*

10. The saving can be split down in the following manner

	£
Amount received under the Job Retention Scheme for 2020	470,309
Amount budgeted under the Job Retention scheme for 2021	69,385
Saving as a result of changes to Council activities	582,306
TOTAL – COVID-19 ADJUSTMENT	1,122,000

11. Based on the revised budget requests for 2020 and 2021, the grants already awarded for 2020 and the above Covid-19 adjustment the proposed grants to Councils for 2021 are:

	Normal Grants 2020 and 2021	Less: Grant awarded in 2020	Less: Covid-19 Adjustment	Proposed Grants
Mission in Ireland	2,130,000	(958,500)	(447,000)	724,500
Global Mission	2,130,000	(958,500)	(110,000)	1,061,500
Cong. Life and Witness	1,440,000	(648,000)	(390,000)	402,000
Training in Ministry	750,000	(337,500)	-	412,500
Social Witness	490,000	(220,500)	(45,000)	224,500
General – CPD	460,000	(207,000)	(130,000)	123,000
	<u>7,400,000</u>	<u>(3,330,000)</u>	<u>(1,122,000)</u>	<u>2,948,000</u>

12. In proposing these grants, the Committee wish to note

- (a) The Council for Mission in Ireland received significant bequests in 2020 and, from two Presbyteries, the proceeds of the sale of properties where this was due to the Council. In addition, in 2021 the Council anticipates further proceeds from the sale of properties formerly occupied by Irish Mission Workers. The United Appeal Committee has accepted a request from the Council that a significant proportion of these monies be set aside for future capital projects.
- (b) The Council for Training in Ministry did not amend its request as the grants form part of approved funding arrangements during the period Union Theological College transitions from working in partnership with Queen's University to St Mary's College, London.
- (c) The Council for Social Witness did not amend its request. The funding the Council receives is towards its central costs including Taking Care. The Council did not make any adjustments for money received through the Job Retention Scheme and an adjustment to their request has been made accordingly.

13. The Committee then considered the level of the Appeal for 2021. The Committee is keen to keep before the Church the level of the Appeal pre-pandemic and therefore proposes a Gross Appeal to Congregation for 2021 of £3,600,000 with a Covid adjustment/reduction of £300,000 applied to give a Net Appeal of £3,300,000. (This will allow for a second similar Covid adjustment/reduction in the 2022 United Appeal target of £300,00 – see below.)

	£
Proposed Gross Appeal for 2021	3,600,000
Covid-19 Adjustment	(300,000)
Net Appeal for 2021	<div style="border-top: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 3px double black; display: inline-block; width: 100%;"></div> 3,300,000

14. This means that along with the adjustment made in 2020 of £370,000 and to be made in 2022 of £300,000, the overall reduction as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic is approx. £1m.
15. The allocation to Presbyteries is shown in Appendix 2.

The 2022 Appeal

16. In normal circumstances at this time of year Councils would be asked to submit a budget request for 2022. In anticipation that the General Assembly will not be able to meet until later in 2021, possibly the first week in October, it is proposed that this budget round is deferred to later in the year, possibly May or June. Proposals regarding the 2022 Appeal and Grants would be brought to the 2021 General Assembly.
17. As indicated above, the gross 2022 United Appeal figure will be reduced by the second Covid reduction to give a nett 2022 appeal £300,000 less than the gross figure.

APPENDIX 1

(Note: This is the amended version after the debate and decision at the Standing Commission)

UNITED APPEAL			
ACTUAL ACCOUNTS FOR 2020 and PROJECTIONS FOR 2021			
	Actual	Budget	Budget
	2020	2020	2021
	£	£	£
THE APPEAL	3,600,000	3,600,000	3,600,000
COVID REDUCTION			-300,000
NET APPEAL	<u>3,600,000</u>	<u>3,600,000</u>	<u>3,300,000</u>
INCOME			
Congregations (current year)	3,057,174	3,350,000	3,150,000
Congregations (prior years)	165,388	150,000	170,155
Donations and Bequests	33,411	28,000	10,000
Income from Trust Funds	29,228	10,000	24,445
Investment Income	768	0	768
Bank Interest	7,986	10,000	7,500
	<u>3,293,955</u>	<u>3,548,000</u>	<u>3,362,868</u>
EXPENDITURE			
Redundancy Costs	15,386		90,000
Promotional costs	4,554	10,000	10,000
	<u>19,940</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>100,000</u>
Grants to Councils - see attached schedule			
Mission in Ireland	958,500	1,065,000	724,500
Global Mission	958,500	1,065,000	1,061,500
Congregational Life & Witness	648,000	375,000	402,000
Training in Ministry	337,500	720,000	412,500
Social Witness	220,500	245,000	224,500
General Council - Creative Production	207,000	230,000	123,000
	<u>3,330,000</u>	<u>3,700,000</u>	<u>2,948,000</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>3,349,940</u>	<u>3,710,000</u>	<u>3,048,000</u>
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR YEAR			
Gains / Losses on investments	-55,985	-162,000	314,868
OPENING RESERVES	1,977,954	1,867,408	1,922,272
CLOSING RESERVES	<u>1,922,272</u>	<u>1,705,408</u>	<u>2,237,140</u>
<p>Note 1. The normal pattern of congregations forwarding their contributions to the annual Appeal is such that not all of these are received by the closing date of the Appeal. Some contributions are received after the closing date and are recorded in the following years as "prior year contributions". It has been assumed that £3,150,000 will be received in 2021 toward the 2021 Net Appeal of £3,300,000 by the closing date and that £150,000 will fall into the following year.</p> <p>Note 2. At the date of closing the 2020 Appeal 66 congregations had not made any contribution to the Appeal. The target for these congregations totalled £340,310. It has been assumed that 50% of this amount will be received. This is considered a prudent estimate.</p>			

APPENDIX 2

(Note: This is the amended version after the debate and decision at the Standing Commission)

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE					
ALLOCATION OF THE 2021 UNITED APPEAL TO PRESBYTERIES					
Presbytery	Contributing Families	Assessable Income	United Appeal	United Appeal	United Appeal
	2019	2019	2021	2021	2021
			Gross	Covid Adjust.	Net
		£	£	£	£
Ards	6,298	3,823,041	334,587	-27,882	306,705
Armagh	3,457	2,319,451	193,396	-16,116	177,280
Ballymena	6,322	3,668,551	328,411	-27,368	301,043
Belfast North	3,284	2,045,108	176,743	-14,729	162,014
Belfast South	2,217	1,864,495	140,643	-11,720	128,923
Belfast East	4,506	3,305,953	264,539	-22,045	242,494
Carrickfergus	3,871	2,017,977	191,027	-15,919	175,108
Coleraine and Limavady	4,724	2,802,462	248,097	-20,675	227,422
Derry and Donegall	4,473	2,216,040	215,630	-17,969	197,661
Down	4,178	1,937,042	195,555	-16,296	179,259
Dromore	4,197	2,350,042	214,258	-17,855	196,403
Dublin and Munster	964	1,819,961	105,637	-8,803	96,834
veagh	3,188	1,688,156	158,479	-13,207	145,272
Monaghan	1,088	859,623	66,580	-5,548	61,032
Newry	2,622	1,359,009	129,045	-10,754	118,291
Omagh	3,191	1,615,505	155,355	-12,946	142,409
Route	2,971	1,562,067	147,197	-12,266	134,931
Templepatrick	3,439	1,745,318	167,617	-13,968	153,649
Tyrone	3,266	1,839,468	167,204	-13,934	153,270
	68,256	40,839,269	3,600,000	-300,000	3,300,000

50% of the allocation for 2020 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Assessable Income. Assessable Income for congregations in the Republic of Ireland has been converted to sterling as GB£1 - €1.1301

SCHEDULE B

Way forward if a future General Assembly cannot be held

2020 STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Friday 19 February 2021

THE WAY FORWARD IF A FUTURE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CANNOT BE HELD

FEEDBACK FROM PRESBYTERIES AND REVISED PROPOSALS FROM THE GENERAL COUNCIL

A. PRESBYTERY RESPONSES – SOME CLEAR CONCLUSIONS

1. There was a strong feeling that any changes should not be put into the Code until a full stated meeting of the General Assembly could debate and decide upon any suggested changes.
2. There was large degree of consensus that Option 1 should be put in place i.e. that if necessary, the General Council should be able to agree a postponement of the General Assembly for a short period.
3. There was large degree of consensus that Option 2 should be put in place – i.e. that if necessary, a General Assembly Standing Commission would meet physically in the Assembly Hall, with a significant majority of members being appointed directly by Presbyteries. (Some Presbyteries felt that each Presbytery should have more than three representatives.)
4. There was large degree of consensus that Option 3 was the least desirable – i.e. that a small General Assembly Standing Commission meeting by video conferencing should only be used as a last resort and if put in place the majority of members should be direct Presbytery nominees.
5. Several Presbyteries raised the following points:
 - Any General Assembly Standing Commission should, as far as possible, not decide upon very controversial decisions or decisions that have significant ongoing implications.
 - There should be consideration as to how Presbyteries could discuss in advance the matters being dealt with by any future General Assembly Standing Commission, which would help inform Presbytery representatives.

- There should be further examination of how larger numbers could participate by video conferencing in any future General Assembly Standing Commission.
- There should be further examination of how the meetings of any future General Assembly Standing Commission could be streamed, enabling those not part of the Commission to observe the debates and decision making.

B. REVISED PROPOSALS FOR THE WAY FORWARD IF THE 2021 GENERAL ASSEMBLY CANNOT BE HELD

In light of Presbytery responses, the following revised recommendations were unanimously agreed by the General Council as a way forward, for decision by the 2020 Standing Commission of the General Assembly.

It is recommended that:

1. That the 2021 stated meeting of the General Assembly be held during the first week in October 2021 i.e. beginning on Monday 4th October 2021.
2. If it is not possible for the General Assembly to meet physically for that stated meeting in October 2021, then the General Council shall have delegated power to decide if the meeting should simply be postponed for a short period.
3. If the General Council deem that a short postponement is unlikely to be sufficient, then:
 - (a) The General Council shall have delegated power to convene a General Assembly Standing Commission (2021) 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 2021 Annual Meeting of the General Assembly;
 - (b) This General Assembly Standing Commission (2021) 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 (10);
 - Council Secretaries and GA Solicitor to ‘sit and deliberate’ (6)
 - (c) That the General Assembly Standing Commission (2021) 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.

- (d) The General Assembly Standing Commission (2021) should, as far as possible, not decide upon very controversial decisions or decisions that have significant ongoing implications
- (e) The business sessions of the General Assembly Standing Commission (2021), apart from any private session, should as far as possible be streamed, recognising that this may not be possible if the Commission has to meet by video conference.
- (f) 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 being dealt with by the General Assembly Standing Commission (2021) and therefore all Presbyteries be asked to meet on Tuesday 28th September 2021.

NOTES:

1. In the unlikely event that the General Council is unable to physically meet, the General Council Standing Committee would act on its behalf in the above.
2. The ministers and elders appointed by Presbytery are not 'delegates' but are 'representatives', in a similar way that a Kirk Session has a 'representative elder' i.e. 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.
3. The '10 ministers or elders appointed by the General Council' is to enable some key conveners etc to be present, whose input is important for the business of the Standing Commission e.g. Support Services Convener, United Appeal Convener etc.
4. The 2021 General Assembly Reports should indicate, if the General Assembly Standing Commission is necessary, which resolutions would be dealt with, which would not be dealt with (in line with point 3(d) above) and which may be dealt with at the discretion of the Commission.

Trevor D Gribben (Clerk of Assembly)

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