

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 1

(Tuesday morning 9.45 am)

Convener: Very Rev RL CRAIG
Secretary: THE CLERK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. In seeking to understand the nature of the work of the General Council the key word is “General”. Whereas each of the other Councils has a specific focus and remit the General Council is a kind of umbrella under which several General Assembly Committees and Task Groups take shelter. These Committees and Task Groups can and do work independently from one another; in the past year their reports to the General Council and their resolutions before this year’s General Assembly are an indication of a busy schedule both for the Council and each of its bodies.

2. In keeping with the new approach to business since the introduction of our new structures, the General Council, through the **General Assembly Business Committee**, is offering this year’s Assembly options in respect of the conduct of future business. The General Council, through the **Priorities Committee**, draws the attention of the General Assembly to the proposed direction of travel in seeking to discover “what seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us” in determining priorities for PCI.

3. As a denomination the Presbyterian Church in Ireland seeks to pursue good relationships with sister Churches both within the UK and Ireland and further afield. Reports from both the **Church Relations and Doctrine Committees** are a reflection that such relationships are dynamic and not static.

4. This year **eight Task Groups** have been working under and reporting to the General Council. The Council thank and commend all who play their part in these Task Groups.

5. The General Council is very thankful for the time, experience and advice of those who have been serving on the **Charities Legislation Task Group**. The Clerk, in particular, has found that many hours of his time have been consumed with matters related to interaction with government officials, and concerned Ministers and Elders.

6. Many have become aware that, at the local level, PCI has become very congregational in its outlook and is in danger of losing its sense of what it means to be Presbyterian. The General Assembly are asked to consider carefully and support the resolutions from the **Engagement and Consultations Panel** both in seeking the help of Presbyteries and in piloting a new scheme for Consultations.

7. As people of the Word who live in a world saturated with all kinds of social media, the General Council, through the **Communications Review Task Group**, has been considering how best to communicate both within the denomination and beyond.

8. The **Dialogue and Resources Task Group** has been exploring ways in which ministers might be better resourced to offer pastoral assistance to both individuals and families in respect of matters related to sexual orientation.

9. Like a local congregation the General Council has been entrusted with properties which have served us well and which need both constant upkeep and a timely consideration as to their future use. To this end, a Task Group has been considering the **Commercial use of Assembly Buildings** and brings a substantive report with options to this Assembly.

10. To facilitate the ordering of business in the Assembly, the General Assembly Business Committee will report in its own right at the beginning and the end of the Assembly (9.30am on Tuesday 7th and 11.45am on Friday 10th respectively). The General Assembly Nominations Committee will also report separately on Friday morning. The main General Council's report this year will then be considered in five separate sections, as follows:

Section 1 (9.45am on Tuesday 7th June):

- Priorities Committee
- Residential Assembly Task Group
- Engagement and Consultations Task Group
- Memorial Record

followed by Overtures relating to the Priorities Committee

Section 2 (3.30pm on Wednesday 8th June):

- Moderator's Advisory Committee
- Dialogue and Resources Task Group
- Republic of Ireland Marriage Task Group

followed by Overture relating to Marriage

Section 3 (4.30pm on Wednesday 8th June):

- Charities Legislation Task Group
- Communications Review Task Group
- Historical Archiving Task Group
- Guysmere Redevelopment Task Group

followed by Overtures relating to Charities Legislation

Section 4 (11.15am Thursday 9th June):

- Support Services Committee
- Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings Task Group
- United Appeal Committee

followed by Overture relating to Support Services

Section 5 (4.45pm Thursday 9th June):

- Church Relations Committee
- Organists and Employment Task Group
- Doctrine Committee
- General Business

followed by General Council Overtures

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

INITIAL REPORT

Matters relating to the 2016 General Assembly (Tuesday Morning 9.30am)

1. At the time of writing The General Assembly Business Committee has met on four occasions during the year with further meetings planned in preparation for the 2016 General Assembly.

2. The Committee received the resignations of the Rev Gordon Best as Convener of the **Arrangements Panel** and of Mrs Maureen Patterson as **Hospitality Secretary**. The Committee puts on record its thanks to both of them for the helpful and efficient manner in which they fulfilled their responsibilities. The Rev Andrew Thompson is welcomed as the new Convener and thanks are also due to Mrs Daphne Patton and Mrs Phyllis Spence for agreeing to look after Hospitality and Catering.

3. A **Draft Order of Business for 2016** was agreed and approved by the General Council. This includes the following:

- (a) A Friday morning has been added as already agreed at last year's General Assembly.
- (b) Following on from last year's innovations, which were well received there will be alternative presentations on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons for the Council for Church in Society, Listening to the Global Church, and the Council for Social Witness respectively. The latter will include input from the Pastoral Care Committee of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and focus on older people, including the topic of dementia. It is hoped that these alternative presentations will engage, inspire, and enable the General Assembly to participate in aspects of its business in a more creative way.
- (c) The General Council's report and business is divided into five sections over three days.
- (d) The Arrangements Panel has appropriate matters in hand and a budget of £20,000 has been agreed for recommendation to the Assembly.

4. **The Wednesday night event and the Wednesday and Thursday worship** will address the Fit for Purpose theme for 2016/17, 'A Community of Global Concern'. **SPUD** will have been engaging with four key areas of our culture: Sexuality, Secularism, Selfies and Science. Before the main Wednesday evening gathering they hope to serve a light tea in the Minor Hall and then share their insights, contributions and stories in these areas.

5. **The Creative Production Department** is cooperating in finding ways to publicise the Assembly with a view to increasing attendance and raising the public profile. The Committee has also considered the pre-Assembly scrutiny of business and encourages colleagues, ministers and representative Elders to meet with each other to discuss the forthcoming business.

6. Attention is drawn to the fact that changes to the **ordering of business and speaking times** implemented last year are continued this year, with a slight increase in speaking times, and are included in the procedure outlined in 'the yellow pages'.

7. The **Innovations** agreed for this year will be implemented. These include:

- (a) Additional named Elder to sit and deliberate
- (b) Reports restricted to strategy and implementation, not ‘showcasing’
- (c) Reports: executive summary; Implementation of previous decisions; decisions to be made;
- (d) Where appropriate each Council’s non-controversial resolutions be blocked together and taken as one item (without speeches unless challenged) along with the remainder of the Council’s more significant business.
- (e) Cross-council discussion of topics, especially priorities.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

SECOND REPORT

Matters relating to future General Assemblies (Friday Morning 11.45am)

8. The Committee recommends that, for future Assemblies, all the Council’s non-controversial items be moved into one consolidated resolution.

9. As requested by last year’s General Assembly (Minutes page 76 resolution 26) the committee has looked at ‘**much more radical proposals**’ concerning the General Assembly than those presented in 2015. The Committee was asked to bring options that would, among other things, enable working Elders and younger people to be involved in the highest court of the Church. The Committee has consulted with a range of people, including the proposer and seconder of the amendment, younger ministers, Spud representatives and a cross-section of Elders. Following the Committee’s report the General Council agreed that the following options be presented for decision at the 2016 General Assembly:

- 1A. Development of the current arrangements. This is already agreed for 2016 and involves some minor changes.
- 1B. As above but with a change of date to possibly September/October.
- 2A. Move to the first weekend in June starting on Thursday evening, Friday and Saturday business, worship on Sunday morning with a Sunday afternoon focus on the work of Church at home and abroad.
- 2B. As above but with a change to date to possibly September/October
3. An Assembly split over two separate dates.
10. Each option has its pros and cons and, along with the details of each option, are included in Appendix 1. It should be noted that in the appended resolution 32 the Assembly is being asked to decide upon which of these options it wishes to adopt.

REPORTS FROM OTHER CHURCH ASSEMBLIES etc**The Welsh Assembly 2015**

The Right Rev Dr Ian McNie reports:

11. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Wales met from 6th-8th July 2015 in Aberystwyth University.

12. Both Anne and I, along with other delegates, were warmly welcomed and many opportunities were afforded to us to be involved in all the Assembly activities. I was asked to speak at the closing session, on behalf of the visiting delegates. Hospitality was provided in a local hotel and after the evening session visiting delegates gathered and shared opinions on the day's proceedings. During the Assembly coffee breaks we were regularly joined by a group of young Presbyterian Ministers from India whose Church was established after Missionaries from the Presbyterian Church of Wales went to India following the Welsh Revival. They seemed to want to identify with us and hear about the work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

13. It was good to renew fellowship with the outgoing Moderator, Neil Kirkham, who chaired the first and second days of the three day Assembly, before handing over to Dr Elwyn Richards.

14. Concern was expressed with regard to falling numbers, with a larger proportion of Churches having a membership of fewer than 50.

15. The issue of same-sex marriage was highlighted, but not discussed in detail due to the Clerk's caution, 'that the process that needs to be followed is complex, and I am aware that wisdom and diligence will be required when dealing with the issue.' As an outsider seeking to understand these complex procedures, with many of the speakers articulating their point of view in Welsh, albeit with a translation available, it did become a challenge for those of us who were visitors.

16. It was heartening to read the Clerk's final sentence on the matter, 'I pray that we will discern God's will, and that we as a Church might be found to be dealing with these matters in a way which is God-honouring, thus adorning the Gospel.'

17. The Church and Society Department dealt with many issues that dominate our own agenda: the Syrian and the evolving migrant crisis, the plight of persecuted Christians and support for Christian minorities. In respect of the migrants, they cite a Calvinistic/Methodist publication of 1800, 'it is beholden on everyone living close to the sea behave compassionately towards those they see in danger ... also you shall not oppress a stranger.'

18. An examination of the role of the Moderator and his or her duties, and the length of the term of office brought no change to the present arrangement, Welsh Moderators continue part time in their own Congregations and are encouraged to use their distinctive and individual gifts for the benefit of the whole Church.

19. Listening to the report on Women's Ministry, and the Youth and Children's Work, reminded me much of what we experience at our own Assembly. In both cases there was an emphasis on the need for spiritual growth and development, and a passion within the leadership of these departments to facilitate this aspiration.

20. The overall impression I gleaned from attending the Assembly was a concern that the Church was in decline and there was no easy quick-fix. Majoring on the non-essentials and personal preferences must be eclipsed by a challenge to “be re-energised and accept the reality of being strangers and aliens within a culture that needs to be renewed”.

21. It is always good to have the opportunity to experience other Churches and their practices, and having spent three days at the Welsh Assembly, return with a renewed appreciation and enthusiasm for the work and witness of our own Church.

The Methodist Conference 2015

The Very Rev Dr Michael Barry reports:

22. I attended the Methodist Conference accompanied by Mr Martin Hampton, an Elder from Strand Congregation in East Belfast. Each year the Conference is hosted by a different District and this year it was based at the East Belfast Mission in the Skainos Centre on the Newtownards Road, Belfast. The theme of Conference was *Living as Aliens in a Strange Land*.

23. The Conference ran from Wednesday to Sunday and on the opening night the Rev Brian Anderson was elected and installed as President of the Conference.

24. Each day started with worship and Bible Study. Unfortunately the Rev David Bruce was unable to lead the studies each morning due to a family illness. However it was good to begin the day in God’s presence before the business began.

25. **Dr Neil Hudson**, Director of the Imagine project at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, was the special speaker at the Conference and he presented a challenge to reach our communities by building relationships.

26. There was a familiar ring to the Conference as it completed its business. However there were a number of differences between it and our Assembly. For example, as well as the morning Bible Study, there was an evening celebration on the Thursday and Friday evenings. Ministers who had died during the past year were remembered and opportunity given to members to speak about their life and witness. This was particularly relevant for me as one of those who had died was the Rev Stanley Ross, my next door neighbour when I came to Newry. Brought up in a Presbyterian home Stanley would often end a discussion with an unanswerable quotation of the Shorter Catechism.

27. One other notable difference, found in the Church of Scotland Assembly and the URC Conference, was taking non-controversial business en bloc. This greatly reduced the time given to individual resolutions.

28. The business of the Conference dealt with the important issues facing the Church. The Faith and Order Committee had set up a working group to examine issues surrounding human sexuality. This is an ongoing discussion but at present no change will be made to the teaching or practice of the Church.

29. Other matters which were discussed were the reactions to the marriage referendum in the Irish Republic, asylum seekers, domestic violence and abortion.

30. It is obvious that the Methodist Church, like our own, is facing difficult issues. Also like ourselves they are seeing numbers decline. In the face of such trials their Home Mission Department presented “God’s Mission Our Mission”

as a follow up to a 2014 Faith and Order Committee statement. The tag line is intriguing – Warm Hearts, Tough Hands, Wet Feet.

31. The Nominations Committee submitted names for consideration as President and Lay Leader for the following year and on Friday afternoon a vote was taken. The President Designate is the Rev Bill Mullally, currently stationed on the South Cork and Kerry Circuit. The Lay Leader, who holds the post for three years, will be Dr Fergus O’Ferrall, a local preacher on the Dun Laoghaire Circuit. They will now have a year to prepare.

32. Another appointment that was made was that of the Rev Dr John Stephens as Secretary of Conference, who will be replacing the Rev Donald Ker following his impending retirement after eight years in office.

33. The Conference ended as usual with the Ordination Service which, like the opening service, was held in St Patrick’s Parish Church on the Newtownards Road.

34. Each of the candidates for ordination was presented to the President and then gave an account of their call to ministry. The service ended with the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

35. It was a privilege for Martin and me to represent our Church at Conference. Someone had told me that the Methodist Conference was more easy-going than our General Assembly, and while I think that was an accurate assessment, the Methodist Church got through a lot of business. One of the memorable quotes made from the platform was, “I am energised by this Conference.” Not something I have often heard said at our General Assembly.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE
APPENDIX 1**

Options for future General Assemblies

Option 1: A development of the current arrangements

Item	Current	OPTION 1A	OPTION 1B
Dates	1st Monday in June to Thursday	Already agreed for 2016: 1st Monday in June to Friday	As 1A but held in September or another date
Opening	Monday night		
Election of Moderator	Monday night		
Reception of Corresponding Members & Delegates	Tuesday morning		
Business Sessions	Morning & Afternoon		
Worship	Wednesday & Thursday lunchtimes	Wednesday, Thursday & Friday lunchtimes	
Lord's Supper	Tuesday lunchtime		
Memorial Roll	Tuesday lunchtime		
Private Session	Thursday morning	Friday morning	
Missionary Personnel	Prior to CGM report		
Retirees & Licentiates	Prior to CTM report		
Forces Chaplains	During CMI report		
Evening Celebration	Wednesday night		
Closing	Thursday afternoon	Friday afternoon	
Youth Event	Saturday night		

Item	Current	OPTION 1A	OPTION 1B
Presentation of business	'Alternative Presentations'	Already agreed: GABC reflect on CCLW's alternative presentation in 2015 with authority to GC to implement related changes in 2016	
	'Listening to the Global Church' types		
	'That the report be received taken at end'		
		Already agreed for 2016: (a) Additional named Elder to sit and deliberate (b) Reports restricted to strategy and implementation, not 'showcasing' (c) Reports: executive summary; implementation of previous decisions; decisions to be made; (d) Each Council's non-controversial resolutions be blocked together and taken as one item (e) Cross-council discussion of topics, especially priorities	

Option 2: Move to the weekend

Item	Current	OPTION 2A	OPTION 2B
Dates	1st Monday in June to Thursday	Thursday evening before first Monday in June to Sunday evening	As 2A but September or another date
Opening	Monday night 7pm	Thursday night 8pm	
Election of Moderator	Monday night	Thursday night	
Reception of Corresponding Members & Delegates	Tuesday morning		
Worship	Wednesday & Thursday lunchtimes	Friday & Saturday mornings	
Business Sessions	Morning & Afternoon	Friday Morning, Afternoon, Evening; Saturday Morning, Afternoon	
Lord's Supper	Tuesday lunchtime	Sunday morning	
Memorial Roll	Tuesday lunchtime	Sunday morning	
Private Session	Thursday morning		
Missionary Personnel	Prior to CGM report	Sunday afternoon	
Retirees & Licentiatees	Prior to CTM report	Sunday afternoon	
Forces Chaplains	During CMI report	Sunday afternoon	
Evening Celebration	Wednesday night	Sunday night	
Closing	Thursday afternoon	Sunday night	
Youth Event	Saturday night	Saturday night in Ulster Hall or Local Church	
Presentation of business	'Alternative Presentations'		
	'Listening to the Global Church' types		

Item	Current	OPTION 2A	OPTION 2B
	<p>‘That the report be received taken at end’</p>		
		<p>All non-controversial resolutions as one item at end of Saturday ‘Showcasing’ at Sunday afternoon session. In Business Sessions proposers and seconders root their proposals in Scripture and there be a pause for prayer before voting takes place. Material provided for congregational services for that Sunday 2-day holiday for Assembly Buildings staff on following Monday & Tuesday</p>	

Option 3: An Assembly split over two separate dates

Item	Current	OPTION 3
Dates	1st Monday in June to Thursday	Thursday to Saturday twice a year, perhaps February half-term and June.
Opening	Monday night 7pm	February Thursday night
Election of Moderator	Monday night	June Saturday final session
Reception of Corresponding Members & Delegates	Tuesday morning	
Worship	Wednesday & Thursday lunchtimes	Friday and Saturday mornings or lunchtimes
Business Sessions	Morning & Afternoon	Friday and Saturday mornings and afternoons plus one Friday evening
Lord's Supper	Tuesday lunchtime	
Memorial Roll	Tuesday lunchtime	
Private Session	Thursday morning	
Missionary Personnel	Prior to CGM report	A Friday night celebration
Retirees & Licentiates	Prior to CTM report	A Friday night celebration
Forces Chaplains	During CMI report	A Friday night celebration
Evening Celebration	Wednesday night	A Friday night
Closing	Thursday afternoon	June Saturday
Youth Event	Saturday night	February would not conflict with exam time but Assembly Hall would not be available for setting up
Presentation of business	'Alternative Presentations'	
	'Listening to the Global Church' types	
	'That the report be received taken at end'	

Pros and Cons

Option	Pros	Cons
Option 1: Development of current arrangements	Familiarity It 'works'	Doesn't help the issue of inability of many to attend. Falls down on participation.
Option 2: Move to the weekend	Opens up possibility of attendance to more people More room for debate of important issues – less time needed on routine matters Possible to make it residential	Three business sessions on one day (Friday) may not be sustainable. Difficulty of getting Sunday proposals accepted – likely to be divisive. Youth Night could not be in the Assembly Hall.
Option 3: An Assembly split over two separate dates	Opens up possibility of attendance to more people. Would in particular enable more of an input from younger people at February date – could deal with matters more likely to be of interest to them then. The two meetings could be separated along 'routine' and 'directional' or 'outward' and 'inward' lines. If there was a clear theme linking both dates it may be able to work.	Difficult to see the two meetings as 'one assembly'. Would June meeting want to rescind decisions taken at February meeting? Need for two sets of reports. Marginally increased cost. Decisions would have to be made on which meeting contained things like Lord's Supper, Memorial Roll, presentations of personnel etc. Would one meeting become more 'important' than the other? Which meeting would delegates from other Churches and overseas attend?

ROY PATTON, Convener

PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

The Priorities Committee met twice during the last session and transacted the following business:

Towards a new process to be followed by the Priorities Committee:

1. At its first meeting of the session the Committee received a report from a small group which had been set up by the Clerk, as Convener of the Committee, and the Very Rev Dr Rob Craig, as Convener of the General Council. The small group had been tasked to draw up a draft framework paper to facilitate discussion regarding the direction of the Committee's work, and its membership was: The Clerk (Convener), the Very Rev Dr Rob Craig, the Rev Dr Graham Connor, the Rev David Bruce and Mr Maurice McNicholl.

2. In its report, the small group noted: the relevant aspect of the remit of the Priorities Committee, as set out in the Code Par 272(6)(c); statements agreed by the Priorities Committee in February 2015; the various reports of the former Ad-Hoc Committee on Priorities to the General Assembly (especially the 2003 report) and the various reports of the former Priorities Committee itself to the General Assembly (especially the 2005 report). The group's report also included a framework paper to assist the Priorities Committee in clarifying one aspect of its role and related modus operandi – that of assisting the General Assembly in identifying key priorities for its work for specific periods of time.

3. Following detailed consideration of the small group's paper, and the further consideration of a more detailed report at a subsequent meeting, the Committee agreed a process, running from June-December 2016, which will enable representatives of Councils to listen to each other's narratives and, along with others, begin to discern the priorities that need to be brought to the General Assembly for consideration and decision in 2017.

4. The Committee is thankful to Mr Maurice McNicholl for his willingness to facilitate this process over the ensuing months and also recognises the dedicated and focussed time committed by its own members, for a process which will include two 'days away' and one 'overnight'.

PRIORITIES REFERENCE PANEL

Mr Martin Hampton reports:

5. The Priorities Reference Panel has also been considering its detailed modus operandi to enable it to be in a position to begin its work in 2016/17. It was noted that from the 2016 General Assembly, the Priorities Reference Panel would be taking responsibility for the work carried out by the former Appraisals Panel. (This work is currently being carried out by the Finance and Staffing Commission, which will be thanked and discharged at the 2016 General Assembly).

6. The Panel recognised that in addition to any specific Priorities allocated by the General Assembly, the Councils also have to carry out all aspects of their remit (as laid down in the Code) – their everyday function to support the work of the Church in Ireland and globally. The Panel therefore recommends to the General Assembly that this consideration be reflected in a change to the order and wording to the Code par 272(6)(c), which should now read as follows:

- Though a suitable Council Reference Panel, independent of other Councils and reporting directly to the General Council, to:
 - report whether each Council is focussed on the remit allocated to it by the General Assembly.
 - report that the work of the Councils takes cognizance of the priorities agreed by the General Assembly;
 - approve, on behalf of the General Council, all new projects and/or staffing posts, following the scheme agreed from time to time by the General Council;
 - report that the United Appeal allocations are consistent with the remit of Councils and reflective of priorities agreed by the General Assembly;

An appropriate resolution and overture are appended.

7. With regard to the review of the Councils' work (as envisaged in the first bullet point in 6 above), the Panel felt that it could start with consideration of the remit of each Council, in advance of any specific priorities being allocated by the General Assembly in 2017. The Panel is still to determine the best approach, based on skills and resources required. Two approaches are under consideration:

- Review all Councils each year;
- Review some Councils each year on a rolling programme to ensure all are covered in a three year cycle.

8. The Panel initially proposes to carry out a sample review with one Council, to allow it to develop a detailed method of ongoing review. This will also enable the Panel to identify suitable members to co-opt, based on skills/knowledge required.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

2017 RESIDENTIAL ASSEMBLY TASK GROUP

9. Plans for the 2017 Residential Assembly are now beginning to take shape and most of the essential preliminary arrangements are now in place.

The dates are Monday 21st-Thursday 24th August, 2017. The University of Ulster, Coleraine, has been booked as the venue, with the main meetings to take place in the 'Diamond'. Twelve seminar rooms, including a 250-seater lecture-theatre have also been provisionally booked for workshops and break-out groups.

10. The title and theme of the Assembly is 'Everyday Disciples', in recognition of the increasing necessity for followers of Jesus today, to be equipped by the Church to be effective disciple-makers in their various spheres of everyday life. Our two keynote speakers, the Rev Dr Ray Ortlund Jnr (Immanuel Church, Nashville) and the Rev Randy Pope (Perimeter Church, Atlanta), both of whom have a well-informed knowledge of our PCI context, will flesh out this theme for us with a fresh, but strongly biblical perspective.

11. The workshop/seminar topics will similarly include 'Disciples the Jesus Way', 'Disciples in Family', 'Disciples who Think and Engage', 'Disciples

across the World’, and ‘Disciples who really Care’. It is envisaged that several of the workshop facilitators will be local or at least UK/Ireland based.

12. We also plan to supplement our keynote addresses by a series of TED Talks (personal stories) from local PCI contexts for our encouragement. Worship will be led by Mr Jonathan Rea and members of New Irish Arts.

13. A ‘Publicity and Promotion’ sub-group has been appointed, which will oversee the formal launch in the Autumn. This will be effected by direct contact with Congregations and Presbyteries. The ‘Publicity and Promotion’ sub-group will also be responsible for follow-up material, for use in Congregations, post-Assembly. Online registration of delegates will begin in January 2017 and further details regarding this will be forthcoming.

14. Initially, the Assembly will be open to Ministers, Elders, leaders and key personnel in Congregations (up to a maximum of 3 per Congregation), who *must* register in advance of the event, either for the ‘full residential package’ or as ‘day-delegates’.

15. Costs have yet to be finalised. However, we are in contact with Mr Clive Knox to ensure that all budgetary requirements are in place. Mr David Thomson, from Saintfield Road Congregation, continues enthusiastically to act as chief administrator of the Task Group, to whom we are extremely grateful.

16. Please remember this Assembly very much in your prayers, as finer details are worked out over the coming months and as momentum gathers pace ahead of August 2017. Please pray especially that it will have a massive impact upon our denomination over the next few years as we face very real challenges, take tough decisions and seize our opportunities for Christ.

JOHN KIRKPATRICK & GORDON BEST (Co-Conveners)

ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATIONS TASK GROUP

Introduction

17. A reminder of the remit set up by the 2015 General Assembly: *a new Engagement and Consultations Task Group be formed to carry forward the examination of the issue of engagement (between Presbyteries and the new Councils and between Presbyteries and Congregations) and that this group subsume the work of reviewing Consultations.*

18. The Task Group in its various meetings has conducted a wide ranging discussion over the past year on issues such as what does it mean to be a Presbyterian today; how can Presbytery do business better; how can we streamline the Consultations process; how can ordinary Presbyterians feel more engaged with the wider Church?

19. The following is suggested as constituting the major elements of Presbytery’s role into the future:

- Influencing the leadership of Congregations, particularly Ministers;
- Offering pastoral support, particularly to Ministers;

- Providing accountability for Ministers, Elders and Congregations;
- Facilitating administration;
- Representing member Churches in the public square;
- Training of leaders and members of Congregations;
- Formulating missional strategy on a Presbytery wide basis;
- Providing advice;
- Informing Presbytery of what individual Congregations are doing and celebrating successes.

Points considered:

On the issue of being a Presbyterian Church:

- (a) It is important to continue to have some form of accountability built into the Church structures for the health of our Church.
- (b) Part of being Presbyterian is to engage with the different aspects of the wider Church denomination – we are not congregationalist with each Congregation viewing itself as independent from others.
- (c) It is noted that the modern trend is to play down denominational distinctives and to lean towards congregational independence so we must be aware of this and seek to counteract it positively.
- (d) While engagement between Presbyteries and Congregations is considered “a good thing” it is a massive challenge to achieve this in a helpful way.
- (e) For Congregations to identify as being part of a Presbytery there need to be real benefits seen: people need to feel informed about relevant matters; have good prayer information; be encouraged to think that they are part of a bigger vision; be able to access regular training on a Presbytery basis.

On issue of Consultations:

- (f) Presbytery Consultations are becoming burdensome and an increasing number of Presbyteries are doing fewer of them (six Presbyteries did not carry out any last year).
- (g) The Consultation process can be viewed as increasingly unwieldy, involving too many people and too long.
- (h) The end product of Consultations tends to be innocuous and of minimal help considering the amount of time spent in carrying them out.
- (i) Consultations however can be of great benefit to spot major issues arising in a Congregation and of course aids in accountability.
- (j) We should endeavour to find ways of keeping Congregations engaged with the wider Church, especially through Presbytery.
- (k) A way should be found to keep Presbyteries meaningfully engaged and knowledgeable about what Congregations are doing within their bounds in an ongoing way.
- (l) A way should be found to maintain accountability but in as non-threatening and affirming a way as possible.
- (m) The current Consultation questions are helpful and need not change considerably but they do need reviewed.

20. The focus of our work recently has been concentrated on these two issues – how to improve the Consultation process; how we can improve engagement between Presbytery and Congregations including whether the format of Presbytery needs to change to facilitate this engagement?

21. The key question to be determined is whether we see Presbytery mainly as a court of the Church which guides the tenor of the way business is conducted, or whether it can appropriately meld into a forum for fellowship, prayer, training and strategizing in addition to being a court. There is more thinking needing to be done on this key question as it will shape how we conduct Presbytery business.

22. This paper focuses on the thinking done so far in two main areas –

Appendix A: Improving engagement and communication between Presbytery and Congregations;

Appendix B: Consultations.

23. Thanks are due to the Revs Albin Rankin and Jonathan Boyd who have contributed substantially to this report.

ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATIONS TASK GROUP

APPENDIX A

Improving engagement and communication between Presbytery and Congregations

Introduction

1. A survey of Clerks of Presbytery revealed the following barriers to significant and positive engagement between Presbytery and Congregations.

2. **Perspective:** The overriding attitude adopted by Congregations is that of congregationalism not Presbyterianism. Presbytery is therefore often seen as an agent of the central Church; an imposition, not an encouragement and a body best avoided, or least a body with whom minimal contact should be maintained.

3. **Priority:** Closely aligned to the perspective is the place of Presbytery on the agenda of already overstretched Ministers. Presbytery does not rate as a key priority and Elders and Congregations reflect this view in the attitude they adopt towards and the involvement they seek to have with Presbytery.

4. **Representation:** While in many cases representative Elders serve for long periods, in some cases the turnover is high. This makes relationship-building difficult and hampers the development of engagement between Presbytery and Congregation.

5. **Capacity:** The perspective taken and priority adopted is in no small measure a result of the limited capacity within Congregations to undertake any additional activity or relationship-building outside of Congregation life.

6. **Geography:** Although predominantly an issue within rural Presbyteries, the spread of Congregations over either a wide physical region or across diverse socio-economic areas often mitigates against real engagement.

7. **Identity:** The geographical issue is exacerbated by the lack of identification with Presbytery. Congregations may all bear the imprimatur of PCI but Presbytery is often viewed as an unknown and unknowable entity. It is telling that Presbytery is more often referred to as “they” rather than “we.”

8. While it is vital that the administrative, supervisory and judicial roles of Presbytery are protected and its place as a court of the Church is not devalued, it is nevertheless equally vital for Presbytery to become a place as much about people as it is about process.

9. To that end the dissemination of good practice is a first step, in encouraging a proactive approach by Presbytery, towards more meaningful and productive engagement with Congregations.

10. Alongside its role as a court of the Church, Presbytery can become a catalyst sparking fresh thinking and innovation as it seeks to engage, encourage and enable Congregations to fulfil their calling as missional communities in the 21st century.

11. The survey of Clerks revealed the following elements of good practice:

- (i) **Hosting:** Having Congregations host Presbytery meetings and events on a rotation basis.
- (ii) **Sharing:** Inviting host Congregations to share opportunities and challenges in mission as part of a Presbytery meeting. Where this involves congregational members participating (rather than Minister or full-time staff), greater engagement is afforded. However, excusing such participants when their contribution is over only serves to reinforce the perception that Presbytery is only for Ministers and Elders and/or Presbytery is boring!
- (iii) **Praying:** Create space to pray for and with one another within each Presbytery meeting. This can be complemented by distributing prayer points before or after Presbytery meetings; appointing a prayer co-ordinator and encouraging prayer in Congregations for groups of Presbytery Congregations throughout the year.
- (iv) **Role specific and single-issue meetings:** Gathering congregational members who serve similar roles together for sharing and training can be a basis for developing better relationships between Congregations. The training component could also involve vision-casting about Presbytery, its roles, responsibilities and the relationship it seeks with each Congregation under its care.

12. Single-issue meetings provide opportunity for Presbytery to invite a wider range of congregational members to sit and deliberate. This has a two-fold benefit in that it allows more people to be part of Presbytery's work and it allows Church members to have real opportunity to impact and shape the direction of Presbytery.

Areas for further consideration

13. **Representative Elders:** The role of Representative Elders is crucial in the engagement of Presbytery with Congregations. It may be useful for Presbytery and Kirk Sessions to consider minimum (and maximum) terms of service for Elders in this role.

14. In addition thought needs to be given to fostering better two-way communication between Congregations and Presbytery. What would Presbytery wish Congregations to know about their current work and planning? What is taking place at congregational level that would be useful to share at Presbytery level?

15. **Clustering:** Where geography, demographics or socio-economic factors make Presbytery-wide engagement difficult, if not impossible, might consideration be given to a clustering model? Relationship-building might be more meaningful and productive between smaller groups of Congregations than on a Presbytery basis. This model is being trialled in one Presbytery as part of an alternate format for Presbytery meetings. This will involve breakout sessions in clusters but with a plenary session to ensure that no one loses sight of the bigger picture, namely Presbytery. It is also envisaged that such clustering will involve gatherings outside of stated meetings by Ministers and possibly also by Clerks of Session and Elders. The aim is to foster better relationships with an intentional missional focus.

16. **Consultation:** The role of Visitation/Consultation/Oversight or whatever the next development of the process whereby Presbytery exercises its supervisory role, is a crucial element in the Presbytery-congregational relationship. The refreshing of how this task is undertaken has the potential to develop more meaningful and significant engagement between Congregations and Presbytery.

Conclusion

17. The congregational model of mission and ministry coupled with the new Assembly structures of Councils and Commissions dominates the landscape of Church life and work. The place and purpose of Presbytery remains hazy in the minds of many Church members and Ministers.

18. The challenge facing Presbytery is identity, “Who or what is Presbytery?” and involvement, “What does Presbytery add to the conversations about ministry and mission at congregational and Assembly level?”

19. Developing better engagement between Presbytery and Congregations will require further reflection on these two fundamental questions.

ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATIONS TASK GROUP

APPENDIX B

Review of Consultations

Introduction

1. A working group of the Engagement and Consultations Task Group has been reviewing Consultations with the aim of producing:

- a revised process;
- new resources and guidelines for Presbytery to carry out Consultations; and
- resources to help Kirk Sessions make effective use of Consultations to develop the fruitfulness of congregational life.

2. It is envisaged that a smaller number of people be involved:

- (a) Consultation Team: A four-person team appointed by Presbytery, consisting of members of Presbytery, at least two of whom should be Ministers. They would have a quorum of three. One member will be the

Consultation Convener with responsibility for preparing reports and presenting them to Presbytery.

- (b) Congregational Representatives: In order to involve the Congregation more in this process, get a fuller picture and ensure that there is ownership of outcome; we propose having a representative group of people meet with the Consultation Team for face-to-face discussions. This group would have to be large enough to present a wide and representative picture of congregational life, yet small enough for effective discussion to take place. The whole Kirk Session will have opportunity for input into the process via a written submission but the Team will meet with the Congregational Representatives, a smaller group which facilitates better discussion. Kirk Session should assemble a group of 10–12 people consisting of e.g.
- up to four Elders;
 - two young people (under age 25);
 - four to six other leaders/representatives from the Congregation (at least two of whom are female).

3. To ensure that these are coherent and helpful, we are working backwards to establish:

- (a) the goals of Consultations;
 - (b) the product of this process that will allow the goals to be accomplished, by way of reports to Presbytery, and resources for Kirk Session;
 - (c) the best means of assessing congregational life leading to good recommendations for action;
 - (d) the process of gathering and analysing the data required to make this assessment; and
 - (e) the specific questions used to gather data including guidelines for assessing answers.
4. This part of the report addresses steps (a)–(d) above.

a. Goals

- (i) Get a full picture of congregational life that comes from the different perspectives present in a Congregation, but without overburdening the Congregation with many meetings.
- (ii) Involve the Congregation in discussions so that they will understand and have ownership of the outcome of the process and embrace it as a means of increasing fruitfulness, rather than go through the motions.
- (iii) Ensure that, under the leadership of Kirk Session, the Congregation is meeting its obligations to keep accurate records and up to date policies, and abide by the Code and the law of the land.
- (iv) Discover things in the life of the Congregation which could be celebrated by the Congregation for their edification, and by Presbytery for the building up of the wider Church.
- (v) Discover challenges that Kirk Session faces in congregational life, particularly with regard to mission, and resource Kirk Session to deal with these challenges internally so that it can take ownership of the work and embrace it rather than have a solution imposed from outside.
- (vi) Determine if there is a need for Presbytery to directly intervene to offer help or investigate problems.

- (vii) Inform Councils of the aforementioned celebrations and challenges to guide them in their work, particularly the resourcing of Presbytery and Congregations.

b. Product

- (i) For Congregations, it is hoped that this process will lead to the end product of enabling them to be more fruitful by identifying good things already happening which can be built upon, and by addressing challenges. This involves providing information to the Consultation Team, hearing their recommendations, and responding in a way that will improve the life of the Congregation. The specifics of what this looks like will vary greatly from Congregation to Congregation depending on their circumstances, the recommendations of the Consultation Team and the willingness to respond. With the help of CCLW some draft resources have been produced to help Kirk Sessions continue discussions about how to develop particular areas of congregational life during the ensuing year.
- (ii) For Presbytery, this process is about getting a better picture of life in a Congregation, both as it was when the Consultation process began and how it has changed as a result. For the Congregation, the process should primarily produce action and change.
- (iii) The finding and recommendations of the Consultation Team are not only a product of this process, arising out of investigation and analysis, but also an interim step leading to the desired final outcome of greater fruitfulness in the Congregation. While the actions of Congregations cannot be specified in advance, the nature of the Consultation Team's finding and recommendations can be clearly specified and would take the form of two reports:

1. **Consultation Report** – presented to Presbytery for approval and then passed on to Kirk Session for action. This would also be copied to CCLW to give them a picture of the positive stories in PCI and the needs that are being identified. Where appropriate, CCLW could pass this on to other Councils e.g. CMI. The report would answer questions and make recommendations as follows:

a. Questions to be answered

- (i) Has the Congregation complied with the requirements to maintain good records and review policies, etc.? Ideally for most Congregations this would be a one-sentence paragraph.
- (ii) What stories are there to celebrate?
- (iii) What challenges does the Congregation face?

b. Recommendations

- (i) Action for Kirk Session to take in the next year.
- (ii) Action for Presbytery to take immediately. This would be absent from most Consultation Reports, unless there is evidence of serious problems that require immediate intervention or investigation by a Commission.

2. **Follow-up Report** – This would come a year after the Consultation Report, during which time Kirk Session will have had time for action. Providing that the Consultation Team is satisfied with progress made, this should be a

brief verbal report to Presbytery. The report would answer questions and make recommendations as follows:

a. Questions to be answered

- (i) How has Kirk Session dealt with their challenges in the past year?
- (ii) Has a story come out of this that we can celebrate?
- (iii) Are there further challenges requiring some form of follow-up?

b. Recommendations

EITHER

- (i) That Kirk Session and Congregation be commended for their work.
- (ii) That the Consultation Team be discharged.

OR, in situations where the response of Kirk Session and/or the Congregation is particularly concerning, and Presbytery feels that further action is required

- (i) That further action be taken by Presbytery.
- (ii) That the Consultation Team be discharged.

c. Assessment

The conclusions which go into the reports would be formed after discussion by the Team who would be guided by the hard and soft data they have gathered throughout the process.

- (i) Hard data to be recorded in a booklet known as the 'Review of Resources, Records, and Policies'. It would be similar to the old 'Review of Resources' and collect data on:
 - (a) Numerical trends in attendance and finance;
 - (b) Property maintenance reports.
 - (c) Evidence of record-keeping.
 - (d) Up-to-date policies.
- (ii) Soft data
 - (a) The Consultation Report from the previous Consultation.
 - (b) Experience of a normal service in the Congregation by the whole team.
 - (c) The story of congregational life heard from the Minister via written response to a questionnaire and personal interview. This would also be done with the Associate Minister where one is present. As Licenced Assistants and other members of staff are not members of Presbytery, they will not receive the same individual attention, but could potentially be included in the Congregational Representatives if Kirk Session so desire.
 - (d) The story of congregational life heard from the Kirk Session via written response to a wide-ranging questionnaire.
 - (e) The story of congregational life heard from the Congregational Representatives via a group discussion focussing on issues arising out of the written responses and hard data.

Assessment for the follow-up report would be accomplished by hearing from the Kirk Session about action taken in response to the Consultation Report. The form of this report would be at the discretion of the Consultation Team and depend on the nature of the recommendations it makes.

d. Process of a Consultation

- (i) Presbytery inform Kirk Session twelve weeks in advance of when they will be due to participate in a Consultation and send an outline of the Consultation process.
- (ii) Groups are appointed to conduct the Consultation process.
 - (a) Presbytery appoints a Consultation Team and provides it with the previous Consultation Team Report for this Congregation.
 - (b) Kirk Session inform the Congregation that the Consultation will be happening and organise the appointment of a group of Congregational Representatives who will take part in the group discussion.
- (iii) The Consultation Team write to the Congregation to begin gathering data and require that all responses be made within six weeks.
 - (a) It sends Kirk Session a Review of Resources, Records and Policies to be completed with the help of Congregational Committee.
 - (b) It sends Kirk Session a questionnaire which requires a written response.
 - (c) It sends the Minister a questionnaire which requires a written response.
 - (d) It sends the Associate Minister, if there is one, a questionnaire which requires a written response.
- (iv) The Consultation Team visits a service in the Congregation.
- (v) Each member of the Consultation Team individually looks at data gathered so far and makes an assessment. The Team then meets to agree on areas of focus for discussion. Two methods of assessment will be given in the Presbytery pilot scheme.
- (vi) The Consultation Team organises discussion meetings. The order and timing of these would be at the discretion of the Consultation Team.
 - (a) It holds a group discussion with the Congregational Representatives.
 - (b) It holds an individual discussion with the Minister.
 - (c) It holds an individual discussion with the Associate Minister, if there is one.
- (vii) The Consultation Team meets to discuss their individual impressions and agree on recommendations.
- (viii) The Consultation Convener writes a Consultation Report.
- (ix) The Consultation Team or Consultation Convener may at their discretion meet with the Minister and Clerk of Session to verbally inform them of the content of the report as a courtesy, making it clear that the report still has to go to Presbytery for the recommendations to be agreed.
- (x) The Consultation Convener presents the Consultation Report to Presbytery.
- (xi) If urgent intervention is recommended in the report and agreed by Presbytery, Presbytery addresses the concerns as a separate process, with access to information from the Consultation process.
- (xii) If the Consultation Report is received by Presbytery, then the Consultation Convener sends the report to Kirk Session, along with resources to help hold discussions concerning the area(s) of congregational life addressed by the recommendations.

- (xiii) Kirk Session has a year to address the recommendations of the report.
- (xiv) The Consultation Team consults with Kirk Session after a year to hear about progress regarding the recommendations of the Consultation Report.
- (xv) The Consultation Team meets to discuss their views on the progress and agree on what to report to Presbytery.
- (xvi) The Consultation Convener makes a Follow-up Report to Presbytery.
- (xvii) If urgent intervention is recommended in the report and agreed by Presbytery, Presbytery addresses the concerns as a separate process, with access to information from the Consultation process.
- (xviii) If the Report is accepted by Presbytery, then Presbytery discharges the Consultation Team.

5. Conclusion

- (a) In short, the main new elements of the Consultation process are a reduced team conducting the review; new written questions for the Session and the Minister; the consultation Team meeting with a representative Group (maximum 12) from the Congregation and not the Session and Committee.
- (b) There are still a number of issues to be addressed such as the interval between Consultations (probably 10 years); should there be a Review of Resources every five years; how to deal with Charges made up of multiple Congregations; the relationship between Consultations and other Reviews (such as Tenure reviews); payment of Pulpit Supply Fees to facilitate the Consultation process.
- (c) The Task Group is currently finalising the areas to be covered in the written questions to Session and Minister. It is contemplating covering nine areas in the questions to Session which accord with the key areas of focus in the Council for Congregational Life and Witness. The nine areas would be outreach, discipleship, leadership, worship, pastoral care, global mission, sacramental discipline, relationships, staffing. There will only be two or three questions in each section so the overall maximum number of questions would be 30 (similar to the number in the current Consultation process).
- (d) There would be ten questions to the Minister which focus on his/her ministry emphases, personal development, recent highlights, concerns and relationships.
- (e) The Task Group hopes to be in a position to run a pilot of the new Consultation process in one or two Presbyteries in early 2017.

NORMAN AL CAMERON, Convener

MEMORIAL RECORD

The Very Rev Dr Donald Patton reports:

The Very Rev Robert Victor Alexander Lynas, OBE, BA, BD, DD, Minister Emeritus of Gardenmore Congregation, Larne, died 20th June 2015 in the ninety-sixth year of his age and the seventy-second year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 17th January 1920, the eldest of two sons (his brother, Cowper, became Minister of Ballywillan and Dunmurry successively) to William Lynas, a Belfast City Missionary, and his wife Winifred Mary, née Jamison. The family were members of Fitzroy Avenue Congregation. Dr Lynas attended Rosetta Primary School and then Methodist College, Belfast, 1932-1935, where he captained the Medallion Rugby XV, and won several Ulster Schools Athletics sprint titles. On leaving school he worked in Alexander Findlay, Soap, Candle and Glycerene Manufacturers in Ann Street, Belfast, but left in 1937 to pursue academic study at the Queen's University, Belfast, graduating BA in 1940. In response to the call of God to the ordained ministry he studied at the Assembly's College, Belfast, 1940-1943. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 25th May 1943 and was assigned as Assistant to the Rev WR Megaw of St John's, Newtownbreda, Belfast. Mr Megaw had been Minister of Trinity, Ahoghill, before being called to St John's, and it was that Congregation which called Mr Lynas, where he was ordained and installed as Minister by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 15th December 1943. He ministered there until his call to Gardenmore, Larne, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus on 11th March 1947. This was the beginning of a long and distinguished ministry to which Mr Lynas gave his many gifts with great commitment. He was a noted pulpit speaker and efficient organiser. He was invited to conduct many evangelistic missions and had many opportunities as a broadcaster on radio and television. A devoted pastor, he brought the compassion of the Saviour and the hope of the Gospel to every situation, a much needed ministry when the Princess Victoria, the ferry that sailed daily between Larne and Stranraer, sank on 31st January 1953 with the loss of 133 men, women and children. As the town of Larne expanded the Congregation grew in numerical strength from six hundred to eight hundred families. A new manse was built on the site of the old one and was ready for use in September 1957. Mr Lynas gave enthusiastic leadership when the Congregation decided to build new halls and to add a tower to the Church building in 1969. In the mid-1950s the large housing estate of Craigy Hill was built and Mr Lynas saw the need for, and encouraged the planting and development of, a new Congregation in 1956 in the heart of the development. He was well known in the wider community especially through his association with Larne Grammar School, of which he was a Trustee Governor for sixty-four years from 1948, and a past Chairman of the Board of Governors, a position he also held in Larne Technical College for some years. His commitment was recognised with the awarding of an OBE for services to education in the New Year Honours List, 1998. In local Church life he served as Clerk of the Presbytery of Carrickfergus 1974-99 guiding the work of the court and advising and encouraging colleagues in their ministry. He was also twice Moderator of Presbytery and Moderator of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine in 1965. The central Church owes him a debt of gratitude for his work in a variety of roles. He was Convener of the State of

Religion and Evangelism Committee 1955-63; Convener of the Central Ministry Fund 1962-73; Convener of the Board of Ministry and Pensions 1966-76. His work and worth were recognised by the wider Church when he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly for the year 1972-73 and the Presbyterian Theological Faculty of Ireland conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. These were challenging times for all Church leaders as the IRA intensified its campaign of violence, and division and sectarianism spread. Dr Lynas brought able and reasoned leadership in this context and demonstrated the pastoral care and fellowship of the Church by his attendance at the funerals of Presbyterian and other victims of the 'Troubles'. As Convener of the Government Committee 1973-81 he continued to exercise a ministry of reconciliation and to speak for the Church in political and community circles. Dr Lynas retired on 31st December 1987 to live at Ballygally. Throughout his busy years of full-time ministry Dr Lynas was supported loyally by his wife, Margaret Elizabeth, a daughter of Mr Thomas Rainey whose name is closely associated with the building of the Presbyterian War Memorial Hostel in Howard Street, Belfast, opened in 1926, to provide accommodation for Presbyterian young people working and studying in the city. They had four children, Cowper, Brian, Stephen, and the late Karen. All three sons serve as Elders in the Presbyterian Church, two of them being Clerks of Session, and Stephen was Head of Press and Media for the General Assembly for twenty years. To them, and the wider family circle, we extend our sympathy and appreciation of the ministry and fellowship of their loved one in the assurance of the Gospel that 'No eye has seen, nor ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.'

The Rev Samuel John Millar, BA, MA, Minister Emeritus of Hazelbank Congregation, Coleraine, died on 11th July 2015 in the seventy-eighth year of his age and the forty-seventh year of his ministry. He was born at Ahoghill on 12th April 1938 the second of two sons to Samuel John Millar, a Machine Engineer, and his wife, Mary, née Smyth. He was educated at Fourtowns Primary School and Ballymena Technical College. On leaving school aged fifteen, he trained as a draper with TG Alexander and Son in Ballymena. He was taught the Gospel in the family Church of Trinity, Ahoghill, and was converted to personal faith in Christ as a teenager at an Elim mission Service in Ballymena. This spiritual experience would inform the central thrust of his future ministry that men and women should know Christ personally. He was fully engaged in the life of his local Congregation being a keen member of the Christian Endeavour. The Minister, the Rev William Fleming, encouraged him in his faith and to think of the ordained ministry. To that end he studied part-time, leading to full-time study at Magee University College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, graduating BA in 1965. He read theology at the Assembly's College, Belfast, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 18th June 1967 in his home Congregation. He was assigned as Assistant to the Rev Robert James Magee, Minister of Sinclair Seamen's Congregation, Shore Road, Belfast, where he was ordained on 19th December 1967. During this time he studied part-time for his MA, graduating from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1969. On 18th February 1970 he was installed by the Presbytery of Down to the joint charge of Clough and Seaforde. Here he ministered until 1974 when he was inducted into the Church Extension Charge of Hazelbank, Coleraine, on 5th September 1974. This work had begun in February

1973 with the Rev WP Addley, who was the Presbyterian Chaplain to the New University of Ulster, Coleraine, as Stated Supply. A hall was opened on 31st March 1973 and over the next few years the Congregation grew and a Church building was opened by the Rev Dr Addley on 18th November 1978. The Charge was erected to full congregational status on 7th January 1982 and Mr Millar was installed as Minister on 21st January 1982. The Congregation continued to prosper under Mr Millar's leadership, growing from fifty to two hundred and fifty families. He was a gifted evangelist and assiduous pastor to his people and the wider community. From 1976 he was also responsible for commencing a work at Burnside, Portstewart, until the Rev Eric M Borland was installed on 5th April 1978. Mr Millar retired on 30th April 2003. He married Adela (Della) Mary Wright, a nurse from Broughshane, in 1967. They had two children, Samuel and Judith. Mrs Millar fully supported her husband in his ministry and she was also closely involved with the central work of the Presbyterian Women's Association. Mrs Millar predeceased her husband in 2007.

Mr Millar was Moderator of the Synod of Ballymena and Coleraine in 1998 and taught RE in local schools over several years. An early interest in the sea led him to serve as Port Chaplain for the British Sailor's Society at Coleraine harbour for some years. In his leisure time he enjoyed sport, especially football, tennis and squash, as well as studying meteorology, and enjoying angling and gardening. While ministering in Clough he developed an interest in beekeeping. He qualified as a lecturer with the Federation of Irish Beekeeper's Associations, was a member of the Ulster Beekeeper's Association Education Sub-Committee and Education Officer of the Roe Valley Beekeeper's Association. In latter years he helped develop a beekeeper's network in New Zealand while visiting his daughter Judith, and helped with the beekeeping project at Zomba, Malawi. We give thanks for our brother's fruitful ministry and extend our sympathy to Mr Millar's children, Samuel and Judith, his brother Thomas, and the wider family circle, assuring them of our sympathy and prayers.

The Very Rev James Alexander Matthews, DipEd, BA, BD, DD, Minister Emeritus, Sixmilecross Congregation, died on 19th July 2015 in the eighty-seventh year of his age and the fifty-fourth year of his ministry. He was born at Lislimnaghan, Omagh, on 12th September 1927, the youngest of a family of seven, three boys and four girls, born to Samuel Matthews, a farmer, and his wife Elizabeth, née Arthur. His father died when he was aged ten years and he learned early to play his part in running the farm. He was brought up in connection with the Congregation of Mountjoy, and, with the encouragement of a sister, put his trust in Christ while still young. He was educated at Omagh Model School, then Omagh Academy from 1940 to 1945. He attended Stranmillis College from 1945 to 1947 to train for a career in teaching and qualified with a DipEd. He attended Trinity College, Dublin, from 1947 to 1950, graduating BA. He taught at several schools including Omagh Model, Mallusk, and Lislane near Limavady, until his appointment in 1952 as Principal of Derryboy Primary School, Crossgar, Co Down. A member of staff encouraged him to consider the ordained ministry which led him to begin theological study at the Assembly's College, Belfast, in 1957, completing his course in 1960 and graduating BD from the Queen's University, Belfast, in 1961. He developed a love for the biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek, and, in later years, helped others aspiring to the ordained

ministry to study them. He served as assistant to the Rev Alan Flavelle, Minister of the Congregation of Mourne, Kilkeel. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Down on 29th May 1960, and ordained in Brookside, Ahoghill, as Minister, by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 5th October 1960. His experience as a school teacher was utilised in teaching RE at Ballymena Academy from 1963 for several years. He remained at Brookside until called to the Congregation of First Lurgan where he was installed by the Presbytery of Dromore on 28th April 1971. He served there for twenty three years giving leadership to the Congregation in the tercentenary year of the Church's founding. In 1989 he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly and the Presbyterian Theological Faculty of Ireland conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He moved to Sixmilecross in the Presbytery of Omagh, where he was installed on 6th April 1994, ministering there until his retirement to Castlerock on 30th September 1997. Throughout his ministry he sought to commend Christ as Lord and Saviour. His warm personality, evident humanity, and teaching gifts, combined to equip him as a gracious pastor and a winner of souls. Dr Matthews was Moderator of the Synod of Armagh and Down in 1987 and Convener of the Arrangements Committee of the General Assembly 1983 to 1988. He met Jean Elizabeth Logan while interviewing for a place at Stranmillis College, and they married on 22nd July 1949, forming an effective partnership in the service of Christ and of the Church. They had three children, Carol, Barbara, and Stephen. We assure them, and Mrs Matthews, of our sympathy and prayers as we thank God for the ministry of Dr Matthews, a good and faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Very Rev John Ross, BA, DD, Minister Emeritus, High Street, Hollywood, Co Down, died on 31st August 2015 in the eightieth year of his age and the fifty-fourth year of his ministry. He was born at Ballymena on 7th January 1936 the only son of three children born to James A Ross, a draper, and his wife Ellen, née Millar. He was brought up in connection with the family Church of First Ballymena and attended Ballymena Model School followed by Ballymena Academy 1947 to 1953. Persuaded of his divine call to the ordained ministry he attended the Magee University College, Londonderry, completing his primary studies at Trinity College, Dublin, graduating BA in 1957. He began his theological training at New College, Edinburgh, rounding off his course at the Assembly's College, Belfast, in 1959. While in Edinburgh he served as a student assistant in Chalmers Church and back in Ireland was assigned as Assistant Minister to the Rev EM Borland, then Minister of Rosemary Congregation, Belfast. He was licensed in First Ballymena by a Commission of the Presbytery of Ballymena on 26th July 1959 and ordained on 18th September 1960 by the Presbytery of North Belfast. Having a strong interest in foreign mission work Mr Ross was inducted to work in Nyasaland (now Malawi) on 11th October 1961 with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. He was accompanied by his wife, Annie Sarah (Betty), née Meehan, whom he married on 16th March 1961. They lived at Livingstonia while a new manse was being built at Bandawe on the west shore of Lake Malawi with the help of funds raised by the Girls' Auxiliary in Ireland. Mrs Ross, a qualified nurse, opened a clinic which soon attracted many people from a wide area seeking medical help. Their first-born, a daughter, Fiona, was born here in 1962. They returned home in 1965 for family reasons and Mr Ross was installed as Minister in the joint charge of Clough and

Seaforde by the Presbytery of Down on 7th July 1966. After a relatively short ministry there he was installed in the Home Mission charge of Christ Church, Dundonald, (founded 1965) by the Presbytery of East Belfast, on 8th December 1969, as the second Minister of this charge to labour in this new and large housing area. His seven years there were busy building up the Congregation, a task in which he had the assistance of experienced Deaconess, Miss Janet Wood. He guided the fellowship to full congregational status officially celebrated in January 1974 when he was also formally called and installed as the Minister. Two years later he accepted a call to the Congregation of High Street, Holywood, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Ards on 22nd September 1976. This was a contrast to Christ Church in that it was a long established Congregation, formed in 1855, though it too had developed in response to a growing population in the town and district. Here Mr Ross remained for the next twenty-four years until his retirement on 17th September 2000. Through the years Mr Ross did not forget his interest in foreign mission. He was Convener of the Foreign Mission Board 1969 to 1972, and Convener of the East, West and South Committee of the Overseas Mission Board 1972 to 1979. It was due to his inspiration that the Board established relationships with Reformed Churches in Europe, specifically in Hungary, Romania and the Ukraine, which continue as enduring partnerships. He served as Convener of the Race Relations Committee 1986 to 1993 having a particular interest in the apartheid situation in South Africa. In the early nineteen nineties, along with Dr Moreen Gordon, he was appointed as Pastor to the Church's missionary personnel bringing his experience, warmth of personality, and spiritual heart to the role. His services to the Church were recognised in his election as Moderator of the General Assembly in 1995 and the conferment of a DD by the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland. In his free time he enjoyed photography, music, and the outdoors. Dr Ross was predeceased by his first wife Betty in 1990 and is survived by his children, Fiona, Sean, Mary, and Stephen, his second wife, Helen, née Ross, whom he married on 15th April 1998, and his sisters May and Annie. To these and the wider family circle we extend the prayers of the General Assembly and give thanks to God for the life and witness of our brother.

The Rev Thomas Campbell Davis, BA, DipSocS, Minister Emeritus, Sligo and Boyle, died on 19th September 2015, in the one hundredth year of his age and the seventieth year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 27th October 1915, the third of four children, to Thomas Davis, proprietor of a grocery business and the son of a well-known family which still farms in Ballybofey, Co Donegal, and his wife Jeannie, née Faulkner, originally from Cookstown, Co Tyrone. The family worshipped in the Congregation of Malone, and Mr Davis attended Carrickfergus Primary School, where his uncle was headmaster, from 1920 until 1926. From 1926 to 1933 he attended Methodist College, Belfast. He played scrum-half for the rugby 1st XV, and coxed the MCB 1st VIII to victory in numerous inter-school regattas. In 1933, Mr Davis proceeded to Queen's University, Belfast, graduating BA in 1937. At Queen's he coxed the university 1st VIII and was awarded a Double Blue for rowing. In 1939, Mr Davis entered the Assembly's College, Belfast, to train for the ordained ministry. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 19th December 1943, while serving as Assistant, from 1941 to 1944, to the Rev William John Thompson,

Minister of College Square, Belfast. During the war years, he was responsible for billeting military personnel and those displaced by the German bombing of Belfast. In 1944, he moved to Coleraine to assist the Rev Thomas Doey of New Row Congregation, where he was ordained by the Presbytery of Coleraine on 3rd March 1945. While there he started a Youth Club. He also studied sociology, receiving a Social Administration Distinction in 1943 and gaining a Diploma in Social Studies in 1945 from the Queen's University. On 1st October 1946, Mr Davis married Elizabeth Mary Evelyn (Maeve) Fraser at Duncairn Presbyterian Church, North Belfast. The Best Man was Mr Davis's cousin, Brian (later Lord) Faulkner, who became the last Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. They had three children, Trevor, Sandra, and Daphne. Mr Davis resigned from New Row in 1947 to take up the post of Down County Welfare Officer, and subsequently published 'Plans for Welfare Services in County Down.' In 1950, he returned to ordained ministry and served as Assistant Minister in First Bangor, until he was called to the joint charge of Sligo, Drum, Ballymote and Boyle, where he was installed on 16th January 1952 by the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster. In moving to Sligo, Mr Davis was bringing his wife back to the town where she had been born to Robert and Evelyn Fraser on 11th July 1921. During the next 34 years, Mrs Davis played a full and active role in supporting her husband in parish life in town and country in the west of Ireland. She died at Belfast on 18th October 2009, aged eighty-five years. In Sligo, Mr Davis set up a local rowing club, with members from all denominations. He reared chickens – up to 1000 at one time – and won rosettes at the local agricultural shows. Mr and Mrs Davis's door at the Manse in Sligo was always open, both to parishioners and to those from further afield who needed help. At the time of the Hungarian rising in 1956, they gave shelter to a young family who had fled Budapest in the face of Russian tanks. Ecumenical activities in Sligo were important during his ministry, with excellent relations with Roman Catholic neighbours (the local Bishop lived next door), as well as the Church of Ireland and Methodist Congregations. In addition to fulfilling the duties of a parish Minister, Mr Davis was Chaplain to the Sligo North West Health Authority, combining his spiritual and social qualifications in the role. He was Moderator of the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster 1971-72, and Moderator of the Synod of Dublin in 1978. On 5th April 1986, he retired from Sligo, Ballymote and Boyle and from full-time ministry. We assure the family circle of our sympathy and prayers in their loss and give thanks to God for the ministry of our brother.

The Rev Hugh Dermot McMorran, BA, BD, Minister Emeritus, Trinity Congregation, Bangor, died on 10th October 2015, in the eighty-ninth year of his age and the sixty-third year of his ministry. He was born at Newtownards on 30th March 1927 one of three children (two brothers and a sister) to William Kyle McMorran, a garage proprietor, and his wife Mabel, née Magilton. He received his spiritual education in Greenwell Street Congregation and attended Castle Gardens Primary School and Regent House Grammar School. He studied for a BA degree at the Queen's University, Belfast, 1944 to 1947, and took a Post Graduate course in Mathematics, 1947 to 1948. He proceeded to the Assembly's College, Belfast, to study for the Christian ministry 1948 to 1950, spending the academic year of 1948 to 1949 at New College, Edinburgh. He completed a BD degree in 1952. He served as assistant to the Rev Ronald Craig in the

Congregation of Woodvale, Belfast, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Ards on 3rd June 1951. He was called to his first charge of Third Portglenone in 1953 where he was ordained by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 3rd December of that year. After six years he moved to Belfast to Duncairn Congregation, Antrim Road, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 22nd May 1958. The Congregation was birthed by the revival of 1859 and the Church building opened in 1862. Mr McMorran was a worthy successor to his distinguished predecessors, having gifts of mind, of eloquence and of heart which were gladly given in the service of Christ. His evident humanity, gracious character and approachability commended him as a pastor to Church members and the community in general whose respect he earned. His courage and dedication shone through in the difficult early years of the Troubles which so disrupted the peace of North Belfast in the 1970s. The manse was sited in Duncairn Avenue just behind the Church where the family were exposed to the sounds and dangers of the violence which characterised life in the surrounding district for so many years. Congregational membership dwindled as residents moved away to escape the ongoing violence. The Congregation was eventually amalgamated with St Enoch's, Carlisle Circus, on 1st January 1992, but the buildings found new purpose housing the work of the 174 Trust from 1995. In 1976 Mr McMorran moved to Trinity Congregation, Bangor, in succession to the Very Rev Dr John Carson, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Ards on 1st January of that year. The current Minister, the Rev Ricky Montgomery, paid tribute to him, saying, 'members recall with affection his inspiring pulpit ministry, the pastoral care for those in need and the gracious way in which he dealt with all who were privileged to know him. He was unfailing in his encouragement and many would testify to how he brought the "fragrance of Jesus" into situations where members were experiencing difficulty or distress.' In the wider Church he was Convener of the Memorial Record Committee of the General Assembly 1959 to 1969. He retired on 30th June 1992. Outwith the Church, he was a member of the Belfast Education and Library Board for some years and a member of the Boards of Governors of a number of schools. This experience was put to continuing good use when he moved to Bangor, and became a member of the Board of the former Rathgael and Whiteabbey Management Committee where his counsel was much sought and valued. Mr McMorran married Janet Josephine McClintock on 31st October 1956 who supported him in his ministry and contributed to Church life in her own right. They had five children, Rosemary, Paul, Heather, Judith, and Andrew. To these and the wider family circle we express our sympathy and commend them to the Saviour who is the resurrection and the life.

The Rev Thomas (Tom) James Wilson, BSc, DipSW, BD, MTh, Minister of Kilmakee Presbyterian Church, Seymour Hill, Dunmurry, died on 3rd December 2015 in the sixty-second year of his age and the twenty-first year of his ministry. He was born at Magherafelt on 6th June 1954, the second of three children to William Wilson, a wholesale greengrocer, and his wife Margaret, née Clarke. He was educated at Bellaghy Primary School followed by Rainey Endowed Grammar School (1965 to 1973). He studied Biochemistry at the Ulster University from 1973 to 1976, graduating BSc. Wishing to pursue a career in social work he attended Lancaster University from 1979 to 1981, graduating with a Diploma in Social Work. He then pursued a career as a Probation Officer with the

Northern Ireland Probation Service and also utilised his social work background as a Relate Counsellor. In 1991 Mr Wilson entered Union Theological College, Belfast to study for the ordained ministry. He completed his theological studies in 1994, graduating BD. He was licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena on 17th June 1994 and served his assistantship with the Rev SW McClintock in the Congregation of Kilbride, where he was ordained on 19th January 1995 by the Presbytery of Templepatrick. He was inducted as Associate Minister in the Congregation of Rosemary, Belfast, on 12th June 1996, by the Presbytery of North Belfast, where he assisted the Minister the Very Rev Dr John Dunlop. In the year 2000 he was called as Minister by the Congregation of Kilmakee and was installed there on 29th November by the Presbytery of South Belfast. Mr Wilson's ministry in Kilmakee was marked by his belief in, and commitment to, equipping all to serve and follow Christ and in creating opportunities for each believer to fully participate in the life and leadership of the Church. In this he was always encouraged by the members of the Kilmakee Kirk Session who faithfully supported him throughout his ministry and in particular during his illness. He served as Co-Convenor of the Addiction and Education Services Committee 2003 to 2005 and of the Adult Services Committee 2005 to 2014. In 2003 he completed an MTh with the Institute of Theology, Queen's University, Belfast, and went on to develop a ministry in spiritual direction within the wider Church. Mr Wilson had warm ecumenical associations, in particular with Dom Mark-Ephrem Nolan of the Benedictine Monastery, Rostrevor, the Jesuit community at Manresa, Dublin, and the Sisters of the Cross and Passion at Drumalis Retreat House, Larne. On 21st July 1978, he married Daphne Ann Bell at Woodschapel Parish Church and they had three children, Lauren, Hannah, and Katy. We commend these and the wider family circle to the prayers of the Church and give thanks for our brother who has fought the good fight of faith and run the race to the glory of God.

The Rev William George McConkey, MA, Minister Emeritus, Ballycarry Congregation in the Presbytery of Carrickfergus, died on 31st December 2015 in the eighty-eighth year of his age and the sixty-first year of his ministry. He was born at Killyfuddy, Newbliss, County Monaghan, on 26th February 1928, the eldest of eight children (six boys and two girls) to Thomas William McConkey, a farmer, and his wife Isabella, née Mackerel. He was educated at Killevan National school followed by Clones High School. Persuaded of his call to the ordained ministry during his final years at school, he studied at Magee College, Londonderry, and graduated BA, from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1952. He proceeded to the Assembly's College, Belfast, for his theological course which he completed in 1954. He was licensed in his home Congregation of Newbliss by the Presbytery of Monaghan on 13th June 1954 and assigned as Assistant to the Rev Ronald Craig, Minister of Woodvale Park Congregation, Belfast. The following year he received a call to be Minister of Bunrana and Burt Congregations and was ordained and installed there on 1st December 1955. In 1961 he moved to Ballycarry where he was installed on 31st May by the Presbytery of Carrickfergus and continued until his retirement on 30th September 1993. Thoughtful and reflective, Mr McConkey was always well prepared for pulpit ministry and in each of his Congregations was known to be a good listener with a pastor's heart. He started a Youth Club and also a Boys' Brigade company in partnership with

Magheramore Presbyterian Church. In Ballycarry the local 'Churches Together' fellowship supported the work of Christian Aid and he was involved in the setting up of a community association. He engaged in further study graduating MA from his alma mater in 1961. He was supported and assisted in his ministry by his wife Anne, née Logue, whom he married on 6th April 1957 in Duncairn Gardens Church, North Belfast. Three children were born to the marriage, Rosemary, Sandra, and Karen. Coming from a farming background, Mr McConkey loved the outdoors, enjoying fishing and various sports, but there were two hobbies in particular that he maintained throughout his life. At the age of eight he began beekeeping under the guidance of an uncle. He travelled to the World Congress of the Beekeepers held in China and also Japan as the only Irish delegate on both occasions. He loved gardening, growing many plants from seed and developing a mature garden. He is survived by his wife, daughters and their families, and six of his siblings. To them and the wider family circle we express our sympathy as we give thanks for the ministry of our brother and colleague.

The Rev William Wylie McIlwrath Craig, MA, Minister Emeritus, Dromore and Drumquin Congregations, in the Co Tyrone and the Presbytery of Omagh, died on 9th January 2016 in the ninety-second year of his age and the sixty-fourth year of his ministry. He was born at Frocess, Cloughmills, Co Antrim, on 25th September 1924, one of four children (sister Edith, brothers Samuel and Robert) to Thomas Henry Craig, Principal of Frocess Primary School, and his wife Edith, née Wylie. The family attended Clough Congregation until they moved to Portrush. Mr Craig attended Dalriada High School, Ballymoney (1937-1940) followed by Ballymena Academy (1940-1943). On leaving school he worked for the Northern Ireland Road Transport Board. However, during this time, and encouraged by the Rev Robert Lennox, Minister of Clough Congregation, he felt the call of God to the ordained ministry and so, in 1944, he began study at Magee University College, Londonderry, and Trinity College, Dublin, graduating BA in 1948. A keen sportsman, he captained the 2nd XV Rugby team while at Magee. He took his theological course at New College, Edinburgh (1948-1949) and the Assembly's College, Belfast, (1949-1950). As a student he assisted at St Paul's, Galashiels, and at Inverie and the outlying small Church of Airor in the district of Knoydart, Inverness-shire (now Highland). On returning home, he was licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena, on 2nd July 1950, and assigned as Assistant to the Rev Dr John Brooks McIlroy, Minister of McQuiston Memorial Congregation, Belfast. In 1952 he was called to the united Congregations of Clough and Seaforde where he was ordained on 28th February by the Presbytery of Down. After a ministry of ten years he emigrated to Canada where he ministered from January 1963 to December 1964 in the Presbytery of Bruce to St Andrew's Congregation, Southampton, Ontario, on the eastern shore of Lake Huron, and also at Elsinore, Ontario, a short distance inland. In January 1965 he moved to St Luke's-Knox Congregation in Finch, Crysler, to the south-east of Ottawa, in the Presbytery of Glengarry. During this period he completed an MA (1969) through Trinity College, Dublin. He re-crossed the Atlantic to Scotland in the summer of 1970 and assisted at St Ninian's Parish, Glenrothes, Fife, from September 1970 until the following year when he accepted a call to the newly united Congregations of Donoughmore and Stranorlar where he was installed as Minister by the Presbytery of Donegal on 16th November 1971. He

taught for a time in Raphoe Royal School and started a Bible Union there. Under his guidance the Donoughmore Congregation undertook extensive renovations to the meeting house in 1974. However, the Church building was destroyed by fire in 1975 due to an electrical fault. Plans were drawn up for a new sanctuary which was opened on 3rd September 1977. Mr Craig had by then moved to Clontibret Congregation (Presbytery of Monaghan) with Middletown (Presbytery of Armagh) as Stated Supply, where he was installed on 17th February 1977. His ministry in these two Congregations lasted four years until he accepted a call to minister in the united charge of Dromore and Drumquin, Co Tyrone, where he was installed by the Presbytery of Omagh on 24th June 1981. He retired on 31st December 1990. Throughout these years Mr Craig exercised an evangelical ministry, challenging his people with the call of the Gospel to repentance and faith in Jesus as Lord and Saviour and encouraging them in discipleship. He supported the work of the Faith Mission in the rural districts where he served. He went about his work quietly and diligently pastoring his Congregations with spiritual wisdom and insight. In the 1950's he served the wider Church on the Students' and Colleges Committee. In his leisure time Mr Craig enjoyed music often playing for Services while in Dromore and Drumquin. His sister and brothers pre-deceased him and we express our sympathy to his wider family circle giving thanks to God for the life and witness of our brother.

The Rev William Cowper Lynas, MA, Minister Emeritus, of Dunmurry Congregation in the Presbytery of South Belfast, died on 24th January 2016, in the ninety-third year of his age and the sixty-first year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 20th July 1923 the younger of two sons (his older brother was the Very Rev Dr Victor Lynas) to William Lynas, a Belfast City missionary, and his wife, Winifred Mary, née Jamison. He was brought up in connection with the Congregation of Fitzroy, Belfast, where he joined the Choir and became a Boys' Brigade officer. He attended Rosetta Primary School and Methodist College, Belfast. At Methody he played rugby for the First XV and ran for the junior and senior track teams. On leaving school he worked in the Arthur Street branch of the Belfast Savings Bank in the city. Convinced of his call to serve in the ordained ministry he studied in the evenings to prepare himself for college. He went to Magee University College, Londonderry, in 1947, where he excelled in Hebrew, and graduated BA from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1950. While in Derry he assisted the Rev WI Steele of First Derry. He proceeded to the Assembly's College, Belfast, for his theological course, and was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast on 27th May 1952. He was assigned as Assistant to the Rev Dr David Dowling, Minister of McCracken Memorial, Upper Malone, Belfast. A couple of years later he received a call from the Congregation of Ballywillan near Portrush, where he was ordained and installed by the Presbytery of Coleraine on 28th January 1954. With his wife, Elizabeth (Betty) McBride Stevenson, a daughter of the Rev Samuel and Mrs Stevenson of Glastry Manse, Co Down, whom he married on 20th July 1951, he settled into the rhythm of congregational life and service. Their two children, Gillian and Michael, were born at Ballywillan. The young Minister gave himself to his charge energetically. He quickly identified the need to develop youth work in the Congregation and later that year Girls' Brigade and Boys' Brigade Companies were formed and a Youth Club was opened. In the winter of 1958-1959 the Church building was extensively renovated. He

also made time in his busy schedule for further study gaining an MA from his alma mater in 1958. After seven happy years there he moved to Dunmurry and was installed as Minister on 13th April 1961 by the Presbytery of Belfast. The Congregation grew over the ensuing years and in 1967, to accommodate the busy weekly Church calendar of activities, a new hall, the Davey Hall, was added to the old Trinity Hall, which had begun life as a school. Intermittently Trinity Hall was used for court sittings which made it a target for bombers in August 1971. The Congregation decided to build a new hall, named the Lynas Hall, which was officially opened in March 1973. Mr Lynas served the wider Church as Convener of the Central Ministry Fund (1973-1980) the Widows of Ministers Fund (1978-1985) and of the United Appeal Board (1992-1998). He was also Moderator of the Synod of Belfast in 1976. Mr Lynas retired on 31st March 1989. To Mrs Lynas, daughter Gillian, son Michael, and wider family circle, we extend our sympathy and prayers as we give thanks to God for the ministry of our brother.

The Rev Terence Patrick McCaughey, BA, BD, died on 9th February 2016 in the eighty-fourth year of his age and the fifty-first year of his ministry. He was born at Belfast on 17th April 1932, the youngest of six children (John Davis, William Park, James, Mary and Betty) born to John McCaughey, a grain merchant, and his wife Lizzie, née Finnegan. The family worshipped in Rosemary Street Congregation in the centre of Belfast until 1941 when the Church was destroyed in a German air-raid and the Congregation amalgamated with Ekenhead on the North Circular Road and became known as Rosemary. Mr McCaughey was educated at Larne Primary School, Larne Grammar School, and Campbell College, Belfast, from 1945. An able student, he followed in his brother John Davis' footsteps (who became Professor of New Testament at Ormonde Theological Hall, University of Melbourne, Australia, and served as Governor of the State of Victoria 1986 to 1992) to Cambridge University in 1951 and studied English Literature at Pembroke College, graduating BA in 1955. He continued his studies in the School of Celtic Studies, part of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, completing his course in 1957. He then successfully applied for the post of lecturer in Celtic Studies at the University of Edinburgh a position he held until 1960 when he decided to read theology at New College, Edinburgh, graduating BD in 1963. He was received as a candidate for the ministry of the Church of Scotland and licensed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh on 5th May 1963. Deciding on an academic career he was appointed a Lecturer in Irish at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1963, a post he held until his retirement on 31st December 1999. In this capacity he published many articles on English and Irish Literature and Theology, too numerous to list, and moved in wider literary circles which included the poets Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes, a friend from university days, and at whose funeral service in North Tawton, Devon, he gave the address (3rd November, 1998). He was received as a Licentiate of our Church by the General Assembly of 1964 and ordained and inducted by the Presbytery of Dublin on 5th May 1965 as Assistant to the Presbyterian Dean of Residences in Trinity College, a position he held until October 1971, though not constituted a member of the General Assembly until 1979. Much of his career was therefore taken up with the education of students and with the pastoral care of Presbyterian students at the university. He was a founder member of the Department of Religions and Theology where he lectured on St Paul and the New Testament.

His book *Memory and Redemption: Church, Politics and Prophetic Theology in Ireland (1993)* was used as part of the course on ethics and memory, and his involvement with the founding of the Irish School of Ecumenics within Trinity in 1970 reflects his enduring interest in conflict and reconciliation. He worked with a network of figures across Irish and Ulster society in promoting reconciliation in Ireland arguing for a faith ‘... that calls for the oneness of humankind, rather than focusing on social and political divisions.’ Mr McCaughey was an advocate and activist for social justice which he expressed through his membership of, and involvement with, many organisations, movements and causes. He served as Chaplain to Mountjoy Prison and worked with Prisoners Aid through Community Effort (PACE). He was a founder member of the Irish Council for Civil Liberties, was involved with the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, and served as President of the Irish Anti-Apartheid movement. He was also President of the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) which advocates the maintenance of Irish neutrality in foreign policy and a reformed United Nations, and a patron of the *People’s News* which opposes the development of the European Union as a federal super-state. He married Ohna Mackinnon MacDonald from Skye in 1965 and they have four children, Mary (Marcoux), Kevin, Sorley, Patsy. To them, Mrs McCaughey and the wider family circle, we extend our sympathy and prayers.

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 2

(Wednesday afternoon 3.30 pm)

MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1. The Moderator's Advisory Committee met on three occasions during the year and transacted the business outlined below.

APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSORS

2. At the request of a number of Presbyteries, Assessors were appointed under Par 172 of the Code.

3. The Committee discussed whether it should adopt a principle that if a Kirk Session requests the Committee to appoint Assessors, it will first of all take Presbytery's views into account. Following discussion it was agreed:

That the Clerk of Presbytery should in future be informed of the appointment of Assessors arising from requests from Kirk Sessions, as well as those that arise from requests from Presbytery.

That the requesting body be required to report back to the Committee on the efficacy of the Assessors it has appointed.

LGBT RELATED ISSUES

4. The Committee noted various items of work being progressed by different groups within the Church, namely:

The Council for Church in Society's responsibility for related 'Public Square' issues;

A Task Group considering the implications of changes in the Constitution in the Republic of Ireland and how they related to the law on marriage;

The Council for Congregational Life and Witness had been tasked by the General Assembly to assist congregations in further developing positive biblical teaching with regard to marriage, family, sexuality etc.

The Moderator's Advisory Committee had been given the dual role of giving leadership firstly with regard to dialogue with the LGBT community and secondly in assisting Ministers and Congregations in both reaching out to and welcoming those with same sex attractions and related pastoral challenges.

5. While there are clear overlaps between these various remits, and therefore a need for good internal communication, the Committee agreed that is important that the different groups remain focussed on their areas of responsibility.

6. To enable progress to be made on the matters outlined in the final bullet in point 4 above, the Committee decided to recommend that the General Council transfer this remit to a dedicated Dialogue and Resources Task Group,

consisting of: Moderator and Clerk, the Very Rev Dr Rob Craig (Convener), Mr Joe Campbell, the Very Rev Princ Stafford Carson, Mrs Avril Heenan, the Revs Chris Kennedy, Bobby Liddle and Mairisine Stanfield. This Task Group would report directly to the General Council.

MATTERS REFERRED BY A PRESBYTERY

7. The Clerk tabled key recommendations from a recent Finding of a particular Presbytery Commission, and gave further information concerning the issues in question connected with the 'employment' of organists and related matters. After discussion it was agreed to recommend to the General Council that a dedicated Task Group be appointed to examine these issues and report back to the General Council.

CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSE TO INVITATION TO 1916 COMMEMORATION SERVICE

8. The Clerk reported that an invitation had been received from An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD, to a 1916 Commemoration Service. At the request of the Clerk, the Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow had attended a meeting of a group which is organising the event. Discussion took place on the principle of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland being represented at a 1916 Commemoration event, and then on whether PCI should be represented at the particular event being held in Glasnevin Cemetery on Sunday 3rd April 2016, the Sunday after Easter Sunday. Dr Morrow was invited to speak and addressed the Committee. He tabled and spoke to a document 'A Service of the Word for a Commemoration of the Easter Rising 1916' which had been previously circulated. It was noted that there would be three sequential and separate elements conducted by Jewish, Muslim and Christian leaders and that the General Assembly has previously agreed in principle, following a report from the Doctrine Committee, that it was possible to be represented at these types of events.

9. After a full discussion, it was agreed that in principle the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should be represented at an appropriate 1916 Commemoration event. After further discussion, it was agreed that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland should be represented at the event planned for Glasnevin Cemetery on the Sunday following Easter Sunday.

OTHER BUSINESS

10. At the request of the Clerk, and to assist the Charities Legislation Task Group, the Committee discussed and offered opinion on the issue of the continuing membership of Retired Ministers in Presbytery. This would be passed onto the Task Group to assist their deliberations.

11. In light of his appointment as Convener of the Republic of Ireland Panel of the Council for Church in Society, it was agreed that Dr Trevor Morrow be invited to sit and deliberate on the Moderator's Advisory Committee until the next General Assembly, when his position would be regularised.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN, Convener

DIALOGUE AND RESOURCE TASK GROUP

12. In the Autumn of 2015 the Moderator's Advisory Committee established the Dialogue and Resources Task Group (DRTG) by way of seeking a Biblical and pastoral response to the complex and often painful situations which are confronting PCI members, families, ministers and congregations in respect of homosexuality.

13. During the course of the year the DRTG has been exploring several avenues of investigation. The Convener and three members of the Task Group spent a fact-finding afternoon meeting with a leading representative of Living Out. (www.livingout.org). Living Out might be described as a Forum which espouses an evangelical and celibate understanding of same sex matters.

14. The Convener and three members of the Task Group spent another fact-finding afternoon meeting with a leading representative of the True Freedom Trust (www.truefreedomtrust.co.uk). True Freedom Trust is an evangelical organisation also espousing the celibate understanding of same sex matters.

15. The Convener and two members of the Task Group have held an initial meeting with some local people who hold the view that the Christian Faith and a same-sex relationship are not incompatible. In the coming months it is hoped that there will be a limited number of future meetings to engage in a discussion around two books which espouse contrary theological opinions on same-sex relationships.

16. The DRTG is currently planning to hold a series of regional conferences in the autumn 2016. With the help of suitably qualified facilitators it is hoped that such conferences will be both of interest and help to Ministers who are often the first within a Congregation invited to offer pastoral support to an individual or family. Later in the coming year it is hoped that further assistance will be made more widely available.

ROB L CRAIG, Convener

MARRIAGE IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND TASK GROUP

17. The Task Group held a number of meetings, including a valuable discussion in Ballyalbany with ministers who are registered solemnisers of marriage in the Republic of Ireland. At the first meeting it was noted that the remit given by the General Assembly was to "consider all of the issues surrounding the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's ongoing involvement in the solemnisation of marriage in the Republic of Ireland, along with how this may relate to Northern Ireland". While this is a wide remit, the context was clearly the impending changes to legislation following the referendum on marriage in the Republic of May 2015. The Task Group limited its discussions as to how those legislative changes may affect Ministers who conduct marriages in the Republic.

18. The initial thinking of the Group was greatly helped by a paper prepared by the Very Rev Dr Trevor Morrow on historical, theological and pastoral factors involved in the solemnisation of marriage. It is clear that historically the involvement of the Church in conducting marriages was long before any involvement of the State. For the sake of order in society and good government the State then decided to recognise and register marriages conducted by the Church. In fact the Presbyterian Church in Ireland struggled to receive such recognition. When a Minister solemnises a marriage, therefore, it is as part of their pastoral role in the Congregation, not as an agent of the State. This position may not be recognised by everyone, but the Task Group is of the view that it should be strongly defended by the Church.

19. In fact it clearly underlies the Government's thinking behind the changes in legislation, in that those who are registered as solemnisers on the nomination of a particular denomination or religious body may only conduct a marriage using a "form of ceremony" agreed by the denomination and approved by the An tArd-Chláraitheoir. Historically, while there are various forms of service available to Presbyterian Ministers and some approved by the General Assembly or one of its Boards, there has been great freedom for a Minister to use his or her own language in conducting a marriage. The Task Group recommends that the General Assembly now instructs that a short statement be included in every marriage solemnised according to the form of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and approved by An tArd-Chláraitheoir. The wording which is recommended to be included in an overture anent Par 85(2) states: "Since the beginning of creation God, in his gracious purpose, provided marriage as the accepted way in which a man and a woman may come together as husband and wife. This is the only basis on which marriage can take place within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland."

20. Some concern has been expressed about amendments to the two declarations required to be made under the Republic's legislation. The Task Group has been assured that the government does not intend to amend the list of civil impediments referred to in the first declaration and indeed has not done so. What must be included in the second declaration, accepting one another as husband and wife, has been altered to permit the use of the word "spouse" but in correspondence the then Minister for Justice and Equality has stated, "Crucially, nothing in the section as amended requires any change to a form of ceremony in which a woman makes a declaration accepting a man as her husband, and a man makes a declaration accepting a woman as his wife".

DONALD J WATTS, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 3

(Wednesday afternoon 4.30 pm)

CHARITIES LEGISLATION TASK GROUP

1. During the year the Charities Legislation Task Group met formally on seven occasions, with a significant number of additional meetings of small groups to consider a range of matters.

2. The task of **facilitating the registration of all Northern Ireland based Congregations with the Charity Commission (CCNI)** has proved to be substantial. This work has included detailed negotiations and discussions with CCNI (including the agreement of standard ‘purpose’ and ‘public benefit’ statements for PCI), the drawing up of guidance notes for Congregations, the organisation and delivery of regional training events and the task of responding to countless queries and, regrettably, having to seek to counter some potentially harmful and misguided assertions by a few individuals.

3. Following the decisions taken at the 2015 General Assembly, **an initial letter was sent on 9th July 2015** to all Ministers and Clerks of Session of Congregations in Northern Ireland and to all Clerks of Presbytery with Congregations in Northern Ireland. This gave important preparatory information for the registration of Congregations and Presbyteries.

4. **A meeting was held to brief Presbyteries** on the registration process on Wednesday 9th September 2015. Three representatives from each Presbytery with Congregations in Northern Ireland were invited and detailed information was presented regarding the registration process to be followed in both Congregations and Presbyteries. Dates were agreed for Regional Training Events to be held throughout Northern Ireland. **A second preparatory letter** was then sent on 25th September 2015 to all Ministers and Clerks of Session of Congregations in Northern Ireland, providing necessary information regarding the training events and registration process.

5. A set of **Consolidated Guidance Notes** was issued to all Congregations in December. This was followed up by number of additional e-mails to all Ministers, seeking further to assist Congregations and give added clarity, especially with regard to the issue of why all Elders are Charity Trustees and the issue of indemnity.

6. **Presbyterian Congregations are charities**, and they were charities before the Charities Act came into force. The Charities Act requires all charities to register with the Charity Commission by giving to the Commission prescribed information about the Charity, including the names of those persons responsible for the general control and management of the charity. The Charities Act calls such persons “charity trustees”. In the Presbyterian system of Church government, the Kirk Session is the body with general control and management of the life and witness of the Congregation. The Code in Par 34 states, “The Kirk Session is

the governing body of a Congregation in its Christian calling....". Hence, the General Assembly has agreed that Par 35(e) should state, "The Kirk Session shall act as the charity trustees of the Congregation....". The legal position, both in the law of the land and the law of the Church, is clear – members of Kirk Session are the charity trustees of their Congregation. Therefore members of Kirk Session don't have to decide to become charity trustees, they are charity trustees – the process of registration with the Charity Commission (NI) is simply formally registering that stated position.

7. Some have stated erroneously that each Congregation has been formed into a trust managed by the Elders acting as trustees and that Elders are being required to sign a trust deed. This is simply incorrect and perhaps points to a misunderstanding of the role of the Kirk Session (as charity trustees) and the role of those acting as 'holding', or 'bare', trustees for the Congregation. (Holding, or bare, trustees are those who have the responsibility to legally receive and hold the property belonging to the Congregation. They have no active managing role and simply follow the instructions of the Congregation, often through its Kirk Session or Congregational Committee e.g. regarding the transfer of property. In the Presbyterian Church in Ireland each Congregation's holding trustees has to be either the Education Board of the Presbytery or three or more named voting members of the Congregation – see Code Par 241). What Elders are being asked to sign is a declaration of their name and address and that there is no reason why they cannot be a charity trustee. The issue of registering as a company or companies limited by guarantee has also been mistakenly recommended by some. Firstly, this again is predicated on a confusion of the role of charity trustees and holding trustees and secondly it is simply not permissible under the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Roman Catholic Church has sought to use a variance of this approach at central and diocesan levels, but this is possible only because of a very different form of Church government, with centralised episcopal authority having ultimate oversight in that Church. Any suggestion that either a Presbytery or 'Church House' should have centralised day to day control of the property, finances, ministry and mission of Congregations is the very antithesis of what it is to be Presbyterian!

8. As stated above, the whole issue of **personal liability** and indemnity has caused concern for some. This issue is covered in some detail the Consolidated Guidance Notes. There it is noted that, following a decision of the General Assembly in 2004, the former Board of Finance and Personnel issued guidance dealing with the potential liability of members serving on 'committees' within a Congregation (including the Kirk Session and Congregational Committee). In that guidance it was recomunicated that a resolution be passed indemnifying members and that an insurance policy be then taken out to insure the potential risk. As part of the preparation for registration with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland the Charities Legislation Task Group has reviewed and updated the 2004 guidance and recommended that, even if Congregations had acted on the 2004 guidance, all Congregations action (or re-action) the recommended steps. It is important to also note that the responsibilities carried by members of Kirk Session are largely unchanged. **The General Assembly Solicitor has therefore advised that personal liability is not increased simply because of this new designation as charity trustees.**

9. At the time of writing, five **Regional Training Events** have been held, with the outstanding one planned for Omagh on Monday 9th May 2016. These evenings have been very well attended, with to date only one Congregation not being represented. Unfortunately CCNI plan to install a new online application system during the middle of April 2016 and this has resulted in necessary alterations to the PCI guidance notes for the online system, along with some changes of the 'call forward' dates for a small number of Presbyteries.

10. The **application for registration for the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland** has been successfully completed. The **Designated Religious Status** sections of the Charities Act NI (2008) had been commenced on 1st January 2016, and an application for designated religious status has been submitted. This one application will cover all PCI Congregations, Presbyteries and the General Assembly and it is hoped that this will be successfully processed by CCNI shortly. The **Charities Act (Designated Religious Charities) Order 2016** was progressed through the NI Assembly, with representatives of the Churches being called to give evidence to the DSD Committee. It came into force on 1st March 2016 and further protects designated religious charities, such as PCI, from direct state interference.

11. **Current permanent membership of Presbytery of 'Retired Ministers'** – A paper was tabled by the Clerk and considered by the Task Group. This had been drawn up after consultation with the Moderator's Advisory Committee, Presbytery Clerks and a number of former Moderators. Following discussion and amendment, an updated paper with two options was agreed for presentation to the General Council (see Appendix 1).

12. Guidance regarding **the new relationship between Kirk Sessions and Congregational Committees** has been progressed to final draft stage by the Task Group, along with some additional overtures to further clarify the new relationship and these are presented to the General Council for consideration (see Appendix 2). The Task Group agreed that, as far as possible, additional necessary work flowing from the requirements of charity registration should be referred to the appropriate PCI body for action e.g. the Finance Panel would be responsible for issuing guidance regarding the presentation of accounts etc. It was further agreed that the Finance Panel would be asked to deal with the Charity Commission's Consultation on Charity Reporting and Reporting Guidance. That Panel would also progress any necessary changes to the Code relating to 'auditing' vs 'examining' accounts etc.

13. The Task Group also considered the issue of **Elders who ultimately refuse to register as charity trustees**. Its recommendations are included in Appendix 3 for consideration by the General Council. At a subsequent meeting (in late April / early May) the Task Group will be considering some outstanding issues. These include: The annual report of the Kirk Session; Registration of Presbyteries, Education Boards and other bodies. With permission of the General Council, the Task Group would seek to report on this small number of issues directly to the 2016 General Assembly through Supplementary Reports.

14. A paper was tabled from the General Assembly Solicitor regarding the **legislation in the Republic of Ireland** along with a draft letter from the Clerk and Financial Secretary to be sent to all Congregations in that jurisdiction. It was however agreed to seek a meeting with the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) for the Republic of Ireland to clarify some matters, prior to circulating this letter.

The Financial Secretary had submitted a list of all Congregations in RoI to the CRA. The Task Group also confirmed that, in line with the decisions of the 2015 General Assembly, the trustee bodies in RoI would be the same as in NI i.e. Kirk Session and Presbytery.

CHARITIES LEGISLATION TASK GROUP APPENDIX 1

RETIRED MINISTERS AND MEMBERSHIP OF PRESBYTERY

A. Introduction

1. The process of charity registration has brought to the fore a number of quite complex issues for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Mostly these challenging issues have not been because of some draconian new requirements being imposed upon PCI by the Charity Commission (NI), but rather have been because the process has brought into focus issues of governance that had 'room for improvement' irrespective of the requirements of civil law.

2. The General Assembly has decided that the charity trustees for Presbytery shall be the members of Presbytery and this is now part of the Code (see Par 70(d)). A problem however exists because of the automatic membership of Presbytery of all retired Ministers right up to either their removal through some judicial process or resignation from the office, or their removal through death. This means that a retired Minister who either does not attend (through choice), or is unable to attend (say through long-term illness, greatly advanced age or even simply living very far away) still remains a full voting member of Presbytery.

3. In many senses this always has been a problem in pure governance terms, however now because of the requirement of all members of Presbytery to be active to fulfil their role as charity trustees, it presents a problem for which a solution is required. The time-scale is tight, in that in practical terms any changes to the Code need to be processed at the 2016 General Assembly.

B. Towards a possible solution:

4. The Clerk of Assembly consulted on the issue with the Moderator's Advisory Committee, at a meeting of Presbytery Clerks and at an informal gathering of some former Moderators with an acknowledged understanding of Church law. It was noted that full membership of Presbytery is required for membership of Commissions, including for instance vacancy convenerships etc. From these meetings a report was brought to the Charities Legislation Task Group and following discussion it was agreed to bring the following options to the General Council for further discussion, followed by report to the 2016 General Assembly.

OPTION 1:

5. At retirement, all Ministers automatically continue to be full members of their Presbytery and of the General Assembly, on the understanding that they are able and willing to participate as such, especially in Presbytery. They will be designated Minister Emeritus.

6. Annually Presbytery will be required to review the position of each Minister Emeritus under their care. Normally there will be no change of status, however this annual review will provide an opportunity for:

- (a) a Minister Emeritus to request that the Presbytery release them from the responsibilities of full membership of Presbytery (and consequently of the General Assembly);
- (b) the Presbytery, at its own initiative, to release a Minister Emeritus from the responsibilities of full membership of Presbytery (and consequently of the General Assembly). Presbyteries should only take the initiative to release a Minister Emeritus from the responsibilities of full membership of Presbytery in extreme cases, usually when the Minister Emeritus is no longer physically or mentally able to fulfil those responsibilities or where a Minister Emeritus has failed to attend Presbytery, without valid reason, for a period of 12 months.

7. A Minister Emeritus released from their responsibilities of full membership of Presbytery (and consequently of the General Assembly) would be designated 'Minister Emeritus (Released)', or other suitable title, and would have the rights of a Minister without Charge i.e. would continue under the care of Presbytery with the right to sit and deliberate (without voting rights) at both Presbytery and the General Assembly.

8. **Note:** Administratively this option would require Presbyteries annually to review the position of each Minister Emeritus, clarifying if they wish to remain a full member of Presbytery and if they are deemed able to fulfil the related responsibilities.

OPTION 2:

9. At retirement, all Ministers automatically cease to be full voting members of their Presbytery and of the General Assembly, and would have the rights of a Minister without Charge i.e. would continue under the care of Presbytery with the full rights to sit and deliberate (but without voting rights) at both Presbytery and the General Assembly. They will be designated Minister Emeritus.

10. A Minister Emeritus appointed to a Presbytery Commission or appointed as Clerk of Presbytery, shall become a full member of the Presbytery (with voting rights) during their tenure of that Presbytery Commission or Clerkship.

11. A Minister Emeritus who is a nominee from Presbytery, or a nominee of the Nominations Committee, to a Commission of the Assembly shall become a full member of the General Assembly and of their Presbytery (with voting rights in both) during their tenure of that Assembly Commission.

12. **Note:** Administratively this option would require Presbyteries to add (and at the appropriate time remove) a Minister Emeritus to full membership of Presbytery when that standing is necessary under the law of the Church.

CHARITIES LEGISLATION TASK GROUP APPENDIX 2

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KIRK SESSION AND CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

1. Following on from the change in relationship between Kirk Sessions and Congregational Committees, as agreed at the 2015 General Assembly, there is a need to both further define the agreed delegation of responsibility in the Code and issue guidance as to its practical outworking.

Delegation of Responsibility

2. **It is recommended that** the following changes in the Code be made to further define the delegation of responsibility from the Kirk Session to the Congregational Committee and to remove the unused option of having a Board of Deacons instead of a Congregational Committee:

- Par 16 (3) be amended as follows (new section underlined):
“The Ruling Elder is appointed to watch for souls and to exercise government and discipline in conjunction with the Teaching Elder. This shall include the oversight of the care of those in need and the management of the temporal affairs of the Congregation, with direct responsibility for these two matters delegated to the Members of the Congregational Committee.”
- The current Par 16 (4) be deleted and replaced with:
“Members of the Congregational Committee are appointed to fulfil the biblical role of deacons by discharging the duties delegated to them of caring for those in need and managing the temporal affairs of the Congregation”
- Par 47 (1) be deleted and replaced with:
“The duties of the Congregational Committee, delegated to it by Kirk Session, shall be to care for those in need and to manage the temporal affairs of the Congregation, and be accountable to Kirk Session.”
- Par 51 (1) be deleted and replaced with:
“Any member of the Congregational Committee or any member of the Congregation who is dissatisfied with any decision of the Congregational Committee may, after notice in writing to the Congregational Committee, ask the Kirk Session to review that decision. Any member of the Congregational Committee or any member of the Congregation dissatisfied with the decision of the Kirk Session following such review may after notice in writing to the Kirk Session petition the Presbytery against that decision.”
- Par 52 of the Code be deleted.

GUIDANCE REGARDING THE EXERCISE OF DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY

3. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland now clearly states that the Kirk Session shall “act as the charity trustees of the Congregation and be responsible for the Congregation’s compliance with the requirements of charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate;” (Code Par 35(e)). It also states that the Kirk Session shall, “ensure that the Congregational Committee fulfils its duties as delegated to it by the Kirk Session and complies with the decisions of Kirk Session;” (Code Par 35(f)).

4. The duties delegated to the Congregational Committee by the Kirk Session are outlined in Par 47(1) of the Code (in its amended form above), namely, “*The duties of the Congregational Committee, delegated to it by Kirk Session, shall be to care for those in need and to manage the temporal affairs of the Congregation, and be accountable to Kirk Session.*” These duties are expanded upon in Par 47(2) of the Code.

5. The Congregational Committee shall therefore continue to have day to day responsibility for the temporal affairs of the Congregation as outlined in Par 47 of the Code. However, it will be accountable to the Kirk Session for the exercise of those responsibilities, as it is the Kirk Session which is ultimately responsible for “*the Congregation’s compliance with the requirements of charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate;*” (Code Par 35(e)).

6. While the Kirk Session should not as a body micro-manage the work of the Congregational Committee (all Elders are ex-officio members of the Congregational Committee and can attend and be involved in the detailed work in that forum) it should have oversight of it. **Therefore the following guidelines are recommended:**

- (a) The annual report of the Congregational Committee should be presented to the Kirk Session for its consideration, with the Kirk Session (as the Charity Trustees) being the body which now formally approves the accounts prior to their submission to the Congregation’s Annual General Meeting for their adoption.
- (b) During the year, the draft minutes of each meeting of the Congregational Committee should be formally submitted to the Clerk of Session. The agenda for each stated meeting of Kirk Session should include a standing item ‘Congregational Committee’, at which the Kirk Session should formally note the draft minute, with by exception, only very significant issues being discussed when necessary. The Kirk Session should not seek to redo the work of the Congregational Committee, nor reopen ongoing day to day matters that have been decided by the Congregational Committee and are clearly within its delegated authority. However, the Kirk Session may in certain circumstances, when it feels an important decision of the Congregational Committee is significantly out of step with the overall mission and ministry of the Congregation, refer that matter back to the Congregational Committee and require it to be further considered, or in extremis overturn that decision.

7. **It is recommended** that the following amendment to Par 257(2)(a) of the Code be made to enact the changes outlined above (changes underlined):

257(2)(a) The annual report of the Congregational Committee shall include a full statement of accounts, which shall be submitted to the Kirk Session for approval and then to the Congregation for adoption.

CHARITIES LEGISLATION TASK GROUP APPENDIX 3

ELDERS UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO REGISTER AS CHARITY TRUSTEES

1. In the Consolidated Guidance Notes issued in December 2015 one of the appendices addressed the issue of the role of the Kirk Session as the charity trustees of a Congregation, along with the related issue of Elders unable to act as charity trustees at point of registration. The following was stated:

FURTHER GUIDANCE REGARDING CHARITY TRUSTEES OF A CONGREGATION

- (a) There have been a number of queries regarding the necessity of all Elders being registered as charity trustees for a Congregation. The following is the position of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland:
 - (i) The Code Par 35(e) clearly states that:
35. The Kirk Session shall
 - (e) act as the charity trustees of the Congregation
 - (ii) The Code Par 25(1) defines the Kirk Session thus:
25. (1) The Kirk Session shall consist of the ordained Minister or Ministers and the Ruling Elders of the Congregation.....
 - (iii) The Code therefore clearly places a duty upon every member of Kirk Session to act as a charity trustee of the Congregation. (For absolute clarity this includes the Minister, or Interim Moderator, along with any ordained Associate Minister and all ruling Elders in the Kirk Session. It does not include anyone who may 'sit and deliberate' with the Kirk Session e.g. Licentiate Assistants, Deaconesses etc.)
- (b) Further, the General Assembly Solicitor also advises: "The Kirk Session is the body responsible under the Code for the oversight of the Congregation and its activities; it is therefore the body which has the general control and management of the Congregation. The persons who are "charity trustees" within the meaning of the Charities Act are those to whom is entrusted the general control and management of the charity. Thus as a matter of law the members of Kirk Session are the Charity Trustees for the Congregation, and Par 35(e) of the Code is therefore doing no more than reflecting the legal position."

GUIDANCE REGARDING ELDERS UNABLE TO ACT AS CHARITY TRUSTEES AT POINT OF REGISTRATION

A. AN INTERIM ARRANGEMENT – ELDER TEMPORARILY RELEASED FROM DUTIES

- (a) Under the current Par 25(1) of the Code there already exists a mechanism to temporarily release an Elder from the duties of the eldership in a Congregation (see under-lined sections):
- 25. (1)** The Kirk Session shall consist of the ordained minister or ministers and the ruling elders of the congregation except that a ruling elder may be given permission by the Kirk Session not to carry out the duties of the eldership for a specified time. All members, including the Moderator, are entitled to propose, speak to and exercise equal votes, except that the Moderator shall have no deliberative but only a casting vote. Where a ruling elder has been temporarily released from the duties of the eldership in the Congregation for a specified time, that elder shall not act as a member of the Kirk Session and shall not be entitled to attend, speak or exercise a vote in the Kirk Session.
- (b) When this happens the Elder, temporarily, is no longer an active member of the Kirk Session.
- (c) Therefore, with regard to an Elder who is temporarily unable to act, for a reason deemed acceptable, the Kirk Session should resolve to temporarily release the Elder from the duties of the eldership for (stating the specified time) due to (stating the reason).
- (d) Once this resolution has been passed, that Elder does not need to be registered with the Charity Commission because, during this temporary period, the Elder shall not act as a member of the Kirk Session. As the Code states, they shall not be entitled to attend, speak or exercise a vote in the Kirk Session and hence will not be acting as a Charity Trustee during that temporary period.
- (e) If and when the reason for the temporary release from duties has been resolved (e.g. an Elder who has been seriously ill recovers) the Elder can resume their duties and should then added to the Charity Trustees of the Congregation, through the process provided on the website of the Charity Commission (NI).

B. PERMANENT ARRANGEMENT - ELDER EMERITUS STATUS GRANTED

- (a) Under Par 33(3) of the Code an Elder may permanently retire from the duties of the eldership:
- 33. (3)** A ruling elder who has reached the age of 65, or is in special circumstances, may retire from their duties in a Congregation with the consent of the Presbytery, who may if it so wishes, in consultation with the Kirk Session, deem the Elder to be an ‘Elder-Emeritus’ of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
- (b) Once this has happened, that Elder does not need to be registered with the Charity Commission because they will no longer be a member of

the Kirk Session. They will not be entitled to attend, speak or exercise a vote in the Kirk Session and hence will not be acting as a Charity Trustee.

C. PERMANENT ARRANGEMENT – AN ELDER RESIGNS FROM THE DUTIES OF THE ELDERSHIP

- (a) Under Par 33(4) of the Code an Elder may resign from the duties of the eldership:

33. (4) A Ruling Elder may resign his duties in a Congregation or his office of eldership in the Presbyterian Church with the consent of the Presbytery.

- (b) Once this has happened, that Elder does not need to be registered with the Charity Commission because they will no longer be a member of the Kirk Session.

2. The Consolidated Guidance Notes however did not address how to deal with the issue of **new Elders** being added to the Kirk Session and secondly how to deal with current Elders who refuse to register and choose not to take any of the options outlined above. After due consideration by the Charity Legislation Task Group **it is recommended that** that these issues should be addressed as follows:

Regarding new Elders

- (a) The simplest way to deal with this is to add a clause into the Code at the section dealing with the election of new Elders. This should both require the Presbytery to acquaint an Elder elect with the requirements of charity trusteeship and also obtain a signed Charity Trustee Declaration. **It is recommended that** the following changes (underlined) be made in Code Par 180 to covers these points:

180. (1) The name of every ruling elder elect shall be reported to the appointed Presbytery commission, who, in line with General Assembly guidelines, shall confer with the elder elect respecting their acquaintance with divine truth, their personal faith and character, their sense of the responsibilities and duties of the office, including their responsibility as a charity trustee of the congregation and their gifting and availability for the exercise of that office.

(2) During a period prior to ordination elders elect shall receive a course of instruction, of not less than six sessions, in the doctrines of the Church as set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and in the life and duties of the elder.

(3) The Presbytery commission, being satisfied on these matters, and having confirmed that a Charity Trustee Declaration has been completed, shall report thereon to Presbytery or shall themselves proceed to ordain those approved, if this lie within the terms of their appointment.

A similar clause should be inserted into the section of the Code dealing with co-option. The following is a suggested amendment (underlined) to Code Par 181(1):

181. (1) The co-option of a ruling elder, certified as such from one congregation to another, or of a minister not in active duty, or of a ministerial member of the local Presbytery not in charge of a congregation, may be decided upon by the Kirk Session with the approval of the congregation and the sanction of the Presbytery. The Presbytery should confirm that the ruling elder is aware of their responsibility as a charity trustee of the congregation and that a Charity Trustee Declaration has been completed.

Regarding current elders who refuse to register and choose not voluntarily step down

- (b) The challenge here is to remove such Elders from membership of the Kirk Session without the necessity for a decision to be taken by the Presbytery, which would be open to appeal through the courts of the Church. Therefore, **it is recommended that** the following new sub-paragraph be added to the Code (becoming a new Par 33 (2), with subsequent existing sub-paragraphs renumbered):

33. (2) *In the case where a ruling elder fails to complete a Charity Trustee Declaration, by a date set by Presbytery, that elder shall be deemed to have resigned from the duties of the eldership in their congregation, unless otherwise resolved by Presbytery.*

For completeness the following change to the Code (underlined) is recommended in relations to the installation or induction of Ministers:

211. *Before proceeding with any ordination or installation service, the Presbytery (or Presbytery commission in charge) shall –*

.....

(4) be satisfied that notice has been duly published in the congregation, that (where appropriate) a Charity Trustee Declaration has been completed, and that there is no remaining impediment to the ordination or installation.

JOHN HUNTER, Convener
TREVOR GRIBBEN, Secretary

COMMUNICATIONS REVIEW TASK GROUP

1. The Rev Philip Thomson resigned as Convener of the Task Group in the autumn and the Rev Graeme Kennedy was appointed as Convener in his place. Thanks are recorded to Mr Thompson for his work, especially in establishing the direction of travel for the Task Group as it began its work.

2. Over the past year the group has continued its review of communications policy, focussing on the organisational values which should inform our 'corporate identity' and guide all of our communications. The organisational values were presented to the General Council and were adopted for internal staff use in informing our approach to communication.

3. It has also been reviewing the current regular publications produced by our Church in the form of the three main magazines – *Presbyterian Herald*, *ReachOut* and *Wider World*. The group reported on its work to the General Council and it was agreed that *Wider World* should remain as a publication targeted at PW members while the other two publications should merge into one new publication to be known as *Presbyterian Herald*, with the last editions of *ReachOut* and the present format of *Presbyterian Herald* being those of December/January 2016, and the first edition of the merged magazine being that of February 2017.

4. The General Council also accepted the group’s recommendation that a small editorial advisory group be established with immediate effect to:

- support and help the editor of the current *Presbyterian Herald* and the future merged magazine;
- develop an ongoing relationship with the editor;
- be available for the editor to contact when faced with a decision regarding content of a complex or highly sensitive nature;
- provide opinion alongside that delivered through the editor’s line-management.

That group has already been established.

5. The Task Group also recommended to the Council that a Creative Production Panel be set up to set ongoing priorities for the Creative Production Department and to oversee outstanding tasks from the Communications Review Task Group as well as general departmental issues. This was accepted and the Support Services Committee is to appoint the Panel.

GRAEME KENNEDY, Convener

HISTORICAL ARCHIVING TASK GROUP

1. The Historical Archiving Task Group has met twice since the last General Assembly.

2. **Strong Room** – All the Synod and almost all the Presbytery records have been transferred to the care of the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland and catalogued. It is intended that all the transferred material will be properly catalogued. Some congregational records have also been transferred. There are some records of the Synod of Ulster which would be better conserved by the Historical Society. A resolution to give permission for their transfer to the Society’s care is appended. It should be noted that all ‘live’ documents such as congregational deeds remain in the Strong Room. Once all the material designated for transfer has gone, the Strong Room will be emptied and cleaned, and the temperature control examined and renovated if necessary. Subsequent to the cleaning, material that is appropriate for the Strong Room will be catalogued, returned and placed in appropriate storage boxes.

3. **Secure Room, former IT store and financial records** – The rooms on the first floor used as an IT store have been cleared. The shredding/archiving of old records, in the first-floor Secure Room, mostly financial, has been completed, although it may be that further material for shredding will be identified by the Financial Secretary.

4. **Advice for Presbyteries** – Consideration is being given to drawing up advice for Presbyteries on the archiving of material.

JIM STOTHERS, Convener

GUYSMERE REDEVELOPMENT TASK GROUP

1. In light of the ongoing work which was being carried forward by the Finance and Staffing Commission, it was not necessary for the Guysmere Redevelopment Task Group to meet during the last session.

TREVOR GRIBBEN, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 4

(Thursday morning 11.15 am)

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

1. At the time of writing the Support Services Committee had met on two occasions. Both meetings considered reports from its Finance, HR and Property Panels and it's IT and Creative Production Task Groups. The Committee's report to the General Assembly summarises the work of its Panels and the Task Groups.

FINANCE PANEL

2. The meeting of the Panel on 1st October reviewed the projected accounts for the various assessment funds for 2015, considered and agreed budgets and assessment rates for 2016. The Committee took into account the decision of the 2015 General Assembly to incorporate an element (£1,158) of the old "bonus" (£1,518) (now referred to as the Central Ministry Fund payment) into stipends from 1st January 2016, with the provision of a new "nil rate" assessment band to compensate congregations for the additional cost. It was noted that some adjustments were necessary to ensure, as far as possible no additional cost or benefit to congregations e.g. in the case of joint charges. The Committee also agreed a reduction in the employer's pension contribution rate from 27.5% to 24.0% following the recent actuarial valuation of the Pension Scheme (2009). As a consequence of these decisions the Committee was able to reduce the overall level of assessment on Congregations in 2016, although it noted that the benefit will be partially offset by the change in employers NIC rates and the withdrawal of the national insurance contracting out rebate from 1st April 2016. The Committee also agreed an increase in the Sterling and Euro Basic Ministerial Minima of 1% for 2016. The proposed rates of assessment for 2016 are as follows:

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%

and that the amounts collected through the assessment system be allocated as follows:

Assessment Fund	Projected Allocation for 2016 £	Projected Allocation for 2016 %
Central Ministry Fund	1,700,000	38.78%
Retired Ministers Fund	750,000	17.10%
Widows of Ministers Fund	300,000	6.84%
Prolonged Disability Fund	25,000	0.57%
Incidental Fund	700,000	15.96%
Church House Repairs Fund	370,000	8.44%
Special Assembly	25,000	0.57%
Ministerial Development Fund	100,000	2.28%
Sick Supply Fund	15,000	0.34%
Students Bursary Fund	400,000	9.12%
TOTAL	4,385,000	100.00%

3. At a further meeting in October the Panel considered an outstanding matter from the Tyrone Memorial Review Report to the 2014 General Assembly. The Report had noted the need to review the remuneration of Ministers in Assembly Buildings and in Union Theological College in the light of the changes to stipend arrangements for Ministers in Congregations agreed at the 2014 General Assembly. The Panel noted that:

The agreed stipend arrangements for ministers in Congregations did not limit the maximum stipend that a Congregation could agree to pay their Minister.

All posts in Assembly Buildings and Union College are subject to agreed job evaluation arrangements.

All posts in Assembly Buildings and Union College are advertised and open to application from Ministers in Congregations meeting the eligibility criteria.

The Panel concluded that there is no need to make any changes to the present financial arrangements for ministers working in Assembly Buildings or Union Theological College.

4. At its March meeting the Committee agreed to recommend an amendment to the section of the Code dealing with the percentage entitlement of the Basic Ministerial Minimum (which now included the annual bonus) to avoid additional cost to the Retired Ministers' Fund and the Widows' of Ministers Fund (an overture is appended). It also agreed to include a provision in the accounts of the Ministerial Development Fund of £120k in respect of the continuing build up of accrued but unclaimed sabbatical leave.

5. The 2016 budgeted expenditure for the Incidental Fund is detailed in an appendix (see Support Services Committee Appendix 2) and an appropriate resolution is attached (see resolution x). Tables summarising the annual statistical returns for 2015 are appended (see General Council appendix x).

6. The Committee noted the new reporting and accounting requirements recently issued by the Charity Commission and agreed that a subcommittee should prepare advice in the form of templates for Congregations. The Committee also agreed that references in The Code to “audit” should be amended to “audit or independent examination” to ensure that Congregations were not required to have a higher level of scrutiny of their accounts that that required under charities legislation

7. The Committee agreed that approval should be given to the pre-65 retirements of the Revs Ian McKee (Aughnacloy and Ballymagrane), Dr Roger Purce (Groomsport), George F McKeown (Rathcoole) and D N Gray (Portaferry) under the provisions of Par 223 of the Code (resolution appended).

8. At its meeting on 14th April the Finance Panel reviewed the draft 2015 accounts of the General Assembly and agreed to submit them to the General Council with a recommendation that they be approved by the Council, subject to any changes that might need to be made following discussions with the auditors. The Panel drew the General Council’s attention to a number of deficits arising in 2015 some of which need to be addressed by the Council concerned.

9. The Panel reviewed the arrangements for the re-imbursment of expenses for attendance at the General Assembly and at Board and Committee meetings as agreed by the General Assembly in 2001. It agreed, other some updating of rates and to reflect present governance structures that the arrangements were still appropriate and agreed to present them to the General Assembly for approval. (see Support Services Committee Appendix 6).

10. Finally the Panel noted the summaries of the annual statistical returns from Congregations and Presbyteries for 2015 which are appended and encourages Councils to review these. (see Support Services Committee Appendices 3 and 4)

HR PANEL

11. The Committee welcomed new policies agreed by the Panel in a number of important areas including: Time Off in Lieu and Sessional Working; Flexible Working; Paternity and Adoption Leave. It also discussed the implications of the introduction of the National Living Wage and noted the continuing review of the contract with Peninsula Business Services.

12. The Committee agreed in principle to the introduction of an appraisal system for executive and administrative staff in Assembly Buildings and spent some time exploring the challenges of developing and operating a fair system. Following the completion of task lists for all staff, the appraisal system is due to be introduced in 2017 with appropriate training of all those involved.

PROPERTY PANEL

13. The Committee agreed to more regular inspections of the properties owned by the Retired Ministers’ House Fund, not least in order to ensure that all statutory requirements are in place. It welcomed the Panel’s wish to publicise the Fund to Ministers and noted the Panel’s intention to explore how changes in personal circumstances might need to be taken into account in the future granting of assistance to those who were already beneficiaries of the Fund. It also agreed to the Panel’s decision to commission annual inspections of the stone work of Assembly Buildings for consideration of necessary remedial work.

14. At its October meeting the Committee noted the purchase of video equipment to improve conferencing facilities, with further investment agreed at its March meeting for the updating of the AV/Live Streaming Facilities in the Assembly Hall. Both meetings welcomed the progress of hall bookings, including the use of seminar rooms. Conferencing continues to generate substantial income – over £80k in 2015.

15. Finally, the Committee noted the fact that the retail units in the Mall were fully let at the end of March, albeit through a number of short term licence agreements which generate lower returns. The Committee awaits the conclusions of the Task Group's review of the use of Assembly Buildings.

IT TASK GROUP

16. The Committee is very conscious of the importance to the day to day running of the Church of its IT Department. It welcomed the progress made during the year in stabilising its workload and investing for the future with new equipment and staff, aided by consultants. Proposals have been agreed for prioritising the work of the Department and mitigating risk by upskilling the IT Support Officers. It noted the need to develop new policies for cloud storage and social media and welcomed the production of a think piece on the latter by a Panel member, which was referred to the new Creative Production Panel (when established) for early consideration, given the significance of the issues therein for communication policies and practices across the Church.

CREATIVE PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT

17. The Committee noted the accounts of the Creative Production Department and agreed that the Convener and Deputy Clerk, supported by staff in the Department, should submit the Creative Production budget for 2017 to the United Appeal Committee.

JOHN HUNTER, Convener

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE APPENDIX 1

RATES AND ALLOWANCES FOR 2016

a. Ministerial Minimum

	Northern Ireland		Republic of Ireland	
	2016	2015	2016	2015
	£	£	€	€
Basic Ministerial Minimum	25,280	23,884	38,777	37,007
After 1 years' service	25,533	24,123	39,165	37,377

After 2 years' service	25,786	24,362	39,553	37,747
After 3 years' service	26,039	24,601	39,941	38,117
After 4 years' service	26,292	24,840	40,329	38,487
After 5 years' service	26,545	25,079	40,717	38,857
After 6 years' service	26,798	25,318	41,105	39,227
After 7 years' service	27,051	25,557	41,493	39,597
After 8 years' service	27,304	26,796	41,881	39,967
After 9 years' service	27,557	26,035	42,269	40,337
After 10 years' service	27,810	26,274	42,657	40,707
After 11 years' service	28,063	26,513	43,045	41,077
After 12 years' service	28,316	26,752	43,433	41,447
After 13 years' service	28,569	26,991	43,821	41,817
After 14 years' service	28,822	27,230	44,209	42,187
After 15 years' service	29,075	27,469	44,597	42,557
After 16 years' service	29,328	27,708	44,985	42,927
After 17 years' service	29,581	27,947	45,373	43,297
After 18 years' service	29,834	28,186	45,761	43,667
After 19 years' service	30,087	28,425	46,149	44,037
After 20 years' service	30,340	28,664	46,537	44,407

b. Family Grants

	2016	2015
Birth to 10 yrs	£357 (€1,039)	£354 (€1,029)
11 to 15 yrs	£538 (€1,642)	£533 (€1,626)
16 yrs and over		
– At school	£808 (€3,036)	£800 (€3,006)
– At university	£2,688 (€5,064)	£2,661 (€5,014)
Bands (joint incomes), Reductions		
– Nil up to	£28,729 (€43,422)	£28,445 (€42,992)
– Up to (£1 for every £5)	£38,650 (€58,405)	£38,267 (€57,827)
– Above (£1 for every £2)	£38,650 (€58,405)	£38,267 (€57,827)

c. Retired Ministers Fund, Widows of Ministers Fund and Prolonged Disability Fund

Retired Ministers Fund maximum retirement pension for 2016 is £12,061

Widows of Ministers Fund maximum annuity for 2016 is £6,633

Prolonged Disability Fund maximum grant for 2016 is £12,130

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE APPENDIX 2

INCIDENTAL FUND

BUDGETED EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2016

PAYMENTS TO OR ON BEHALF OF COUNCILS

(i) General Council

General Work	5,000	
General Assembly Priorities – Themes	5,000	
Assembly Arrangements	20,000	
Church Relations Committee		
– Irish Council of Churches	21,100	
– Irish Inter-Church Meeting	11,700	
– Conference of European Churches	5,100	
– Comm Protestant Churches Europe	1,300	
– World Comm Reformed Churches	13,300	
– General Church Relations	2,300	84,800

(ii) Council for Church and Society

General Work incl conferences		10,000
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(iii) Linkage Commission

General Work	8,000	
Church Architecture Committee	8,500	16,500

Moderator expenses allowance		28,000
Printing for General Assembly		15,000
Postage		6,500
Travel General Assembly & Councils etc		8,000
Allowance to Congregations re Conveners		8,400
Legal fees		30,000
Costs of General Secretary's Department		329,214
Support Services Charges (Finance, Personnel, IT and Payroll)		97,000
UK Borders Agency		1,000
Presbyterian Historical Society		22,250
Youth Link		10,500
Churches Legislation Advisory		2,500
Peninsula Employment Law & Health & Safety		17,300

TOTAL		<u>686,964</u>
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SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE APPENDIX 3

ANNUAL STATISTICAL RETURNS

**TABLE ONE
PERSONS AND AGENCIES**

	2014	2015	Increase	Decrease
Retired Ministers	234	236	2	0
Ministers in Active Duty	384	380	0	4
Retired Missionaries	15	15	0	0
Missionaries in Active Duty	39	40	1	0
Total Ministers and Missionaries	672	671	0	1
Licensings during year	11	19	8	0
Congregations	545	539	0	6
Total Families	98,919	97,731	0	1,188
Persons of All Ages	230,068	225,228	0	4,840
Contributors to FWO or Stipend	76,734	75,321	0	1,413
Baptisms	1,460	1,429	0	31
Admitted to Lord's Table for First Time	2,087	1,806	0	281
Communicants	100,834	98,674	0	2,160
Attended at Least One Communion during year	61,466	60,794	0	672
Ruling Elders in Kirk Session	6,198	6,039	0	159
Number on Rolls in Sunday School and Bible Classes (Note 1)	40,934	42,062	1128	0

Note 1 - from 2011 includes numbers enrolled in childrens and youth ministries under control of Kirk Sessions

TABLE TWO
CONGREGATIONAL INCOME

	2014		2015		% Difference	
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	R.of I.
Assessable Income (gross)	34,767,152	3,550,233	35,438,668	3,870,382	1.9%	9.0%
Building Fund etc	16,090,829	1,625,301	16,634,008	1,057,501	3.4%	-34.9%
Missions and Charities	7,318,977	492,546	7,525,324	524,321	2.8%	6.5%
Raised from other sources	5,979,166	704,902	6,760,124	784,191	13.1%	11.2%
Organisational Income	6,295,338	224,986	6,015,307	247,004	-4.4%	9.8%
Total Receipts	70,451,462	6,597,968	72,373,431	6,483,399	2.7%	-1.7%

TABLE THREE
CONGREGATIONAL EXPENDITURE

	2014		2015		% Difference N.I.	% Difference R.of I.
	£	€	£	€		
Paid to ministers, other salaries and wages, allowances to ministers and others	18,119,432	1,505,174	18,253,221	1,576,085	0.7%	4.7%
Payments under Assembly Assessments	6,669,880	713,755	6,743,170	772,452	1.1%	8.2%
Building, Repairs etc.	14,652,699	1,119,169	16,527,363	1,208,836	12.8%	8.0%
United Appeal Schemes	3,075,248	219,272	3,209,481	254,934	4.4%	16.3%
Supplementary Schemes						
Other Religious and Charitable Objects	7,119,115	761,916	7,421,670	700,931	4.2%	-8.0%
Organisations	6,120,627	217,804	5,855,896	207,414	-4.3%	-4.8%
General Expenses	11,266,699	1,457,806	11,100,315	1,386,515	-1.5%	-4.9%
Total Payments	67,023,700	5,994,896	69,111,116	6,107,167	3.1%	1.9%

TABLE FOUR
CONGREGATIONAL FUND BALANCES

	Opening 2015		Closing 2015		% Difference	R. of I.
	£	€	£	€	N.I.	
Unrestricted Funds	23,015,628	2,188,293	24,820,247	2,337,326	7.8%	6.8%
Restricted Funds	80,094,957	7,178,235	82,525,237	7,566,994	3.0%	5.4%
Total Fund Balances	103,110,585	9,366,528	107,345,484	9,904,320	4.1%	5.7%

TABLE FIVE
MINISTERS' INCOME AND ALLOWANCES (SEE NOTES)

	2014	2015	
	£	£	% Difference
Total Ministerial Income			
(Active Duty - Note 2)	11,150,217	11,490,633	3.1%
Stipend Paid	9,588,327	9,873,163	3.0%
Allowances			
Light, Heat, etc			
Ministerial Duties			
Total	2,745,739	2,671,236	-2.7%

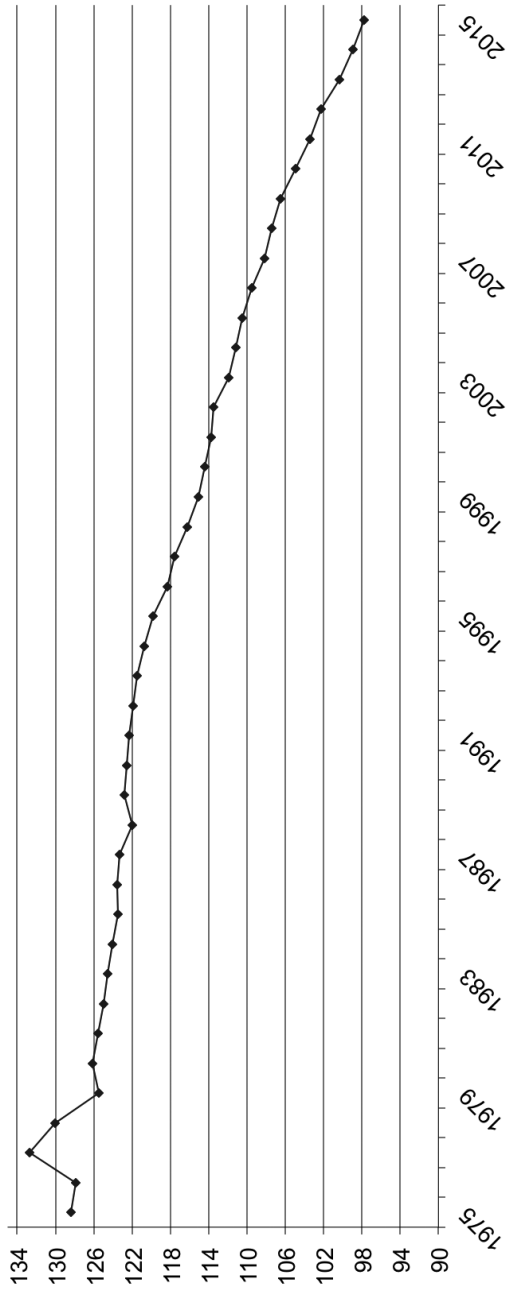
Note 1 Figures for the Republic of Ireland have been converted into £STG using the average value of the Euro for the relevant year (£1/€1.3780)

Note 2 This refers only to 344 ministers in charge of congregations, excluding Assistants, Chaplains, Missionaries, Professors, Administrative Officers and Ministers in recognised service in special work.

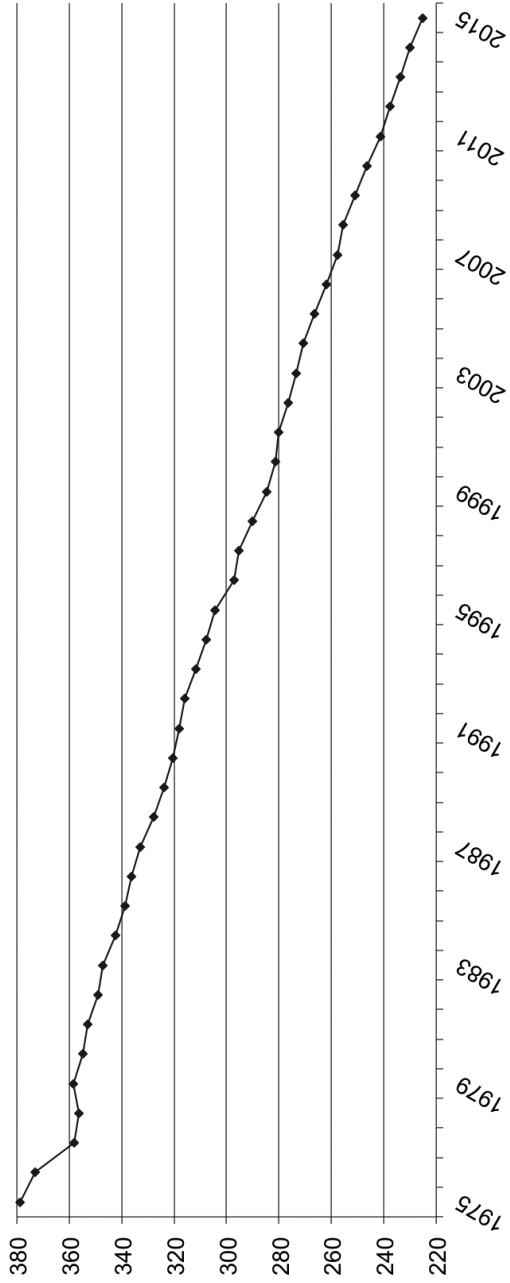
TABLE SIX
PERSONS

	2014	2015
Persons who are aged 18 and under	40,918	40,324
Average attendance at Sunday Worship - Morning	74,111	73,276
- Evening	17,629	17,317

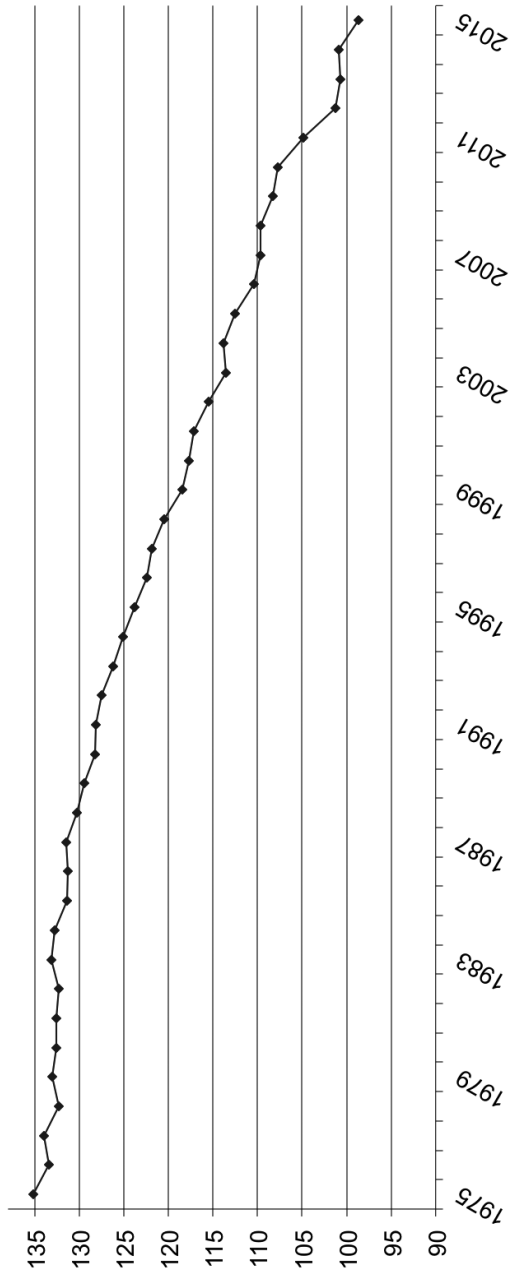
FAMILIES ('000)



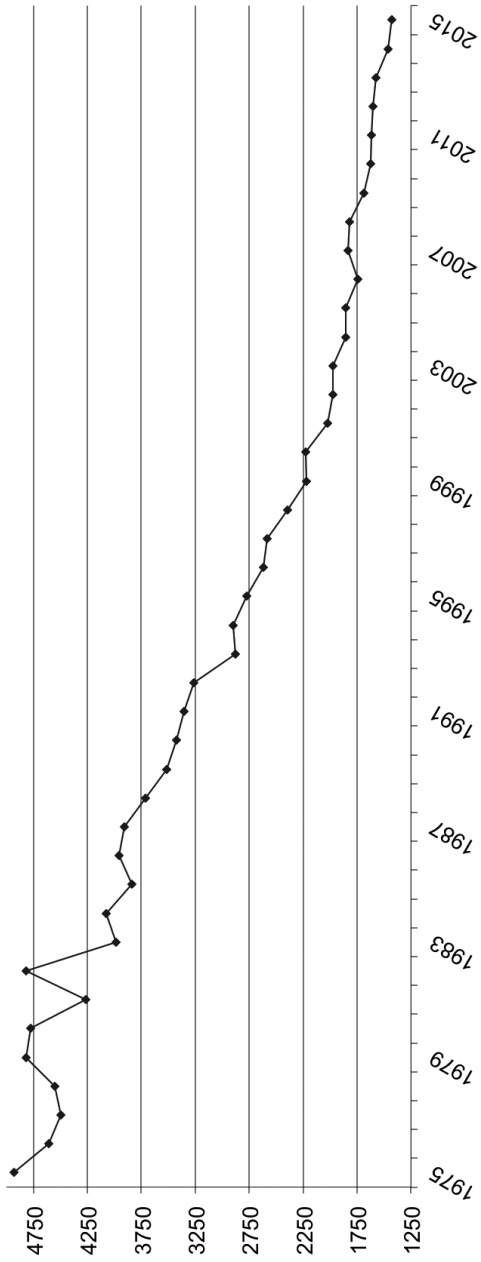
PERSONS ('000)



COMMUNICANTS ('000)



BAPTISMS



SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE APPENDIX 4

SUMMARY OF PRESBYTERY RETURNS FOR YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2015

	Opening Balance	CI Bal 31.12.14	[----- INCOME -----]			[----- EXPENDITURE -----]					Total Expenditure	Surplus (Deficit)	Closing Balance
			Assessment Congregations	Other	Total Income	Presbytery Clerk	Other Staff	Insurance	Other				
1 Ards	15,989	15,989	17,939	802	18,741	(8,896)	(5,972)	(243)	(2,723)	(17,834)	907	16,896	
2 Armagh	4,685	4,685	11,064	4	11,068	(9,388)	(3,000)	(212)	(1,133)	(11,033)	35	4,720	
3 Ballymena	8,129	8,129	18,209	5,408	23,617	(11,549)	(3,560)	(212)	(8,486)	(23,807)	(190)	7,939	
4 Belfast North	2,378	2,378	18,676	4,155	22,831	(10,348)	(5,480)	(859)	(7,594)	(24,281)	(1,450)	928	
5 Belfast South	15,905	15,905	13,751	2,072	15,823	(8,470)	(7,050)	(212)	(4,961)	(20,693)	(4,870)	11,035	
6 Belfast East	138,932	138,932	20,120	90,138	110,258	(10,299)	(1,900)	(212)	(168,326)	(180,737)	(70,479)	68,453	
7 Carrickfergus	7,445	7,445	12,085	403	12,488	(9,085)	(575)	(132)	(3,222)	(13,014)	(526)	6,919	
8 Coleraine & Limavady	39,024	39,024	12,802	540	13,342	(7,762)	(897)	(212)	(2,413)	(11,284)	2,058	41,082	
9 Derry & Donegal	35,889	35,889	22,463	23,796	46,259	(12,004)	(956)	(132)	(31,835)	(44,927)	1,332	37,221	
10 Down	28,680	28,680	10,135	109	10,244	(6,647)	(1,000)	(222)	(5,281)	(13,150)	(2,906)	25,774	
11 Down	3,984	3,984	13,283	4,630	17,913	(8,788)	(1,800)	(212)	(5,047)	(15,847)	2,066	6,050	
12 € Dublin & Munster	47,946	47,946	22,226	26,010	48,236	(10,068)	(21,908)	(746)	(11,344)	(44,066)	4,170	52,116	
13 Iveagh	15,139	15,140	13,212	10,623	23,835	(9,190)	(5,000)	(212)	(8,571)	(18,473)	5,362	20,501	
14 € Monaghan	52,007	52,007	5,265	39,873	45,138	(2,300)	(2,498)	(559)	(21,475)	(26,832)	18,306	70,313	
15 Newry	5,623	5,623	10,093	1,245	11,338	(7,773)	(3,000)	(132)	(2,259)	(10,464)	874	6,497	
16 Omagh	14,240	14,240	11,111	1,069	12,180	(7,627)	(1,785)	(212)	(2,235)	(11,859)	321	14,561	
17 Route	148,234	148,234	11,972	9,586	21,558	(9,248)	(3,500)	(212)	(6,174)	(15,984)	5,574	153,808	
18 Templepatrick	19,359	19,359	18,265	3,681	21,946	(8,268)	(2,768)	(294)	(8,912)	(20,242)	1,704	21,063	
19 Tyrone	4,693	4,693	11,868	18	11,886	(9,307)	(1,000)	(212)	(948)	(11,467)	419	5,112	
Sterling	508,328	508,328	247,048	158,279	405,327	(154,649)	(36,193)	(4,134)	(270,120)	(465,096)	-59,769	448,559	
Euro	99,953	99,953	27,491	65,883	93,374	-12,368	-24,406	-1,305	-32,819	-70,898	22,476	122,429	

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE APPENDIX 5

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT STAFFING

STERLING SALARY SCALES OF STAFF IN POST IN ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS ON 1st JANUARY 2016.

EXECUTIVE POSTS

Scale 1 (£23,901 - £28,397)

IT Support Manager, (ITD)
Presbyterian Women Support Officer (CL&W)

Scale 2 (£26,992 - £32,470)

Property Support Officer (0.8 post) (FSD)
Children's Development Officer (CL&W)
Finance Manager (FSD)
Assistant Residential & Supported Services Manager (CSW)
Creative Production Support Officer (Editor) (CPD)
General Secretary of PW (CL&W)
Finance Manager (FSD)
Creative Production Support Officer (Press and Web) (CPD)
Payroll & Assessment Manager (FSD)
Youth Development Officer (CL&W)
"Taking Care" Programme Co-ordinator
Young Adults Development Officer (CL&W)

Scale 3 (£30,201 - £36,809)

Mission Support Officer (Member Care) (MD)
Head of Creative Production (CPD)
Programme Development Officer (CL&W)
Public Affairs Officer (GSD)
Training Development Officer (CL&W) (higher salary protected)
Building Manager (PSD)

Scale 4 (£33,287 - £41,586)

Senior Finance Manager (FSD)
Head of Personnel (PD)
IT Development & Support Manager (ITD)
Residential & Supported Service Manager (CSW)

Scale 6 (£39,532 - £48,162)

Deputy Clerk of Assembly & Assistant 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 (£44,854 - £57,697)

Clerk of Assembly and General Secretary
 Financial Secretary

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS**Scale 1 (£13,604 - £15,711)**

Telephonist (0.4 post) (PSD)

Scale 2 (£14,637 - £16,928)

Administrative Assistant (0.68 post) (Sales Ledger) (FSD)
 Personnel Assistant (0.74 post) (PD)
 Administrative Assistant, PW (CL&W)
 Administrative Assistant (GSD)
 Administrative Assistant (Job Share) (MD)
 'Taking Care' Administrator (CSW)
 Administrative Assistant (0.7 post) (FSD)
 Handyperson (PSD)
 Personnel/Administrative Assistant (0.8 post) (PD/CSW)
 Assistant Receptionist & Telephonist (PSD) (higher salary protected)

Scale 3 (£16,426 - £18,992)

Senior Personnel Assistant (PD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (job share 1.2 post) (CSW)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (0.5 post) (MD)
 Deputy Buildings Manager (PSD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant, PW (CL&W)
 Information Officer/Receptionist (0.6 post) (PSD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (Partnerships)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (Member Care) (MD)

Scale 4 (£18,611- £21,433)

Payroll & Administrative Assistant (1.77 posts) (FSD)
 Senior Administrative Assistants (x 2 job share) (CL&W)
 Senior Communications Assistant (Press & Web) (0.6 post) (CPD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (0.6 post) (FSD)
 Senior Communications Assistant (Pub) (0.6 post) (CPD)
 Senior Administrative Assistant (CL&W)

Scale 5 (£20,363 - £23,508)

Senior Creative Production Technician (CPD)
 Personal Assistant and Senior Administrative Assistant (MD)
 Assistant Accountant (FSD)
 Senior Personnel Administrator (PD)
 Personal Assistant & Senior Administrative Assistant (job share) (GSD)
 IT Support Officer x 2 (ITD)
 Financial & Administrative Assistant (0.74 post) (FSD)
 IT Support & Development Officer (0.8 post) (ITD)

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£22,488 - £25,707)

Personal Assistant & Office Supervisor (CL&W)
 Personal Assistant & Office Supervisor (MD)
 Personal Assistant & Office Supervisor (CSW)

Scale 5 (Enhanced pt 25-33) (£22,488 - £26,992)

Senior Personal Assistant & Office Supervisor (GSD)

STERLING SALARY SCALES OF STAFF IN POST IN OTHER LOCATIONS ON 1st JANUARY 2016

EXECUTIVE POSTS**Scale 2 (£26,992 - £32,470)**

College Registrar/Bursar, Union College
 College Librarian, Union College
 Minister/Ministry Co-ordinator, Kinghan Church (CSW)
 Project Manager, Willow Brook, (CSW)
 Chaplain in Residence (MD)
 University Chaplain UUJ, (MD)

Scale 4 (£33,287 - £41,586)

Dean of Ministerial Studies & Development (CTM)

Scale 5 (£36,809 - £44,854)

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

Scale 6 (£39,532 - £48,162)

Professor of Old Testament, Union College
 Professor of Church History, Union College
 Professor of New Testament Studies, Union College
 Professor of Practical Theology, Union College
 Professor of Systematic Theology, Union College
 (All Professors higher salary protected)

Scale 7 (£44,854 - £57,697)

Principal of Union Theological College

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RELATED POSTS**Scale 1 (£13,604 - £15,711)**

Clerical Officer (5 p/t) OPS (CSW)

Receptionist (Term Time – part time), Union College

Scale 2 (£14,637 - £16,928)

Clerical and Resource Officer, Nightlight, (MD)

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

Clerical Officer, (1 FT & 2 PT) OPS (CSW)

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

Custodian, Union College (CTM)

Library Assistant (part time), Union College

Scale 3 (£16,426 - £18,992)

Marriage & Guidance Co-ordinator (CSW)

Administrative Assistant (part time), Union College

Nightlight Development Officer (2 posts) (MD)

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

Senior Secretary, Union College (0.6 post)

Scale 4 (£18,611 - £21,433)

Administrator, Derryvolgie (MD)

Senior Secretary, (2 posts) Union College

Deputy Librarian, Union College

Scale 5 (Enhanced) (£22,488 - £25,707)

Assistant Chaplain, QUB (CSW)

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

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE APPENDIX 6

TRAVELLING EXPENSES

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1.1 Mileage Allowance

- A mileage allowance of 15p (22c) per mile can be claimed for one return trip to the Assembly.
- An additional 1p (1c) per mile can be claimed for each additional person travelling in the same car who is also attending the Assembly.

1.2 Train or Bus Fare

- A claim for the cost of standard travel by train or bus or both, as with the mileage allowances, may be made for one return journey.

1.3 Travel Over 200 Miles

- Where a member has travelled more than 200 miles **to** the Assembly (one way) a claim may be submitted for twice the car allowance rate (in effect 30p (44c) per mile). This amount is to cover whatever means of transport has actually been used.

1.4 Daily Allowance

- Each member attending the morning and afternoon sessions on any particular day can claim a daily allowance of £5 per day.
- Where more than 60 miles has been travelled to the Assembly an additional £5 per day may also be claimed.

2. COUNCIL, COMMITTEE, PANEL AND TASK GROUP MEMBERS

2.1 Mileage Allowance

- An allowance of 15p (22c) per mile may be claimed for travel to and from meetings.
- And additional 1p per mile can be claimed for each additional person travelling in the same car who is also attending the Meeting.

2.2 Train or Bus Fare

- Standard class fares will be reimbursed on the presentation of the appropriate receipts.

2.3 Travel Over 200 Miles

- Where a member has travelled more than 200 miles **to** a meeting (one way) a claim may be submitted for twice the car allowance rate (in effect 30p (44c) per mile). This amount is to cover whatever means of transport has actually been used.

2.4 Car Parking

- Where a Council, Committee, Panel or Task Group member attends more than 10 meetings in any one year car parking will be reimbursed on presentation of valid receipts.
- Where such a claim is made, the first claim should be for the previous 10 parking receipts. Subsequent receipts may be claimed on an individual basis per meeting attended.

3. HONORARY ASSEMBLY CONVENERS

- Travelling expenses may be claimed on the same basis as for Council, Committee, Panel and Task Group members.
- In addition other costs incurred in connection with the fulfilment of the duties of the position will be fully reimbursed.

COMMERCIAL USE OF ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS TASK GROUP

1. Last year the General Assembly passed the following resolution: ‘That the Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings Task Group be requested to present options to the General Council with a view to the Council bringing a definite recommendation to the 2016 General Assembly for decision.’ (Minutes page 45, Resolution11)

2. The Task Group has met seven times since then. It has divided the work into two areas: the Reception Area and the Mall.

3. **Reception Area:** Consideration had been given by the Panel whose work the Task Group inherited to the use of the Reception Area for an exhibition/display on Presbyterianism. Thinking on this has developed into an exhibition/display of the history and the contemporary life, work and witness of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. A small sub-group was established by the Task Group to look at the detail of this. Membership includes representatives of the Council for Mission in Ireland, and the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland and someone with expertise in creative expression. Meetings have taken place with a tourism consultant and the Ulster-Scots Agency and, at the request of the Council, a design consultancy has been engaged to provide a worked-up and costed design. While we do not have a definite figure yet, estimates indicate that it will be a small proportion of the cost on any work done on the rest of the ground floor. There are exciting possibilities for the use of this space as a means of communicating something of what our Church is to tourists from far and near, to people who work in the city, and to our own members. The Task Group will ensure that prominence is given to the contemporary life, work and mission of PCI and that there are opportunities for communicating the Gospel within a quality and attractive exhibition.

4. **The Mall:** Following the remit of last year, the Task Group now brings three options for the Mall area to the Assembly for decision, with a definite recommendation. It should be noted that this information is commercially sensitive and should be used with discretion.

5. The **various options** follow, with a summary of costs (Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings Appendix 1), a projected income and expenditure account (Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings Appendix 2), and plans of Options 2 and 3.

OPTION 1 – DO NOTHING

OTHER THAN THE REQUIRED MAINTENANCE WORKS AND CONTINUE TO OPERATE THE MALL ON PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS

1.1 PROJECTED COSTS

	£
Essential Maintenance	160,000
Smoke Extraction	15,000
Other related works	135,000
SUB TOTAL	310,000
VAT & Fees	90,000
TOTAL	400,000

1.2 FINANCING

Based on recent accounts the running of “Assembly Buildings” (which includes income from internal office rents, the letting of Fisherwick Buildings, Conferencing income and the running of the Mall) is generating a cash surplus (around £30k in 2014 and £60k in 2015). The contribution each of the aforementioned sources makes to the overall surplus depends on how certain costs are apportioned. However, a review of the figures would indicate that if the Mall is closed that the surplus from running “Assembly Buildings” would increase to circa £80k per annum confirming that the Mall is operating at a loss (see Appendix 2).

The above maintenance works will have to be funded either from any “surplus” generated by the operation of Assembly Building or by extending the congregational assessment for the refurbishment works for a short period (approx. 1 year).

1.3 PROS

- (i) Does not commit the Church to any further expenditure (other than maintenance works) at a time when there is still an outstanding overdraft from the earlier refurbishment works of circa £3.8m. It is projected this will not be paid off until 2026.
- (ii) The Mall has shown reasonable occupancy in recent months and it may be possible to secure longer tenancies (the current tenancies tend to be on a licence rather than lease basis).
- (iii) The sense of occupancy in the Mall has a positive impact in terms on those who use the building on a regular basis.

1.4 CONS

- (i) The potential issue of Sunday trading **in the Mall** remains and current trends may mean that it is an issue which the Church will be under increasing pressure to deal with either from within or without.
- (ii) The Mall is making a loss. Many rentals are on short term basis and a very low service charge inclusive rents have been agreed in order to secure units.
- (iii) To keep the Mall running requires staff time and marketing and the use of external agents to manage lease renewal, tenant queries and service charges.
- (iv) Does not address the lack of exhibition and break out space which will be necessary to grow conferencing income.
- (v) The opportunity to bring back into the Church's own use the exiting retail space would be lost until next lease renewals.

(Note: the Task Group has been advised that a tenant has a right to renew their lease unless they are in breach of their obligations e.g. they have failed to make their lease payments. Therefore, it is not possible to close the Mall without the Church having a scheme in place demonstrating how it intends to use the space. The sole purpose of the figures in Appendix 2 Option 1 is to show that the Mall is making a loss)

OPTION 2 – THE HYBRID OR PARTIAL SCHEME

AS PER OPTION 3 BUT EXCLUDING THE REFURBISHMENT OF RETAIL UNITS FOR OFFICE USE.

2.1 COSTS

Total including essential and non-essential maintenance	938,190
VAT	187,638
TOTAL	1,125,828

2.2 FINANCING

Additional income will be generated from:

- (i) the letting of an additional retail unit (Area 6 – in old entrance via Upper Queens Street) say £15,000;
- (ii) the possible letting of the Area 1 (labelled as Pres Church Use – this is the old Family Books space) to a third party sympathetic to the ethos of the Church; it is anticipated that, if let any tenant will be responsible for the fit out and that any income will be on a “commission” or “profit” basis; initially it is assumed this would be nil;
- (iii) the new conferencing facilities, say £20,000 per annum. It is anticipated that to significantly grow conference income a marketing/conference manager would need to be appointed. A significant increase in conference income would be required to cover this additional cost. At this stage it is not being proposed that such a person be appointed.

Based on the present annual assessment income for the Church House Repair Fund it would take approx. 3 years to clear the additional debt.

2.3 PROS

- (i) Issues relating to the management of Sunday trading **in the Mall** would not arise.
- (ii) Mall management and service charge issues would be removed.
- (iii) Additional exhibition and breakout space would be provided which would improve the conferencing offering.
- (iv) Is less expensive than option 3, but still provides the opportunity to convert retail units to offices at a future date if considered viable.
- (v) The existing retail units can be used to provide temporary storage for conferences e.g. for set up or could also be used for temporary pop-up exhibition. (The glass fronts could be covered with decals or blinds if necessary).
- (vi) Visit Belfast is supportive of this option.
- (vii) The unallocated space could be brought back into the Church's use.

2.4 CONS

- (i) To grow conferencing income may require additional staffing or marketing resources.
- (ii) The additional cost would have to be funded by extending the current assessment on congregations.
- (iii) Sunday trading issues would remain with Retail units which had direct street access but these are in Fisherwick Buildings which, other than for temporary accommodation, have never been used by the Church.

OPTION 3 – THE “FULL” SCHEME

CARRY OUT THE COMPLETE REFURBISHMENT OF THE GROUND FLOOR TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL CONFERENCING FACILITIES, ADD A NEW RETAIL UNIT AND CONVERT REMAINING RETAIL UNITS FOR OFFICE USE

3.1 PROJECTED COSTS

Total including essential and non-essential maintenance	1,310,903
VAT	262,181
TOTAL	1,573,084

3.2 FINANCING

Additional income will be generated from:

- (i) the letting of an additional retail unit (Area 6 – in old entrance via Upper Queens Street, labelled as Retail Unit) say £15,000.

- (ii) the additional office space. Say 3 units of 500 sq ft each at £7 per square foot which is £10,500.
- (iii) the possible letting of Area 1 (old Familybooks space) to a third party sympathetic to the ethos of the Church. It is anticipated that, if let, any tenant will be responsible for the fit out and that any income will be on a “commission” or “profit” basis. Initially it is assumed this would be nil.
- (iv) the new conferencing facilities, say £20,000 per annum. It is anticipated that to significantly grow conference income that a marketing / conference manager would need to be appointed. A significant increase in conference income would be required to cover this additional cost. At this stage it is not being proposed that such a person be appointed.

Based on the present annual assessment income for the Church House Repair Fund it would take a further 4 to 5 years to clear the additional debt.

3.3 PROS

- (i) Issues relating to the management of Sunday trading **in the Mall** would not arise (although it may be that access to Office units would be required for certain permitted purposes on Sundays).
- (ii) Mall management and service charge issues would be removed.
- (iii) Additional exhibition and breakout space would be provided which would improve the conferencing offering.

3.4 CONS

- (i) The Church’s position on Sunday opening of offices would need to be agreed.
- (ii) To grow conferencing income may require additional staffing or marketing resources.
- (iii) The additional cost would have to be funded by extending the assessment on congregations.
- (iv) Sunday trading issues would remain with Retail units which had direct street access but these are in Fisherwick Buildings which, other than for temporary accommodation, have never been used by the Church.
- (v) There is a development risk in that the Church will be expending around £450k (i.e. the cost difference in cost between option 2 and 3) without the security of long term tenants.

GENERAL COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

6. The options have been presented to the General Council. On purely financial grounds the returns under Options 2 and 3 would probably not justify the proposed level of expenditure. However there is a window of opportunity to bring the Mall back into the Church’s own use and to some extent at least help address issues which could arise re Sunday trading in the Mall. It protects the Church from fluctuation in demand for retail space, provides a platform to grow the conferencing business and will reduce the administration involved in the management of the Mall. The Council feels that to achieve this, it is not necessary to incur the expenditure entailed in Option 3. Areas that may be left void could, for example, be fitted out and used by a third party at no cost to the Church.

7. Accordingly the General Council recommends that Option 2 be adopted and a suitable resolution is appended.

8. General Assembly may wish to take into consideration the fact that Options 2 and 3 open up the possibility of the use of Area 1 by the Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland. It should be stressed that it would be necessary to explore various issues in depth. The possibility has only recently been suggested to the Society and things are not at a stage where they could give an agreement even in principle. More detailed conversations would be necessary before the Society could give a clear response. Such conversations are likely to go on past the 2016 General Assembly.

JIM STOTHERS, Convener

COMMERCIAL USE OF ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS TASK GROUP

APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF COSTS

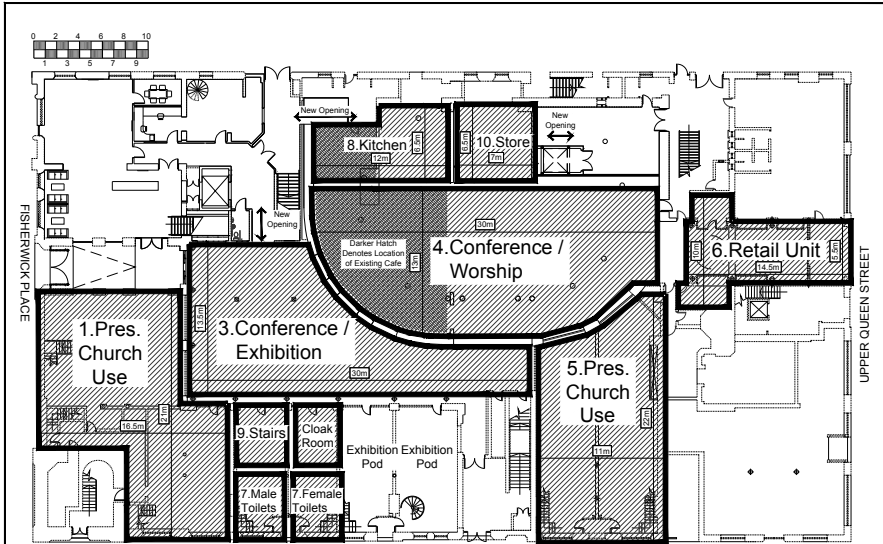
	OPTION 1: Do nothing	OPTION 2: Partial Scheme	OPTION 3: Full Scheme
Area 2 – Exhibition Pods (Op 2)/ Offices (Op 3)	–	–	184,030
Area 3 – Conference/ Exhibition	–	103,400	103,400
Area 4 – Conference/Worship	–	199,100	199,100
Area 5 – Pres. Church Use (Op 2)/Offices (Op 3)	–	–	154,800
Area 6 – Retail Unit	–	45,600	45,600
Area 7 – Toilet Fit Out	–	66,000	66,000
Area 8 – New Kitchen	–	58,500	58,500
Area 9 – Stairs	–	49,500	49,500
Area 10 – Store	–	30,800	30,800
SUB-TOTAL	–	552,900	891,730
Essential Repairs			
- Glazed Roof Repairs	40,000	40,000	40,000
- Boiler etc	120,000	110,000	110,000
Smoke Extraction	15,000	15,000	15,000
Other related works	135,000	135,000	135,000
SUB-TOTAL	310,000	300,000	300,000
TOTAL (excl. VAT)	310,000	852,900	1,191,730
Fees (say 10%)	(est) 23,333	85,590	119,173
	333,333	938,190	1,310,903
VAT – 20%	66,667	187,638	262,181
GRAND TOTAL	400,000	1,125,828	1,573,084

COMMERCIAL USE OF ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS TASK GROUP

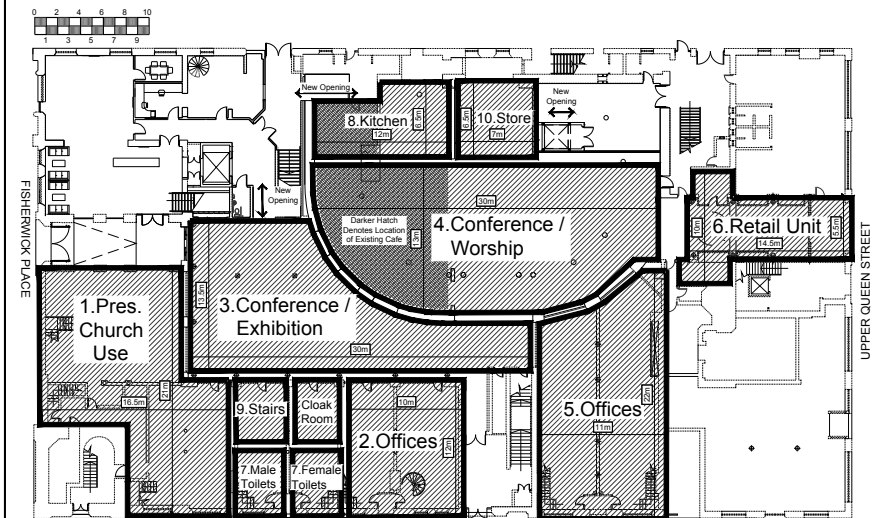
APPENDIX 2

PROJECTED INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT (EXCLUDING REPAYMENT OF REFURBISHMENT COSTS)

	2014 Accounts £	2015 Mall Retail Accounts £	Closing Projection £	Option 2 (Part) Projection £	Option 3 (Full) Projection £
INCOME					
Internal Rent Charges	271,755	297,158	297,000	297,000	298,000
Commercial Lettings	205,166	199,660	133,740	148,740	159,240
Conference Income	83,917	84,147	85,000	105,000	105,000
Sundry Income	100	466			
	<u>560,938</u>	<u>581,431</u>	<u>515,740</u>	<u>550,740</u>	<u>562,240</u>
EXPENDITURE					
Wages and Salaries	131,439	162,810	160,000	160,000	160,000
Property Services and Running Costs	322,395	273,924	194,000	194,000	194,000
Insurance	37,980	36,417	35,000	35,000	35,000
Support Services charge	21,383	34,428	37,520	37,520	37,520
Printing and Sundries	6,943	5,768	7,000	7,000	7,000
Telephone	778	663	1,000	1,000	1,000
Audit	1,600	1,500	1,600	1,600	1,600
Bad debts	5,521	2,616			
Bank Interest	2,479	1,366			
	<u>530,518</u>	<u>519,492</u>	<u>436,120</u>	<u>436,120</u>	<u>436,120</u>
Surplus (Deficit) Before depreciation	30,420	61,939	79,620	114,620	126,120



OPTION 2



OPTION 3

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE

1. The Committee wishes to express its thanks to the all Congregations who supported the United Appeal in the year 2015. When contributions for the 2015 Appeal were closed at the end of January 2016 £3,170,683 had been received from congregations towards the 2015 Appeal of £3,325,000. Once late contributions for the 2014 Appeal and some trust income and donations were taken into account the total income in 2015 was £3,331,911 which is slightly above the target.

2. The Committee is pleased to be able to pay in full the proposed allocation of grants to Councils for the year 2015.

3. Of the 542 Congregations, 344 Congregations met or exceeded their target of honour, 175 Congregations failed to meet their target and 23 have made no contribution to date.

4. In the past the former United Appeal Board appealed to Congregational Committees to change their habits and remit the Appeal donations as they were received. We regret to report that the majority of 2015 donations were received by the Financial Secretary's Department in December 2015 and January 2016. Congregations should be aware that the United Appeal is distributed to the Mission Councils on a regular basis, spread throughout the year. In order for United Appeal to meet its obligation to fund the running the Mission Councils and prevent them from going into overdraft, a substantial United Appeal cashflow reserve has to be maintained. A lesser reserve would be necessary if Congregations did not hold on to United Appeal donations until the year end. The Committee appeals to Congregational Committees to please remit United Appeal donations as they receive them.

5. A number of years ago the United Appeal Board took the decision to introduce a phased reduction in the use of reserves. Reserves in 2015 were reduced by £174,685. In order to restrict the level of 2016 Appeal it was previously agreed to release £171,900 from reserves. The Committee realises it will not be possible to continue to use reserves at this rate and is seeking to bring the level of the Appeal and grants to Councils into line.

6. The Promotions Panel has endeavoured to make material available to Congregations. Despite its excellent work many Congregations remain somewhat ignorant of the work of the Appeal and its rationale to advance the cause of Christ at home and overseas. The Committee earnestly appeals to Ministers to promote the work of the General Assembly Councils through the use of the United Appeal for Mission resources: the 'Mission Together' leaflets, United Appeal articles in ReachOut and the Presbyterian Herald magazines and the range of excellent downloadable resources on the PCI website. These are designed to keep members continually updated and informed.

7. The United Appeal Committee only came into operation on 1st January 2015. The Finance and Staffing Commission previously agreed that it would not be possible to undertake the United Appeal budgeting process as normal in March/April 2015 and therefore agreed that for 2016 Councils would receive an inflationary uplift on their 2015 grants. The Commission also agreed that the 2016 Appeal to Congregations should increase by 2.25% over the 2015 Appeal i.e. from £3,325,000 to £3,400,000.

8. The United Appeal Committee resumed the normal budgeting process with Councils presenting budget requests for 2017. The requests received from Councils for 2017 totalled £3,902,243. This compared to the proposed level of grants for 2016 (as reported to the General Assembly last year and as shown on Schedule II) of £3,527,600. The Committee met with representatives of all Councils to discuss their request and agreed to recommend to the General Council grants for 2017 of £3,610,000 i.e. £292,243 less than the requests received – see Schedule IV. In recommending this amount the Committee considered the level of the Appeal to Congregations for 2017. The Committee is also very aware that the present practise of using reserves to cover the shortfall between the level of the Appeal and the grants awarded to Councils cannot continue. The Committee agreed to recommend to the General Council that the Appeal for 2017 be set at £3,460,000 (see Schedules III and IV) which is a 1.78% increase on the 2016 Appeal of £3,400,000. The shortfall between the level of the Appeal for 2017 of £3,460,000 and the level of grants to Councils of £3,610,000 is to be funded by some income from donations and trust funds but also through the release of £112,000 from reserves – see Schedule IV. The Committee is planning to reduce the use of reserves over the next four years and this will have implications for the level of grants awarded and/or the level of the Appeal. The General Council approved the Committee's recommendation for submission to the General Assembly.

9. The Committee thanks the Financial Secretary's Department for their assistance in every area of the United Appeal's work.

10. The Committee is committed to the need of a United Appeal Sunday, and a suitable resolution is appended. The first Sunday in March is recommended as United Appeal for Mission Sunday. This date is chosen as it is close to the February Presbyteries when the Spring 'Mission Together' leaflets are distributed.

DAVID IRVINE, Convener

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE**SCHEDULE I**

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2014	Assessable Income 2014 £	United Appeal 2016 £
Ards	7,360	3,359,198	316,599
Armagh	3,664	2,122,985	178,211
Ballymena	6,984	3,373,014	308,899
Belfast North	4,486	2,055,149	193,322
Belfast South	3,056	1,823,259	151,042
Belfast East	5,271	3,069,547	257,079
Carrickfergus	4,620	1,944,443	191,230
Coleraine and Limavady	5,335	2,560,152	235,213
Derry and Donegal	4,804	1,934,316	194,844
Down	4,408	1,791,514	179,544
Dromore	4,683	2,163,350	202,632
Dublin and Munster	1,099	1,336,142	85,420
Iveagh	3,486	1,621,610	151,351
Monaghan	1,080	639,212	53,144
Newry	2,260	1,189,655	104,446
Omagh	3,335	1,458,174	140,535
Route	3,417	1,479,065	143,307
Templepatrick	3,899	1,633,215	161,031
Tyrone	3,487	1,638,679	152,153
	76,734	37,192,697	3,400,002

50% of the allocation for 2016 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Assessable Income. Assessable Income for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2014 of 1.2406.

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE**SCHEDULE II**

	2016
	£
MISSION IN IRELAND	1,071,900
GLOBAL MISSION	920,700
TRAINING IN MINISTRY	349,000
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS	730,000
SOCIAL WITNESS	195,300
CREATIVE PRODUCTION	260,700
	<hr/> 3,527,600
Income from donations etc	-38,000
Release from reserves	-89,600
	<hr/>
Appeal to Congregations	<u>3,400,000</u>

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE**SCHEDULE III**

Presbytery	Contributing Families 2015	Assessable Income 2015 £	United Appeal 2017 £
Ards	7,093	3,466,868	320,135
Armagh	3,625	2,137,937	180,215
Ballymena	6,857	3,486,081	315,585
Belfast North	4,389	2,132,682	197,524
Belfast South	2,881	1,834,866	149,382
Belfast East	5,084	3,258,737	264,553
Carrickfergus	4,472	1,967,026	191,918
Coleraine and Limavady	5,149	2,558,534	234,292
Derry and Donegal	4,803	2,064,667	203,949
Down	4,323	1,852,402	183,298
Dromore	4,554	2,236,518	206,023
Dublin and Munster	1,131	1,332,905	86,424
Iveagh	3,390	1,624,879	151,550
Monaghan	1,048	629,171	52,604
Newry	2,735	1,259,081	119,917
Omagh	3,184	1,516,832	141,919
Route	3,372	1,466,683	143,963
Templepatrick	3,794	1,650,366	161,985
Tyrone	3,437	1,672,010	154,767
	75,321	38,148,245	3,460,003

50% of the allocation for 2017 has been based on contributing families and 50% on Assessable Income. Assessable Income for Congregations in the Republic of Ireland have been converted to euro on the basis of the average exchange rate for 2015 of 1.3780.

UNITED APPEAL COMMITTEE**SCHEDULE IV**

	2017
	£
MISSION IN IRELAND	1,050,000
GLOBAL MISSION	1,000,000
TRAINING IN MINISTRY	375,000
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS	740,000
SOCIAL WITNESS	245,000
CREATIVE PRODUCTION	200,000
	<hr/> 3,610,000
Income from donations etc.	-38,000
Release from reserves	-112,000
	<hr/>
Appeal to Congregations	<u>3,460,000</u>

GENERAL COUNCIL

SECTION 5

(Thursday morning 11.15 am)

CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Church Relations Committee met three times during the year and reports as follows:

Irish Council of Churches and Irish Inter-Church Committee

2. The Executive Committee of the Irish Council of Churches met on a regular basis throughout the year and carried forward the ongoing work of the Council. The AGM was held on Thursday 7th April 2016 in Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin. The new President, Bishop John McDowell of the Church of Ireland, took over from the outgoing President, the Rev Dr Donald Watts. The AGM also marked the end of Mervyn McCullagh's time as ICC Executive Officer. Mervyn and his wife Raing are going to Sri Lanka, under the auspices of the Methodist Church in Great Britain and Ireland, to work alongside the local Council of Churches.

3. The Irish Inter-Church Committee met at different points throughout the year. The Irish Inter-Church Meeting held an overnight conference on Thursday 22nd and Friday 23rd October 2015 in Portarlington in the Republic of Ireland, on the theme of '*Missional Challenges in the Rights-based Society*'. The Moderator and the Committee Convener had led the PCI delegation and everyone agreed that it was a very worthwhile meeting.

Conversations with the Church of Ireland

4. During the year ongoing discussions were held with the Church of Ireland, following on from an initial meeting in 2015. It was agreed that it would be useful to hold further meetings to discuss areas of mutual concern, namely:

- Sharing good practice as to how PCI and CofI Congregations could work together in practical ways in local communities.
- Sharing the different approaches of the two denominations to 'linkages' i.e. how two or more PCI Congregations are linked together, and the CofI equivalent.
- Practical collaboration in ministry and mission in areas where both denominations were in a minority situation.
- Exploring how our two Colleges might develop positive relationships e.g. student exchanges.

5. At the time of writing a meeting is planned in Assembly Buildings for the morning of Thursday 5th May, with the PCI delegation made up of representatives of the Church Relations Committee, the Council for Congregational Life and

Witness, from the Council for Mission in Ireland, the Linkage Commission and Union Theological College.

Relationships with other Churches in Ireland

6. It was noted that PCI had no formal relationship with many of the newer Churches in Ireland, nor indeed, other than relationships through the ICC, with some of the smaller denominations (e.g. the Baptist Association of Churches). Following some discussion on practical ways of moving forward, the Committee plan to consider a paper on the matter at its next meeting.

Relationship with the Church of Scotland

7. Following an initial meeting between the Clerk of Assembly and the Principal Clerk of the Church of Scotland, the Very Rev John Chalmers, it was agreed that it would be useful for senior representatives from each denomination to meet. A delegation from the Church of Scotland travelled to Belfast on Friday 19th February 2016 and the respective delegations were as follows:

- PCI – The Very Rev Dr Rob Craig (General Council Convener), the Rev Trevor (Clerk), the Very Rev Dr Roy Patton (GA Business Committee Convener) and the Rev John Brackenridge (Church Relations Convener)
- CofS - The Very Rev John Chalmers (Principal Clerk), the Rev Derek Browning (Assembly Arrangements Convener), the Rev Alison McDonald (Ecumenical Relations Convener) and the Very Rev Sheilagh Kesting (Ecumenical Relations Officer).

8. The meeting had been cordial and both the historic nature of the relationship between the two Churches and its ongoing reality had been affirmed. It was recognised that a degree of strain on that relationship had been experienced over the last number of years, with a focus on the CofS decisions in relation to the position of Ministers in same sex relationships and the very different view taken by PCI. This culminated in the decisions of the 2015 CofS General Assembly on this matter, its wide reporting in Ireland and the resultant decision of the 2015 PCI General Assembly not to send a delegation to the 2016 CofS General Assembly.

9. It was noted that this was the only decision taken by the PCI regarding its relationship with the CofS and that normal relationships through various Councils, Conveners and staff were continuing. PCI would also be inviting the CofS to send a delegation to its 2016 General Assembly. It was noted that PCI would be unable to send any kind of delegation to the 2016 CofS General Assembly, even as observers.

10. It was recognised by all present that both Churches valued their relationship and that efforts should be made to enable it to continue to develop, even recognising the ongoing strain due to previous, and potentially future, decisions in the CofS regarding the matter of concern.

11. It was agreed that the delegations should report back to the relevant bodies in both denominations, recommending that the natural ongoing contacts and collaborations between Councils, Conveners and staff be encouraged and developed where appropriate and that it would be useful for representatives of both denomination's Church Relations Committees to meet in the autumn of 2016 to discuss ongoing relationships.

12. Following discussion in the Committee it was agreed that these recommendations be accepted and reported to the General Council. This was subsequently agreed by the General Council and an appropriate resolution is appended for consideration by the General Assembly.

Relationship with the Free Church of Scotland

13. The Committee noted the resolution of the 2015 General Assembly, namely:

“That in exploring new relationships with other Churches, the possibility of a stronger relationship with the Free Church of Scotland be investigated.”

14. Following informal discussions between representatives of the two denominations, a meeting had taken place on Monday 14th December 2015, when a small group from the Free Church had travelled to Belfast to meet representatives from PCI. PCI was represented by the Moderator, Clerk, the Very Rev Dr Rob Craig (General Council Convener), and the Rev John Brackenridge (Church Relations Convener). The Free Church was represented by the Rev David Meredith (Mission Director), the Rev Alasdair Macleod (Chair of Ecumenical Relations) and the Rev David Robertson (Moderator).

15. The meeting had been cordial and many areas of mutual interest between the two Churches were noted. The Free Church was a relatively small denomination, with approx. 12,000 members in 110 Congregations in Scotland, arranged in 5 Presbyteries. It was also noted that:

- PCI has an ongoing relationship with the Church of Scotland and it was recognised that this should not preclude a parallel relationship with the Free Church i.e. such relationships for PCI would not be mutually exclusive.
- While PCI had a clearly stated theological position regarding ordination, in that both men and women were eligible for ordination on the same basis to both the ruling and teaching eldership, in the Free Church only men were eligible for ordination. It was recognised that for some in PCI this posed a difficulty though it was acknowledged that PCI already related to other denominations with similar theological positions as the Free Church took on this issue.
- PCI was a member of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), while the Free Church was not. The Free Church was however a member of the World Reformed Fellowship and the International Conference of Reformed Churches. A number of denominations in these bodies were also connected to WCRC.
- The Free Church wished to widen its ecumenical reach and pursue meaningful relations with Churches in the UK and beyond, especially Churches from within our Presbyterian tradition. The Free Church 2015 General Assembly had agreed to instigate and pursue ecumenical relationships with the Presbyterian Church of Ireland.
- It would not be appropriate to consider full interchangeability of ministry between the two denominations as PCI did not have that form of relationship with any other denomination and also the issue of ordination of women in PCI would make that undesirable from the Free Church’s perspective.

- Invitations to attend each other's General Assemblies could be one form of expressing a new relationship. Likewise contact between appropriate respective groupings in the two Churches could be developed e.g. relating to mission, or ministry or public square matters. The two respective theological colleges could also develop contacts.

16. It was agreed at the meeting that both delegations would report back to their respective Church Relations Committees. It was noted that some decisions would require approval at General Assembly level e.g. formal invitation to attend each other's Assemblies.

17. Following discussion in the Committee it was agreed that the Church Relations Committee would recommend to the General Council that the General Assembly should be asked to note the worthwhile meeting which had taken place and welcome a natural development of a relationship with the Free Church of Scotland through areas of mutual interest in the Councils of our respective Assemblies. This was agreed by the Council and an appropriate resolution is appended for consideration by the General Assembly.

World Communion of Reformed Churches

18. The Rev Cheryl Meban continues to serve on the Executive Committee of WCRC and reports to the Committee on the work of the Council. She and the Clerk attended a meeting of the European Council WCRC in Zürich from 3rd to 6th March 2016, hosted by the Swiss Reformed Churches.

19. The next full Council meeting of WCRC (held every seven years) will take place in Leipzig, Germany, 29th June to 7th July 2017, recognising the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. PCI will be entitled to send three delegates and the Committee also recommended to the General Council that an amount of £2,000 should be gifted to a Partner Church to assist with their costs in sending a delegation. A suitable resolution is appended.

20. As part of the WCRC Council's business in 2017 there is likely to be a proposal to associate the World Communion of Reformed Churches with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) which was signed by the Catholic and the Lutheran Churches in 1999. An accompanying 'signing statement' would be attached. Each member Church, including PCI, will shortly be asked to indicate whether they would be in favour of this step or opposed to it. The General Council agreed that the view of the Doctrine Committee be sought regarding the WCRC's JDDJ proposal.

Conference of European Churches & Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe

21. Contact continues to be kept with both of these bodies of which PCI is a member. While both the Church of Ireland and Methodist Churches have members on CEC bodies, PCI currently does not. Over the next year, the Committee will be considering how meaningful contact can best be maintained.

General

22. The Committee has been examining its remit and seeking to find ways to better enable Church relations to develop both at denominational and local level. It was noted that most Councils of the Assembly cooperate with relevant

bodies in other Churches and at local level most Congregations cooperate in a range of ways with Christian Churches of other denominations. However, it was also noted that there was much that could be done to encourage such cooperation and partnership in mission and ministry.

JOHN BRACKENRIDGE, Convener

ORGANISTS AND EMPLOYMENT TASK GROUP

23. The General Council appointed a Task Group following a report from a Commission of a Presbytery concerning a difficult situation in a Congregation within its bounds relating to the employment of an organist. The Task Group's remit was to examine both the general issue of the employment of organists etc and the related provision of support for Kirk Sessions generally in personnel matters.

24. The Task Group had before it a report from the Presbytery Commission and it also asked individuals to draw up papers on a number of related issues. It also had some direct input regarding the kind of issues of concern. It should be noted that the Task Group was not formally examining nor considering the matters in the Presbytery in question, but rather attempting to discern and address the wider general issues that particular situation presented.

25. Following detailed discussion and deliberation, the Task Group made the following comments and recommendations, all of which were adopted by the General Council:

- (a) The difficulty of balancing the role a Kirk Session as an employer over against its role in the spiritual oversight of a Congregation was noted as an unavoidable consequence of the tensions that sometimes exist between the different responsibilities of a Kirk Session.
Recommendation: That the Linkage Commission, through its Auxiliary Ministry and Additional Pastoral Personnel Panels, and in consultation with the Head of Personnel, draw up guidance as to how a Kirk Session should deal with employment issues generally e.g. the employee not being present when matters affecting their employment are discussed, even if they are an Elder etc.; the support given by the General Assembly's appointed HR support provider, their own insurer's provision of DAS insurance, the possible recourse to their own solicitor etc.
- (b) The need for the appropriate indemnity cover and HR support for Kirk Sessions is vitally important. 'Non-advice dependent' insurance cover is preferable, in that this would not bind Kirk Sessions into following every detailed aspect of the advice offered. This allowed for other opinions to be taken account of (e.g. Solicitor's advice), while not invalidating insurance cover. Such insurance could be free-standing or linked to an 'HR advice contract', in which the 'business needs' of the Kirk Session in their role in leading the Congregation should be to the fore. It was also noted that it is important that any HR provider would give advice on what a Kirk Session could do and not just what a Kirk Session should not do.

Recommendation: That the HR Panel of the General Council, noting the relevant comments in this report, be asked to draw up the specification for a new PCI Congregational HR Support Tender document (to include PCI specific requirements) and proceed to tender for services.

- (c) It was agreed that there is a need to ensure all organists (or other similar people) who receive any form of remuneration have a contract in place, before any future difficult issues arise.

Recommendation: That the Linkage Commission, through its Auxiliary Ministry and Additional Pastoral Personnel Panels, be given responsibility for rolling this out for all new and existing posts where an organist (or other similar person) is clearly an employee i.e. receives any form of monetary remuneration regardless of what it is called. This would be done in conjunction with the new HR Provider and PCI's Head of Personnel.

Recommendation: That some basic guidance should be provided for a situation where the main organist etc is clearly a volunteer e.g. draft 'Outline of Role' and 'Basis of Understanding' documents would be useful.

- (d) During particularly difficult situations, active and visible (i.e. on the ground) HR support and advice is important, as is access to appropriate legal advice if required.

Recommendation: That HR attendance 'on the ground' should be an option in any new HR contract (at an additional charge to the Congregation) and that a list should be drawn up, and made available to Kirk Sessions, of Solicitors' firms that could provide necessary employment advice in difficult situations.

Recommendation: That, in the most difficult situations, the Clerk of Assembly should be able to authorise the involvement of PCI's Head of Personnel – this would be in a limited way only i.e. liaising with the HR provider and/or assessing if legal input was needed. The resourcing implications for the PCI Personnel Department should be clearly monitored by the Clerk in conjunction with the Convener of PCI's HR Committee.

- (e) Arising from experience it was agreed that it is important to clarify the role of a Presbytery in such matters which, although often being in the realm of employment can nonetheless have a much wider effect on a Congregation.

Recommendation: That a Kirk Session should inform Presbytery if an employment dispute is reaching a difficult stage which is affecting the wider life of the Congregation. The Presbytery would have no formal role in the employment dispute, though should be available to offer support (e.g. pastoral support and/or informal mediation) where that would be helpful. The Moderator's Advisory Committee should also inform a Presbytery if it receives a request to appoint assessors to a Kirk Session.

Recommendation: That the Linkage Commission take steps to require Presbytery Vacancy Commissions to ensure all employment matters in a Congregation are in order, or a process to bring them into order is at an advanced stage, before a new Minister is installed.

- (f) It was noted that in some situations individuals may seek to appeal through the courts of the Church, having firstly failed to get satisfaction in the context of employment.
- (g) Recommendation: That the longstanding position be affirmed, that if a Presbytery Commission has to be formed, to look at wider matters arising from an employment dispute, that the Commission's work should be put on hold until any related civil law matter had reached a conclusion.

Recommendation: That the Judicial Commission examine the law of the Church, and take steps to amend it if necessary, to ensure the pure employment issues should not be able to be appealed through the courts of the Church i.e. a second Church process should not run after the employment process had reached its conclusion in the pure employment aspects of any matter.

26. The Clerk of Assembly, on behalf of the General Council, has written to each of the bodies referred to in the recommendations, asking them to carry forward the agreed tasks.

MICHAEL A BARRY, Convener
THE CLERK, Secretary

DOCTRINE COMMITTEE

Being Human

27. The Doctrine Committee continued throughout the year to work on the "Being Human" project described in previous reports. The theological issues and practical implications arising from this topic are complex and intricate, and while some work has been completed, more time and effort is needed to undertake the necessary study and research before a full report could be presented.

28. There already exists a considerable amount of published material in this area that may be useful to us. In 2003, the Church of England's Doctrine Commission published a report entitled "Being Human" which is very helpful. However we recognise that the situation has changed considerably since the publication of that report. There is also a range of papers published by The Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics at www.klice.co.uk and the Cambridge Papers published at www.jubilee-centre.org which may be of interest to those seeking guidance in specific areas.

29. However, there is a need for current and contemporary issues to be addressed locally and more urgently. The Committee believes that one way to do this would be to offer a series of lectures/seminars in these areas, and that this could be undertaken by the Faculty of Union College in co-operation with the Church and Society Committee, possibly working under *The Church in the Public Square* banner. The material from these sessions could be recorded and made available on-line, and the written papers published electronically. The Committee believes that it is important not only to seek to provide a resource for the Church's Ministers and members, but to engage with professionals working in areas which are directly affected by current trends and changes.

30. The Principal has discussed this possibility with the Faculty, and there is a readiness on the part of the Faculty to facilitate this development, and strong agreement that this would be an effective way to proceed.

Topics to be covered might include:

- Secular and Biblical Views of Humanity
- Gender and Sexuality
- The Beginning and the End: Human Life at the Margins
- Human Rights

31. The Committee discussed a number of options as to the timing and frequency of these seminars, and in consultation with *The Church in the Public Square* steering group a programme of seminars is currently in process of being finalised for Monday evenings in September, October and November at Union College.

Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by Faith

32. The World Communion of Reformed Churches will be holding their Council meeting in Leipzig in Germany from 27th June to 7th July 2017 and PCI's delegation will be appointed at the 2016 General Assembly. As part of the Council's business in 2017 there is likely to be a proposal to associate the World Communion of Reformed Churches with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (JDDJ) which was signed by the Catholic and the Lutheran Churches in 1999. An accompanying 'signing statement' would be attached. Each member Church, including PCI, will shortly be asked to indicate whether they would be in favour of this step or opposed to it.

33. As a result, the General Council, using its powers to act when necessary on behalf of the General Assembly between meetings, passed the following resolution: "*That the view of the Doctrine Committee be sought regarding the WCRC's JDDJ proposal.*" The Doctrine Committee will seek to report on this issue by the early autumn.

Inter-Faith Services

34. The General Council also agreed to ask the General Assembly to request the Doctrine Committee to draw up guidelines for our leaders and members when they are invited to take part in worship with others of a non-Trinitarian faith and report to the 2017 General Assembly. If this request is approved by the General Assembly, this will be another issue for the Doctrine Committee to consider in the next twelve months.

35. In each of these important areas, the Doctrine Committee continues to discharge its task of responding to requests from the General Assembly for help and guidance.

J STAFFORD CARSON, Convener

GENERAL BUSINESS OF THE COUNCIL

The Clerk reports:

36. During the past session a number of pieces of ad-hoc work was carried out by the General Council.

THE POSITION OF MINISTERS WITH REGARD TO MEMBERSHIP OF A CONGREGATION

37. The General Council appointed small group to consider the following two questions for which clarity was needed:

- In the situation where a Minister is retired, can they be on the communion roll of the Congregation in which they worship i?
- Likewise can a Minister of a Congregation be on the communion roll?

38. During discussion in the group the following points were noted:

- Ministers will have been communicant members on a communion roll prior to ordination.
- There is no reference to ordination removing them from the roll. The Code is explicit about when membership of Presbytery, Kirk Session, etc. ceases. Nothing is said about a Minister's membership of a Congregation ceasing.
- Being a member of a higher court is no barrier to being on the roll of a Congregation, as is demonstrated by Presbytery representative Elders, and the Presbytery roll of Ministers is nowhere described as an alternative communion roll which would supersede a congregational roll.
- Therefore the Code clearly permits Ministers to be members on the communion roll of a Congregation.
- Retired Ministers may be members of a Congregation according to Code Par 31(3) and members of the Congregation are – if they are in full communion – on the communion roll according to Code Par 41(1).

39. The group therefore concluded that the Code therefore logically implies that it is permissible for Ministers to be communicant members of Congregations.

40. The General Council received this report and agreed that it be included in the Council's report to the General Assembly, with an appropriate resolution requesting that it be noted by the Assembly.

THE POSITION OF PRESBYTERY EDUCATION BOARDS

41. The General Council appointed a small group to consider the question of the wisdom of continuing to provide 19 different versions of holding trustees for Congregations within PCI (for those Congregations who wish to use such holding trustees rather than having three or more of their own members appointed to fulfil this responsibility) i.e. 19 separate Presbytery 'Education Boards'.

42. The group noted that more than one Presbytery Clerk has raised concerns about Presbytery Education Boards. The legislation under which the Education Boards function has been in existence for over 100 years. Over time, irregularities have crept in, for example, due to changes in Presbytery bounds,

and, it is clear, there is room for improvement regarding the practice of some Education Boards.

43. Following lengthy discussion, including the consideration of a range of ‘anomalies’, the group concluded that the system of Presbytery Education Boards is potentially no longer fit for purpose. The group also noted that in the case of some Congregations with named individual trustees, the number at times fell below three (as required by Code Par 241) without any immediate remedial action being taken. The group further noted that in some Congregations the deeds of properties were either not intact or on occasions were missing.

44. The General Council agreed, on the recommendation the group that the General Assembly be requested to instruct all Presbyteries to carry out a survey of all Congregations, using a provided pro-forma, to ascertain:

- Who are their Holding Trustees? (Presbytery Education Board or list of current named Trustees)
- Are there deeds for all congregational property?
- Where are the deeds held?

and report the outcome to the Clerk of the Assembly by 31st December 2016. A suitable resolution is appended.

45. The General Council appointed a ‘Holding Trustee Task Group’ to consider the results of the Presbytery returns and also to consider the wisdom, or otherwise, of having one consolidated ‘PCI Holding Trustee Body’ (rather than separate ‘Presbytery Education Boards’) for those Congregations who wish to avail of it. The membership of the Task Group is: Moderator and Clerk (Secretary), the Rev Robert Herron OBE (Convener), the Very Rev Dr Ivan Patterson, the Revs Joseph Andrews and Stuart Finlay; Mrs Avril Heenan, the General Assembly Solicitor, the Deputy Clerk and the Financial Secretary. The Task Group will report to the General Council, and through it to the 2017 General Assembly, with recommendations.

THE ISSUE OF GENDER REASSIGNMENT

46. This matter was highlighted during the work of the Republic of Ireland Marriage Task Group. The General Council agreed that this issue, along with the related transgender and transsexual issues, be referred to the Dialogue and Resources Task Group for its consideration, with the Task Group being given power to seek additional support on this issue and/or co-opt additional members.

MARKING THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION

47. During 2017 many significant events will be held to mark the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. On 2nd and 3rd February 2017 Union Theological College will be holding a special ‘Luther Conference’ and it is likely the Presbyterian Historical Society will be marking the anniversary in some way. The question has been asked if PCI wish to hold any other events to mark this significant anniversary, with particular reference to the central doctrine of justification? The actual ‘Reformation Day’ will be on Tuesday 31st October 2017.

48. The General Council agreed that the following Task Group be appointed to proactively consider the holding of an appropriate Reformation Anniversary Service on Tuesday 31st October 2017 (or other more suitable date) in the

Assembly Hall and report directly, with appropriate resolution(s), to the 2016 General Assembly: Moderator and Clerk, the Rev David Johnston (Convener), the Very Rev Principal Stafford Carson, the Revs Karen Campbell and Jonathan Boyd (with power to co-opt).

THE USE OF CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY BY OUTSIDE BODIES

49. A small group appointed met and considered if the General Assembly, or one of its Councils or Committees, need to issue clear guidance to Congregations with regard to a Policy for the use of the Halls etc by external people or groups. The small group concluded that this was an important matter and that rather than every Congregation getting its own legal and other advice, it would be beneficial if guidance could be given by the General Assembly, through its General Council, and a pro-forma policy (and related documents) drawn up. It was recognised that the related subjects of Entertainment Licences and Health and Safety should also be considered.

50. The General Council agreed that a Task Group be appointed to carry this forward this piece of work, as follows: Moderator and Clerk; Deputy Clerk (Convener); the Revs Adrian McLernon, Tom Conway, Mr John Hunter CB, Mr John Francey; the General Assembly's Solicitor and the Financial Secretary; plus power to co-opt one additional member. The Assembly is being requested to authorise the General Council to receive the Report of this Task Group and implement its decisions as necessary.

FOR INFORMATION

PRESBYTERIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IRELAND

The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland is not under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly. This report, which was submitted to the General Council on 16th March 2016, is for information only.

The Very Rev Dr John Lockington reports:

1. The Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland reports that 2015 has been an exceptionally busy year, both as regards its programme of activities and publications, and also regarding the operation of the Society itself.

2. As well as our regular lecture programme, we have experimented this year with one or two extra events of a less structured kind. This included a visit to the 174 Trust where we saw the splendid restoration of the former Duncairn Church, as well as learning about the ground-breaking work being undertaken by the Trust itself. We also had a most interesting tour of Belfast City Cemetery. We hope this year to include a symposium on the First World War, and a visit to Magee College. Our annual Field Trip took us to Counties Monaghan and Cavan, and this year we are planning a trip to Newtownabbey and South East Antrim. In addition to our *Bulletin*, this year saw the publication of three booklets, including a reprint of David Stewart's *The Scots in Ulster*, Leslie McKeague's lecture on the Irish Temperance pioneer, *Anne Jane Carlile*, and an extended work by Prof Bill Addley on *Dr Jack Weir*.

3. The important question of how we as a Society relate to the structures of the Presbyterian Church was covered by legislation at the General Assembly in 2015. As a result, this Report has been drawn up by an annual meeting of the Office-bearers and the six General Council appointees on the Society's Council. A representative has been appointed by the General Council to supervise its interest in our Society, and will present an annual report to the Council, which will form the basis of a report to the Assembly. This representative is currently the Very Rev Dr John Lockington.

4. The Society has been successful in obtaining Charity Status, but this has involved a great deal of administrative work, including the appointment of the full Council as Charity Trustees. This in turn will necessitate some changes in our Constitution. One such change will be before our Annual General Meeting in March, and some further changes, together with some more general tidying up of the Constitution will be proposed at a later date.

5. In recent times a survey financed by the Ministerial Advisory Group Ulster Scots Academy (MAGUS) has made us aware that the Strong Room in Assembly Buildings has become unsuitable for the storage of documents.

6. Not only was it overcrowded, but cold, damp and mildew combined to produce conditions which were to the detriment of items stored there. The society is glad to have been able to offer to take care of Synod, Presbytery and Congregational archive material heretofore stored in Assembly Buildings. Since 2010 the Society has rented premises on the ground floor of 26 College Green from Union Theological College. This has proved inadequate for our needs, including housing properly all the material transferred from Assembly Buildings, and has made it impossible for us to expand our work, or to display even a selection of the many historical artefacts committed to our care. The Society has now been presented with an opportunity to move into the rest of No. 26. This move, which is important both to Union College and ourselves, is however dependent on a substantial increase to our grant from the Finance Panel. We are presently seeking to put our case to the Panel, and hope to have this matter agreed as soon as ever possible.

7. It looks as if the MAGUS grants that made possible very useful work for the Society are now coming to an end. In the last year this enabled us to redesign the Society's website. Some problems remain with this, but we have been able to put in place a front end for the digitised images of Presbyterian magazines, to make available all past issues of *The Bulletin* over five years old and the Presbyterian Roll of Honour, as well as a facility to order publications on-line. MAGUS has also financed a project in which we have been involved by which the Ulster Historical Foundation are about to produce in Folder/Poster format a historical map of Presbyterianism in the historic nine Ulster Counties.

8. As a result of the survey of archives already carried out under MAGUS support, we have been able to transfer almost all the Presbytery and Synod records already referred to, and a great many Congregations have now transferred their historic records to our custody. We have also been approached about the possible display of some historic materials in the reception area of Assembly Buildings, and this possibility is being explored with the appropriate Task Group.

9. The Society is also grateful to individuals and Congregations who entrust historic items to the care of the Society. This year we received historical papers from the family of the late Rev Dr WD Bailie, and from the estate of the

Very Rev Dr Jack Weir, as well as a framed photograph of the Rev Dr Charles Davey.

10. It was a particular pleasure to be associated with the excellent celebrations in October that marked the 150th Birthday of the Magee Campus of Ulster University, and to hear warm tribute paid to the Presbyterian Church for our pioneering role in University education in the North-West, and to the interest of our Society in marking this important anniversary.

11. The Society continues to share information with other organisations, agencies, and blogs which will help to raise our profile, and publicise our publications.

12. In the limited time available at Council meetings we have begun a conversation about the future direction of our Society, and how best to publicise its work. We are planning to hold a Day Conference of Council in a few months time to consider these important matters. Among other matters we are hoping to produce a short DVD about the work of the Society for our website, and for wider publicity purposes.

13. We are delighted that a body known as Heritage Experience Limited has recently produced a DVD of the hugely successful TV series about our Church called *An Independent People*, and we will be helping to publicise it among our members.

14. The Society is most grateful to all those who do voluntary work on its behalf, those who deliver lectures and write booklets, articles and reviews, and most of all to our Librarian and Archivist, Valerie Adams, whose work is quite outstanding.

15. We would appeal again for new members, and for the steady support of all our members in attending lectures and events, buying our publications, and introducing our Society to others. We would encourage every Presbytery to appoint an Historical Agent, and to promote our events and publications whenever and however they can. We continue to be grateful to the few Congregations who directly support our work. If every Congregation were to make us an annual donation, however small, it would transform our finances, and enable much more useful work to be done.

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Nominations Committee met on 16th November 2015 and 18th April 2016.

2. During the year, in accordance with the resolution passed by the General Assembly last year (Minutes page 62, Resolution 20), the changes in Direct Presbytery Nominees by Presbyteries have been agreed and implemented immediately.

3. Only the General Assembly may make other appointments to Councils and Committees. There have been several resignations during the year and others are deemed to have retired due to failure to attend under Code Par 270(4). Suggestions for replacements have been made by Council Conveners and Secretaries. These have been taken into consideration and individuals approached to fill the vacancies. The Committee intends to meet again before the General

Assembly so that it can agree on names to nominate. The full membership of all Councils, Commissions and Committees will be tabled at the Assembly in the form of a booklet. Those whose names are underlined will be new appointments since the last General Assembly.

4. The Committee notes that one Council reports that an attempt to involve younger members has almost totally failed. To quote: “Despite their having put their names in the original pool, there has been marked non-attendance at meetings by these folks. This is a conundrum we haven’t been able to crack... we have chosen not to try to re-populate the Committees from that demographic this time around for fear of repeated failure which leaves Committee attendance and capacity significantly diminished.” The Committee is also aware of the difficulty of striking an appropriate gender balance in some Councils and Committees. Mostly this is due to the balance of the names coming as Direct Presbytery Nominees which reflects the balance of the various Presbyteries. The Committee does, however, where it is in its own gift, seek to address any imbalance in the nominations it makes.

5. The Structures Review document of 2014 includes this: “The Nominations Committee would be allowed to consider other names, if necessary, to provide a balanced Council or Committee, or to provide relevant expertise.” The Committee has given some thought to how it may do this more effectively and will make some changes to the information it requests from Conveners and Secretaries concerning names they wish to put forward for membership, and to how that information is processed.

6. During the year the Committee considered how it might change the system for refreshing the ‘pool’ of Presbytery, PW and SPUD nominations next time round and will discuss that further in the autumn.

7. One Council Convenership falls vacant at this Assembly, that of the Council for Training in Ministry. The Committee advertised the post, a panel interviewed and recommended the appointment of the Rev NJ McCullough in the place of the Rev JNI McNeely. Mr McCullough is being nominated to the Assembly.

The Rev Trevor Gribben writes:

8. Four Committee Convenerships fall vacant. One of those is that of the Nominations Committee itself. Thanks are due to the Rev Tony Davidson for the invaluable work he has done since the inception of the Committee, and in particular in overseeing the process of the initial populating of the Councils and Committees. He is being nominated for membership of the Judicial Commission and for that reason has offered his resignation. An advertisement has been placed for this post.

9. The other vacant Committee Convenerships are:
- Leadership Development Committee under the Council for Global Mission (succeeding Miss M Kane);
 - Strategy for Mission Committee under the Council for Mission in Ireland (a new Committee which is subject to being established by the Assembly);
 - Global Mission Involvement Committee under the Council for Congregational Life and Witness (succeeding the Rev CI Dickson).

These also have been advertised: in the Presbyterian Herald, on the PCI website, and by notification to all active Ministers. However, due to time constraints, the Convenership of the Global Mission Involvement Committee could not be advertised in the Herald.

10. Interview Panels have been appointed and it is intended that the Committee will meet to receive recommendations and then bring nominations to the Assembly in a supplementary report.

11. Resolutions for the vacancies for the various Convenerships are appended, along with one authorising the full membership listed in the booklet.

TONY DAVIDSON, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

Resolutions - General Assembly Business Committee (Initial Section – 9.30am Tuesday morning):

1. That the Draft Order of Business for the 2016 General Assembly be approved.
2. That the 'Guide to Assembly Procedure' (yellow pages) be approved, including the amended speaking times, with the appropriate General Assembly Standing Orders suspended.
3. That a grant of £20,000 be made from the Incidental Fund to the Arrangements Panel of the General Assembly Business Committee.
4. That the Initial Report of the General Assembly Business Committee be received.

Resolutions - General Council (Section 1 – 9.45am Tuesday morning):

5. That the General Assembly encourage all Congregations to pray for, and send delegates to, 'Everyday Disciples', the Residential General Assembly being held at the Ulster University, Coleraine from Monday 21st-Thursday 24th August, 2017.
6. That the portion of the report on engagement between Presbytery and Congregations be sent down to Presbyteries for comment and report back to the Convener of the Engagement and Consultation Task Group by 31st December 2016.
7. That as part of the Review of Consultations process, the General Assembly approve a pilot of the new scheme be run in two Presbyteries in 2017.
8. That Section 1 of the Report of the General Council (with the exception of the General Assembly Business Committee) be received.

Resolutions - General Council (Section 2 – 3.30pm Wednesday afternoon):

9. That the Republic of Ireland Marriage Task Group be thanked and discharged.
10. That Section 2 of the Report of the General Council be received.

Resolutions - General Council (Section 3 – 4.30pm Wednesday afternoon):

11. That Option ____ (insert 1 or 2) in the report of the Charities Legislation Task Group, Appendix 1 - 'Retired Ministers and Membership of Presbytery', be adopted.

12. That the recommendations in the report of the Charities Legislation Task Group, Appendix 2 - 'The Relationship between Kirk Session and Congregational Committee', be adopted.

13. That the recommendations in the report of the Charities Legislation Task Group, Appendix 3 - 'Elders unable or unwilling to register as Charity Trustees', be adopted.

14. That the General Assembly grant permission for the transfer of Synod of Ulster records to the care of Presbyterian Historical Society of Ireland.

15. That Section 3 of the Report of the General Council be received.

Resolutions - General Council (Section 4 – 11.15am Thursday morning):

16. That approval be given to the pre-65 retirements of the Revs D N Gray (Portaferry), Ian McKee (Aughnacloy and Ballymagrane), George F McKeown (Rathcoole) and Dr Roger Purce (Groomsport), under the provisions of Par 223 of the Code.

17. That the 2016 budgeted expenditure of the Incidental Fund (as set out in Support Services Appendix 2) be approved.

18. That the Assessment rates for 2016 be as set out in the report and that the rate of assessment for the Pension Fund be set at 24.0% of stipend paid in the year.

19. That the General Assembly adopt Option 2 in the report of the Commercial Use of Assembly Buildings Task Group ('The Hybrid or Partial Scheme').

20. That the United Appeal for 2017 be as set out on the Schedules of the report of the United Appeal Committee.

21. That the General Assembly encourage all Congregations to make use of the available United Appeal for Mission promotional materials and to mark the first Sunday in March (or other suitable Sunday) as United Appeal for Mission Sunday.

22. That Section 4 of the Report of the General Council be received.

Resolutions - General Council (Section 5 – 4.45pm Thursday afternoon):

23. That the General Assembly note the worthwhile meeting which has taken place between representatives of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Church of Scotland; that the natural ongoing contacts and collaborations between Councils, Conveners and staff be encouraged and developed where appropriate; and that representatives of both denomination's Church Relations Committees be encouraged to meet in the autumn of 2016 to discuss ongoing relationships.

24. That the General Assembly note the worthwhile meeting which has taken place between representatives of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Free Church of Scotland and welcome a natural development of a relationship with the Free Church of Scotland through areas of mutual interest in the Councils of the respective Assemblies.

25. That the Clerk, the Revs John Brackenridge and Cheryl Meban be appointed to represent the Presbyterian Church in Ireland at the 26th General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches in Leipzig, Germany, from 29th June to 7th July 2017, with the General Council authorised to appoint alternates if necessary; and that a gift of £2,000 be made to a Partner Church, identified through the Council for Global Mission, to assist with their attendance at the Council.

26. That the General Assembly note the report regarding the position of Ministers with regard to membership of a Congregation.

27. That the General Assembly instruct all Presbyteries to carry out a survey of all Congregations, using a provided pro-forma, to ascertain:

Who are their Holding Trustees? (Presbytery Education Board or list of current named Trustees)

Are there deeds for all congregational property?

Where are the deeds held?

and report the outcome to the Convener of the Holding Trustees Task Group by 31st December 2016.

28. That the General Council be authorised to receive the report of the Congregational Property Letting Task Group on behalf of the Assembly, with power to implement its recommendations.

Resolutions – Nominations Committee (Friday morning):

29. That the resignation of the Rev JNI McNeely as Convener of the Council for Training in Ministry be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and that the Rev NJ McCullough be appointed in his place.

30. That the resignation of the Rev AD Davidson as Convener of the Nominations Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and that _____ be appointed in his place.

31. That the resignation of Miss M Kane as Convener of the Leadership Development Committee be accepted, that she be thanked for her services, and that _____ be appointed in his place.

32. That _____ be appointed as Convener of the Strategy for Mission Committee.

33. That the resignation of the Rev CI Dickson as Convener of the Global Mission Involvement Committee be accepted, that he be thanked for his services, and that _____ be appointed in his place.

34. That the nominations to the General Assembly Commissions, Councils and Committees (as tabled by the Nominations Committee) be approved.

35. That the report of the Nominations Committee be received.

Resolutions - General Assembly Business Committee (Second Section – 11.45am Friday morning)

36. That for all subsequent General Assemblies, the General Council be given authority to bring together the non-controversial resolutions of all General Assembly Councils into one consolidated resolution, having taken account of the views of those Councils.

37. That for all subsequent General Assemblies, if a written request from ten or more members of Assembly is lodged with the Clerk on or before the day

prior to that scheduled for debate on the one consolidated resolution, then the item(s) specified in the written request will be removed from the consolidated resolution and considered as separate resolution(s).

38. That the General Assembly agree in principle that Option _____ (insert 1(a) or 1(b) or 2(a) or 2(b) or 3) should be adopted for the timing of stated General Assembly meetings.

39. That Second Report of the General Assembly Business Committee be received.

OVERTURES TRANSMITTED TO THE 2016 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OVERTURE RELATING TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

PRIORITIES COMMITTEE

(Tuesday Morning – after Section 1 of General Council Report)

Anent Par 272(6)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 272(6)(c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (c) draw up priorities for the work of the General Assembly:
 - in discussion with the Presbyteries and other Councils, recommend priorities to the General Assembly.
 - through a suitable Council Reference Panel, independent of other Councils and reporting directly to the General Council;
 - report whether each Council is focussed on the remit allocated to it by the General Assembly;
 - report that the work of the Councils takes cognizance of the priorities agreed by the General Assembly;
 - approve, on behalf of the General Council, all new projects and/or staffing posts, following the scheme agreed from time to time by the General Council;
 - report that the United Appeal allocations are consistent with the remit of Councils and reflective of priorities agreed by the General Assembly.

OVERTURES RELATING TO THE COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

(Wednesday Morning – after Council for Training in Ministry Report)

GROUP 1: NEW ACADEMIC STAFFING STRUCTURE

Anent Par 72(e), 74, 132(5), 134(3), 201(1), 202(7) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 72(e), 74, 132(5), 134(3), 201(1), 202(7) of the Code the word “deaconesses” be deleted and the words “deaconesses, senior lecturers” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 309(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 309(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

309. (1) The Assembly's normal direction and control of its Union Theological College shall be exercised in general through its Council for Training in Ministry and in particular through a Management Committee as prescribed in the governing statute and appointed from time to time by the General Assembly. *(See Par 275(2))*

Anent Par 309(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 309(3) of the Code, the word "or lecturer" be deleted.

Anent Par 309(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 309(3) of the Code, the words "the College" be deleted and the words "Union Theological College" be substituted in their place.

Anent Par 309(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 309(4) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(4) Each senior lecturer shall be appointed by the Council for Training in Ministry. If he is a minister or licentiate of the Church he shall be called by the Council and, on presentation of his credentials of ministerial standing, be ordained and installed or installed by the Presbytery with which his congregational connection lies. Otherwise, he shall be commissioned and inducted or inducted by the Presbytery with which his congregational connection lies. In either case such service shall be held in Union Theological College with the Convener of the Council and the Principal also taking part.

Anent Par 309(5) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 309(5) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(5) Each lecturer (as distinct from senior lecturer) shall be appointed by the Council for Training in Ministry. If he is a minister or licentiate of the Church he shall be called by the Council and, on presentation of his credentials of ministerial standing, be ordained and inducted or inducted by the Presbytery with which his congregational connection lies, with the Convener of the Council and the Principal of Union Theological College also taking part. Otherwise, he shall be appointed by the Council only after it is satisfied that he evidences an understanding of, and commitment to, working within the Christian ethos and doctrinal framework of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as outlined in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

(6) Part-time or temporary lecturers shall be appointed by the College Management Committee as occasion may require. Should a vacancy in a chair or senior lectureship occur during the College session, the Committee, on the recommendation of the Faculty, shall make provision for discharge of the duties.

(7) A professor who retires with the leave of the General Assembly shall be known as Professor Emeritus and have the same status as a minister retired from active duty in a congregation.

(8) A senior lecturer or lecturer who is a minister and who retires with the leave of the General Assembly shall be known as Senior Lecturer or Lecturer Emeritus and have the same status as a minister retired from active duty in a congregation.

(9) A senior lecturer who is not a minister and who retires with the leave of the Council for Training in Ministry shall be known as Senior Lecturer Emeritus.

GROUP 2: TO UPDATE THE CODE IN LINE WITH PREVIOUS DECISIONS OF ASSEMBLY

Anent Pars 214(1),(2)&(7), 217(8)(a) and 275(1)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 214(1),(2)&(7), 217(8)(a) and 275(1)(a) of the Code, the words “Director of Ministerial Studies” be deleted and the words “Dean of Ministerial Studies and Development” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 214(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 214(3) of the Code, the word “required” be deleted and the words “required, prior to which the Kirk Session of the applicant’s congregation will complete a questionnaire” substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 214(4),(5), 215(1),(4),(6)&(7), 216, 217 and 218 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 214(4),(5), 215(1),(6),(7), 216, 217 and 218 of the Code, the words “Board of Christian Training” be deleted and the words “Council for Training in Ministry” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 214 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 214 of the Code new paragraphs (2)&(3) be inserted as follows:

(2) Applications will only be accepted from candidates who will not yet have attained the age of 55 years on the projected date of their eligibility for a call.

(3) Applicants should normally have successfully completed the Accredited Preachers Course by the time of interview by the Council for Training in Ministry, and subsequent paragraphs renumbered.

Anent Par 215(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 215(1) of the Code, the reference “Par 282(2)(a)” be deleted and the reference “Par 275(3)(a)” be substituted in its place.

Anent Pars 215(4), 217(6)(b) and (8)(a),(b)&(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 215(4), 217(6)(b) and (8)(a),(b)&(d) of the Code, the word “Board” be deleted and the word “Council” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 215 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 215 of the Code, paragraph 4 be deleted and new paragraphs (4),(5)&(6) inserted in its place(with current paragraphs (5)-(7) renumbered) as follows:

(4) Where an application is declined by a Presbytery the applicant may lodge an appeal with the Clerk of the General Assembly within ten days.

(5) Where intimation is given that a Presbytery nomination has not been sustained by the Council for Training in Ministry, the Presbytery concerned may request a review of the decision by the Council.

(6) Where intimation is given that the review has upheld the original decision not to nominate, the Presbytery may lodge an appeal with the Clerk of the General Assembly within 28 days.

Anent Par 216(2)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 216(2)(a) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(2) (a) To interview each candidate and confer with him/her on his/her motives for seeking the office of the ministry, such interview to take place prior to the March/April meeting of the Council in order to provide for review of the Council’s decision, if requested by Presbytery, in time for the following General Assembly.

Anent Par 216(6) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 216(6) of the Code, the word “Board” be deleted and the words “Council; and where appropriate, and not withstanding a Presbytery’s right to terminate, to recommend to the General Assembly termination of candidature” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 216(7) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 216(7) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(7) To co-operate with the Presbyteries in supervising the life, conduct and work of all students, and where any of the life, work or conduct of a student is considered unsatisfactory by Presbytery, to provide four assessors to deal with the matter by way of admonishment, censure, suspension or termination of candidature.

Anent Par 217(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 217(2) of the Code, the words “but under 40” be deleted.

Anent Pars 217(8)(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 217(8)(d) of the Code, the word “Committee” be deleted and the word “Panel” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 217(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 217(3) of the Code be deleted and subsequent sub-paragraphs renumbered.

Anent Par 218(2)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 218(2)(b) of the Code, the words “Academic Board” be deleted and the word “Faculty” substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 218(2)&(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 218(2)&(3) of the Code, the words “Assignment Committee” be deleted and the words “Assignments Panel” substituted in their place.

GROUP 3: TERMINATION OF LICENTIATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**Anent Par 219A of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 219A of the Code, the words “Assignment Committee” be deleted and the words “Assignments Panel” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 219A(iii) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 219A(iii) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(iii) An appointment as a licentiate assistant may be terminated by agreement; or by the Council for Training in Ministry; or by two months’ notice given by the licentiate assistant, or the Minister, or the Kirk Session, subject to approval of the Assignments Panel.

Anent Par 219A of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 219A of the Code, a new paragraph (iv) be added as follows:

(iv) Where an appointment as a licentiate assistant has been terminated, the Council for Training in Ministry shall either make a new appointment or request that the appropriate Presbytery bring a recommendation to the General Assembly for the withdrawal of licence.

GROUP 4: DEACONESSES

Anent Par 303(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 303(3) of the Code, the words “Board of Mission in Ireland” be deleted and the words “Council for Mission in Ireland” substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 303(4)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 303(4)(c) of the Code, the words “Board of Mission in Ireland” be deleted and the words “Council for Training in Ministry” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 303(4)(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 304(4)(d) of the Code, the words “as approved by the Board in consultation with the Board of Christian Training” be deleted and the words “and probationary period, as approved by the Council for Training in Ministry” substituted in their place:

Anent Par 304 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 304 of the Code be deleted and the following be substituted in its place:

304. (1) The Council for Mission in Ireland shall determine the number of deaconesses required to be trained in any given period.

(2) The procedures for enquiry and application to be considered as a candidate for the office of deaconess shall be as determined jointly by the Council for Mission in Ireland, the Council for Training in Ministry, and Presbyterian Women.

(3) Following commendation by the Kirk Session and Presbytery with which she is connected, the Council for Training in Ministry may, after interview, accept an applicant as a candidate for the office.

(4) Presbyterian Women together with the Council for Mission in Ireland shall be responsible for the training fees and allowances for candidates, upon such scale and conditions as the Council shall determine.

OVERTURE RELATING TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND MARRIAGE TASK GROUP

(Wednesday Afternoon - after Section 2 of General Council Report)

Anent Par 85 of the Code

It is hereby Overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 85 of the Code the following sub-paragraph be added as sub paragraph (2) and the subsequent sub-paragraphs renumbered:

(2) Marriage under the form and discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland shall include the following statement: “Since the beginning of creation God, in his gracious purpose, provided marriage as the accepted way in which a man and a woman may come together as husband and wife. This is the only basis on which marriage can take place within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.”

OVERTURES RELATING TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

CHARITIES LEGISLATION TASK GROUP

(Wednesday Afternoon - after Section 3 of General Council Report)

GROUP 1: DEFINITION

Anent Par 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 137 of the Code, after the words ““bounds” means in relation to a Presbytery or congregation, the bounds assigned by the Assembly to that Presbytery or congregation as the case may be;” the following be inserted:

“charity trustees” means in relation to the Assembly, a Presbytery, or a Congregation those persons who, within the terms of the relevant legislation from time to time in force in, respectively, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and in so far as such legislation may apply to such body, are the charity trustees for that body;

GROUP 2: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KIRK SESSION AND CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

Anent Par 16(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that to Par 16(3) of the Code the following sentence be added at the end: “This shall include the oversight of the care of those in need and the management of the temporal affairs of the congregation, with the direct responsibility for these two matters delegated to the the Congregational Committee.”

Anent Par 16(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 16(4) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(4) Members of the Congregational Committee are appointed to fulfil the biblical role of deacons by discharging the duties delegated to them of caring for those in need and managing the temporal affairs of the congregation.

Anent Par 47(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 47(1) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(4) The duties of the Congregational Committee, delegated to it by Kirk Session, shall be to care for those in need and to manage the temporal affairs of the congregation, and be accountable to Kirk Session.

Anent Par 51(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 51(1) be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

51.(1) Any member of the Congregational Committee or any member of the congregation who is dissatisfied with any decision of the Congregational Committee may, after notice in writing to the Congregational Committee, ask the Kirk Session to review that decision. Any member of the Congregational Committee or any member of the congregation dissatisfied with the decision of the Kirk Session following such review may after notice in writing to the Kirk Session petition the Presbytery against that decision.

Anent Par 52 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 52 be deleted.

Anent Par 257(2)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 257(2)(a) of the Code, after the words “submitted to” the words “the Kirk Session for approval and then to” be inserted.

GROUP 3: ELDERS UNABLE OR UNWILLING TO REGISTER AS CHARITY TRUSTEES

Anent Par 180(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 180(1) of the Code, the first use of the word “office” be deleted and the words “office, including their responsibility to act as a charity trustee of the congregation” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 180(3)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 180(3) of the Code, after the words “these matters,” the words “and having confirmed that a Charity Trustee Declaration has been completed,” be inserted.

Anent Par 33

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 33 of the Code, a new sub-paragraph (2) be added as follows (and subsequent paragraphs renumbered):

(2) In the case where a ruling elder fails to complete a Charity Trustee declaration by a date set by Presbytery, that elder shall be deemed to have resigned from the duties of eldership in their congregation, unless otherwise resolved by Presbytery in exceptional circumstances.

Anent Par 211(4)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 211(4) of the Code, the word “congregation” be deleted and the words “congregation, that (where appropriate) a Charity Trustee Declaration has been completed,” substituted in its place.

GROUP 4: RETIRED MINISTERS**OVERTURES NECESSARY IF OPTION 1 RELATING TO RETIRED MINISTERS IS CHOSEN****Anent Pars 61 and 97 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 61 and 97 of the Code, the words “consent of the Assembly” be deleted and the words “consent of the Assembly, apart from those designated Minister Emeritus (Released)” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 61 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 61 of the Code the following sub-paragraph be inserted after sub-paragraph (h):

- (i) any ruling elder holding office as Clerk;
- and the subsequent sub-paragraph renumbered (j).

Anent Par 62 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 62 of the Code, the words “ministers without charge under their care” be deleted and the words “those under their care designated Minister Emeritus (Released) or Minister without Charge” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 72 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 72 of the Code the following sub-paragraphs be inserted after paragraph (g):

(h) subject to Rules (*See Pars. 220-223, 225 and 226*), accept the retirement of a minister, whom it shall designate as Minister Emeritus;

(i) annually review the position of each Minister Emeritus and following each review may release a retired minister from the responsibilities of full membership of Presbytery (and thereby also of the General Assembly), whom it shall then designate as Minister Emeritus (Released). A decision to so release is appropriate when there is:

- (i) a request from the Minister Emeritus; or
- (ii) a lack of capacity to fulfil the responsibilities of membership of Presbytery; or
- (iii) a failure to attend Presbytery for a period of twelve months without appropriate reason.

and the subsequent sub-paragraphs renumbered.

Anent Par 81(6) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 81(6) of the Code, the words “minister emeritus” be deleted and the words “Minister Emeritus or Minister Emeritus (Released)” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 97(h) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 97(h) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(h) ministers or ruling elders who are ex-officio members of the General Assembly in virtue of their appointment as:-

(i) Conveners and Secretaries of each of the Assembly’s Standing Commissions, Councils and Committees;

(ii) Clerks of Presbytery;

(iii) Two of the Trustees of the General Assembly, being ruling elders, appointed annually by the Trustees;

Anent Par 97(j) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 97(j) of the Code, the word “direct” be deleted.

Anent Par 98 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 98 of the Code, the words “ministers without charge under the care of Presbyteries” be deleted and the words “those under the care of Presbyteries designated Minister Emeritus (Released) or Minister without Charge” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 128(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 128(1)(b) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(b) One person (being a minister or ruling elder) nominated by each Presbytery.

Anent Par 225(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 225(2) of the Code, the words “minister emeritus” be deleted and the words “Minister Emeritus or Minister Emeritus (Released)” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 261(1)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 261(1)(b) of the Code, after the word “retired”, the words “(indicating whether Minister Emeritus or Minister Emeritus (Released))” be inserted.

Anent Par 261(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 261(2) of the Code, after the words “retired ministers”, the words “(indicating whether Minister Emeritus or Minister Emeritus (Released))” be inserted.

Anent Par 263(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 263(1) of the Code, after the word “retirements”, the words “(indicating changes of designation from Minister Emeritus to Minister Emeritus (Released))” be inserted.

OVERTURES NECESSARY IF REVISED OPTION 2 IS CHOSEN (retired ministers no longer full voting members of Presbytery unless required by Presbytery or are ex officio members of Assembly)

Anent Par 61 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 61 of the Code the following paragraph be inserted after paragraph (h):

- (i) any minister or ruling elder holding office as Clerk; and the subsequent paragraph renumbered.

Anent Par 61(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 61(a) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (a) the ministers in active duty of the congregations assigned to it by the Assembly;

Anent Par 61(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 61(c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (c) chaplains to the Forces, ordained ministers and elders serving under the Council for Global Mission and other ministers serving under any Assembly Council in special work outside Ireland who have been installed or inducted to their charge by Presbytery.

Anent Par 61(e) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 61(e) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (e) such retired ministers as the Presbytery requires for membership of a Presbytery Commission, for the duration of that appointment.

Anent Par 61(h) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 61(h) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place.

- (h) ministers or ruling elders under its jurisdiction who are ex-officio members of Assembly;

Anent Pars 62 and 98 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 62 and 98 of the Code, after the word “invite”, the words “retired ministers and” be inserted.

Anent Par 97(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 97(a) of the code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (a) the ministers in active duty of the congregations connected with it.

Anent Par 97(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 97(c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (c) chaplains to the Forces, ordained ministers and elders serving under the Council for Global Mission and other ministers serving under any Assembly Council in special work overseas.

Anent Par 97(h) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 97(h) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (h) ministers or ruling elders who are ex-officio members of the General Assembly in virtue of their appointment as:-
 - (i) Conveners and Secretaries of each of the Assembly's Standing Commissions, Councils and Committees;
 - (ii) Clerks of Presbytery;
 - (iii) Two of the Trustees of the General Assembly, being ruling elders, appointed annually by the Trustees;

Anent Par 97(j) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 97(j) of the Code, the words "Such elders as are direct nominees" be deleted and the words "Such retired ministers and ruling elders as are nominees" substituted in their place.

Anent Par 97(e) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 97(e) of the Code be deleted and subsequent paragraphs renumbered.

Anent Par 128(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that Par 128(1)(b) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

- (b) One person (being a minister or ruling elder) nominated by each Presbytery.

Anent Par 223 of the Code

It is hereby overtured that in Par 223 of the Code a new paragraph be added:

- (6) A minister who has retired with the proper consents is deemed to be Minister Emeritus of the congregation(s) or special work from which he has retired.

Anent Par 226(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured that in Par 226(a) of the Code the words "Minister-Emeritus of the congregation; and shall in virtue of such enrolment be a member

of the superior courts of the Church.” be deleted and the words “Minister Emeritus of the congregation.” substituted in their place.

GROUP 5: CHARITIES LEGISLATION OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS

Anent Par 105 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 105 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

105. The Assembly and only the Assembly -

- (a) may enact, alter or abrogate a law of the Church or prescribe rules;
- (b) may amend, rescind or reverse its own sentences, decisions or resolutions;
- (c) may decide the Church’s general policy on co-operation or joint action with other Churches and authorise congregations, Presbyteries, councils or committees of the Church to participate in joint projects in accordance with such Scheme or on such terms as the Assembly may from time to time determine (See Par 60).
- (d) shall delegate to the General Council such powers and decisions as are required in order for the Assembly to comply with the requirements of charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate.

Anent Par 70 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that following Par 70(c) of the Code a new paragraph be added:

- (d) act as the charity trustees and be responsible for its compliance with the requirements of charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate.

Anent Par 35 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that following Par 35(d) of the Code a new paragraph be added:

- (e) act as the charity trustees and be responsible for the congregation’s compliance with the requirements of charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate;
- (f) ensure that the Congregational Committee complies with the decisions of Kirk Session;
- (g) after considering the grounds for disqualification for being a charity trustee under charities legislation in Northern Ireland and/or the Republic of Ireland as appropriate, refer to Presbytery the consideration of removal from office in the congregation of a ruling elder.

Anent Par 47(1) & (2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 47(1) & (2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in their place:

- (1) **The duties of the Congregational Committee, delegated by the Kirk Session.** shall be to take care of the poor and administer the temporal affairs of the congregation, and be accountable to the Kirk Session.

(2) Those duties shall include -

(a) administering all funds belonging to the congregation, or held by trustees for its use and apply these funds for the purposes for which they have been created or contributed;

(b) administering all other property of the congregation, take care to maintain and insure it and take steps to gather funds needed for these purposes;

(c) having charge of the letting or allocating of seating accommodation in the Church building;

(d) regulating conditions under which the Church premises, halls or rooms are used, subject to decisions of the Session;

(e) promoting the interests of the Central Funds and Missions of the Church;

(f) be responsible for appointing or dismissing the sexton;

(g) managing the graveyard;

(h) having power to borrow against any congregational property, with any security required being given by the Congregational Trustees on the instruction of the Congregational Committee and to authorise up to six members of the Congregational Committee to sign any associated documents required by the lender; and

(i) carrying out such other functions as may be prescribed.

OVERTURES RELATING TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

SUPPORT SERVICES COMMITTEE

(Thursday Morning after Section 4 of General Council Report)

GROUP 1: RELATED TO ‘AUDIT’

Anent Pars 46(h), 240(1) and 272(11)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 46(h), 240(1) and 272(11)(b) of the Code, the words “independent examiners or” be inserted before the word “auditors”.

Anent Par 46(h) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 46(h) of the Code, the words “in accordance with the requirements of charity law” be inserted after the word “accounts”.

Anent Par 59(2)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 59(2)(a) of the Code, the words “independent examination or” be inserted before the word “audit”.

Anent Pars 76(e), 240(4), 258(b) and 310(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 76(e), 240(4), 258(b) and 310(3) of the Code, the words “independently examined or” be inserted before the word “audited”.

Anent Par 137 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 137 of the Code the words ““audit” and “auditors”, when used in relation to a congregation, mean respectively the independent inspection of the accounts and financial statements, and the persons appointed to carry out such an inspection;” be deleted and the following inserted after the words “educational purposes;”:

““independent examination” or “audit” and “independent examiners” or “auditors”, when used in relation to a congregation, mean respectively the independent inspection of the accounts and financial statements, and the persons appointed to carry out such an inspection;”

Anent Par 240(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 240(1) of the Code, the words “examined or” be inserted before the word “audited” and the words “independent examiners or” be inserted before the word “auditees”.

GROUP 2: RELATED TO RMF & WMF**Anent Par 321(1) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 321(1) of the Code, the words “of one-half of the current Basic Ministerial Income or at such other percentage which may be determined by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the General Council, directly or through its appropriate Committee.” [sic] be deleted and the words “agreed from time to time by the General Council, on the recommendation of its appropriate Committee.” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 326(1)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 326(1)(b) of the Code, the words “of 27.5% of the current Basic Ministerial Income” be deleted and the words “agreed from time to time by the General Council, on the recommendation of its appropriate Committee” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 326(1)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 326(1)(c) of the Code, the words “27.5% of the Basic Ministerial Income” be deleted and the words “the rate agreed from time to time by the General Council, on the recommendation of its appropriate Committee.” substituted in their place.

OVERTURES RELATING TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

GENERAL BUSINESS

(Thursday Afternoon - after Section 5 of General Council Report)

A. CHANGES CONSEQUENT ON PREVIOUS GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECISIONS

GROUP 1: Board becomes COUNCIL

Anent Pars 182(1)&(2), 200(3)&(4), 201(1), 219(3)(b)(ii), 220(2)(a), 223(4), 228(2) 247(3), 300(1)(a)-(d),(2),(3)&(6), 302(2)(d)&(e), (3)(b)&(4)(b)&(c), 306(2), 316(2) and 321(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 182(1)&(2), 200(3)&(4), 201(1), 219(3)(b)(ii), 220(2)(a), 223(4), 228(2), 247(3), 300(1)(a)-(d),(2),(3)&(6), 302(2)(d)&(e),(3)(b),&(4)(b)&(c), 306(2), 316(2) and 321(3) of the Code, the word "Board" be deleted and the word "Council" substituted in its place.

Anent Pars 146, 148(1) and 152(2)(d) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 146, 148(1) and 152(2)(d) of the Code, the word "board" be deleted and the word "council" substituted in its place.

Anent Pars 200(3), 202(3), 238(4), 302(3)(c), 306(3), 308(5)(ii) and 308(8) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 200(3), 202(3), 238(4), 302(3)(c), 306(3), 308(5)(ii) and 308(8) of the Code, the word "Boards" be deleted and the word "Councils" substituted in its place.

GROUP 2: DELETE REFERENCE TO SYNOD

Anent Par 241(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 241(a) of the Code, the words "or Synod" be deleted.

GROUP 3: GENERAL COUNCIL SPECIFIC

Anent Par 200(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 200(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(2) Calls to work under the Assembly may be made directly by the Assembly, or remitted to their General Council to act on the same basis on behalf of the Assembly. Such calls and appointments shall be certified to the Presbytery with which the minister is to be associated as a member, who shall if appropriate forthwith arrange for his installation or induction. *(This applies particularly to certain Assembly Buildings and Union Theological College appointments.)*

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 “Board of Finance and Personnel by the Committee on Pensions and Assessments” be deleted and the words “General Council by the Support Services Committee” substituted in their place.

**GROUP 4: COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY
SPECIFIC**

Anent Pars 193(1), 198(2), and 207(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 193(1), 198(2), and 207(2) of the Code, the words “Board of Christian Training” be deleted and the words “Council for Training in Ministry” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 193(1)(a)(ii) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 193(1)(a)(ii) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

all licentiates who have served the Church for two years after licence, and who have obtained a certificate from the Council for Training in Ministry that their period of probation has been completed satisfactorily, provided that they have not been serving in the congregation immediately prior to or at any time during the vacancy. Those licensed in May, June or July shall be eligible from 1st September in the qualifying year.

Anent Par 198(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 198(1) of the Code, the words “Assignment Committee of the Board of Christian Training” be deleted and the words “Council for Training in Ministry” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 198(8) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 198(8) of the Code, the words “Assignment Committee” be deleted and the words “Council for Training in Ministry” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 200(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 200(4) of the Code, the words “of Ministers and Licentiates” be inserted after the words “the Assembly’s Reception”.

Anent Pars 219(3)(c)(i) and 219(3)(c)(iii) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 219(3)(c)(i) and 219(3)(c)(iii) of the Code, the words “General Board” be deleted and the words “Council for Training in Ministry” substituted in their place.

GROUP 5: COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND SPECIFIC**Anent Par 79(e) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 79(e) of the Code, the words “Church and Government Committee, Forces Committee, Chaplains Committee or Education Board” be deleted and the words “Council for Mission in Ireland (or, if necessary, the General Council)” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 116(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 116(2) of the Code be deleted and the subsequent paragraph renumbered.

Anent Pars 227, 229, 230(1)&(3), 232, 234(1), 250(4), 300(1),(4)&(5), 301(1)&(3), 302(1)(b),(2)(c)&(4)(a), 305(4)-(6)&(9)-(12), and 307(1),(2)&(5) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 227, 229, 230(1)&(3), 232, 234(1), 250(4), 300(1),(4)&(5), 301(1)&(3), 302(1)(b),(2)(c)&(4)(a), 305(4)-(6)&(9)-(12), and 307(1),(2)&(5) of the Code, the words “Board of Mission in Ireland” be deleted and the words “Council for Mission in Ireland” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 230(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 230(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(2) Grants towards the provision of suitable buildings for the carrying on of the work shall be made by the Council for Mission in Ireland, for expenditure incurred with their approval, from such funds as may be at their disposal on such terms as may be fixed by the Council, provided that plans have been approved by the Linkage Commission and Presbytery.

Anent Par 230(5)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 230(5)(a) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(5) (a) Church Extension charges participating in joint projects with other Churches may apply to the Council for Mission in Ireland for assistance with the purchase of property or other approved expenditure, upon such terms as shall be determined by the Council having regard to the provisions of the appropriate scheme approved by the Assembly.

Anent Par 231(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 231(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(1) The call of a minister to serve in a Church Extension charge shall be at the initiative of the Council for Mission in Ireland, following such procedure for inviting applications and interviewing candidates as the Council sees fit, provided that the interim Kirk Session be represented in any interview and recommendation for call.

Anent Par 234(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 234(4) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(4) Notwithstanding any of the previous provisions, an established congregation moving its centre of worship, together with its assets, to serve a recognised Church Extension area (i.e., “porting”) may apply to the Council for Mission in Ireland for assistance towards the purchase of property, the erection of buildings and other approved expenditure. Any assistance given by the Council shall be on such terms and conditions as it sees fit.

Anent Par 302(1)(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 302(1)(c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(c) To be considered as a candidate for the office of Irish Mission Worker application shall be made to the Secretary of the Council for Mission in Ireland.

Anent Par 302(3)(a) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 302(3)(a) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(3) (a) Immediate responsibility for the direction and supervision of the work of Irish Mission Workers shall rest with the Secretary of the Council for Mission in Ireland. The Council shall exercise a general responsibility. Irish Mission Workers shall report annually on their work.

Anent Par 305(1)&(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 305(1)&(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

305. (1) The appointment of deaconesses shall be as decided by the Council for Mission in Ireland, after consultation with the parties concerned; and any congregation or Council of the Church wishing for the services of a deaconess shall make official application to the Secretary of the Council for Mission in Ireland.

(2) The Council shall call to each appointment for service as a deaconess in connection with Presbyterian Women, and shall thereupon forward the call to be sustained by the Presbytery under whose jurisdiction it is proposed that she shall work. When sustained, the call shall be presented, either by that Presbytery if the deaconess is already under its care, or certified and forwarded

to the Presbytery then having jurisdiction for the issue of credentials. A call may be retained for consideration for fourteen days after presentation, but if not then accepted shall be deemed to be declined. If the call is declined the Council for Mission in Ireland shall reconsider the matter in the light of Par 305(1). Without such call a deaconess shall not change her appointment.

Anent Par 305(8) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 305(8) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(8) An appointment as a deaconess may, after twelve months' service, be terminated by mutual agreement, or by two months' notice given by the deaconess, the minister of the congregation, the Session (or in the case of a deaconess in special work by the Council for Mission in Ireland) subject to the approval of the Presbytery. In such cases a deaconess may apply to be retained on the records of Presbytery for a period of not longer than one year but she shall have no entitlement to special support from central funds, though the Council for Mission in Ireland may make a special arrangement.

Anent Par 307(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 307(3) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(3) The Council for Mission in Ireland shall fix at regular intervals a realistic allowance for expenses incurred in the course of duty. Reports on expenses shall be made to the Council as required.

GROUP 6: COUNCIL FOR GLOBAL MISSION SPECIFIC

Anent Pars 202(5)(VII)&(6), 205(6)&(7)(b), 290(1-4), 291(1-3), 292 and 293 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 202(5)(VII)&(6), 205(6)&(7)(b), 290(1-4), 291(1-3), 292 and 293 of the Code, the words "Board of Mission Overseas" be deleted and the words "Council for Global Mission" substituted in their place.

Anent Par 331(2)(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 331(2)(b) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(b) 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;

provided that in any of the cases designated in this sub-paragraph, paragraph 161 (with the omission of sub-paragraph (a) thereof) shall apply to the committee or Council concerned as it applies to a Church court.

GROUP 7: LINKAGE COMMISSION SPECIFIC

Anent Pars 57(3)&(6), 73(d), 82(3)&(4) and 232 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 57(3)&(6), 73(b), 82(3)&(4) and 232 of the Code, the words “Union Commission” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Pars 190, 191, 193, 195(11), 198(1)&(8-10), 226(b), 231(4), 232, 233, 234(3), 248(4), 250(4), 256(3), and 300 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Pars 190, 191, 193, 195(11), 198(1)&(8-10), 226(b), 231(4), 232, 233, 234(3), 248(4), 250(4), 256(3), and 300 of the Code, the words “Union Commission” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 197 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 197 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

197. Calls to Licentiates:

A licentiate shall not normally be eligible for ordination until after two years from licensure subject to the following provisions:

(a) Persons licensed in the months of May, June, and July shall all become eligible from the 1st of September of the qualifying year.

(b) A licentiate called to be assistant to the Moderator of the General Assembly shall be eligible without any two years qualification.

(c) A licentiate shall be eligible for calls to special work as prescribed in Par 199(1).

(d) In circumstances not covered by the foregoing provisions, the Linkage Commission shall have power to decide on eligibility for call.

Anent Par 198(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 198(1) of the Code, the words “Allocation Committee of the Union Commission” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 199(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 199(1) of the Code, the words “six months” be deleted and the words “two years” substituted in their place.

GROUP 8: COUNCIL FOR CHURCH IN SOCIETY/ COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIFIC

Anent Pars 274(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 274(1) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

274. Council for Public Affairs

(1) The membership of the Council for Public Affairs shall be:

B. CHANGES TO CODE CORRECTING ERRORS

OVERTURES CORRECTING DEFICIENCIES 212(6), 272(15), 275

Anent Par 212(6) of the Code [Ordinations etc]

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 212(6) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(6) Subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith

[The Moderator addresses the minister-elect in these words:]

You have confessed your belief that 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. It is under that supreme standard, which alone is final, that this Church holds its subordinate standards. (* See below).

This being understood, are you now prepared to subscribe, in terms of the General Assembly's Formula, 'I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code, Chapter I, paragraphs 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.'?

I am

[The Formula is signed in the Minute book of Presbytery.]

*In congregations of the former Munster Presbytery the minister-elect shall be invited to make a declaration of his faith according to the Standards of the Church by personally writing out and presenting for retention among the records of the Presbytery the following -

"I,, do hereby declare that I believe the Confession of Faith, compiled by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, as described in the Code, Chapter I, paragraphs 12-14, to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I declare it to be the confession of my faith."

[In cases certified by the Council for Global Mission, where the spouse is to be commissioned with the person being ordained or installed, the following question shall be asked of the spouse:]

Do you, *NN*, commit yourself to be a partner with your *husband/wife* in the missionary service to which *he/she* is being appointed?

I do

Anent Par 272(15) of the Code [General Council]

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 212(15) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(15) The Council shall, directly or through its appropriate committee:

- (a) administer The Central Ministry Fund (see Pars 311-318)
- (b) administer The Retired Ministers Fund (see Pars 319-323)
- (c) administer The Widows of Ministers Fund (see Pars 324-328)
- (d) administer The Prolonged Disability Fund
- (e) administer The Retired Ministers' House Fund

- (f) appoint a committee to consider and report to the Assembly the cases of all ministers applying for special leave to retire from active duty. The committee shall have the right to issue a schedule of queries to be answered by the applicant.

Anent Par 275 of the Code [Council for Training in Ministry]

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Par 275 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

275. Council for Training in Ministry

- (1) The membership of the Council for Training in Ministry shall be:
- (a) The Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly; Council Convener and Secretary; Committee and Panel Conveners; Principal of Union Theological College; Director of Ministerial Studies;
 - (b) One direct nominee from each Presbytery
 - (c) Seven nominees of the Nominations Committee
- (2) The membership of Council Committees shall be as agreed by the General Assembly from time to time.
- (3) The Council shall consider all aspects of leadership training for ministers including responsibility for:
- (a) selection, training and on-going development of full-time ministers;
 - (b) pastoral care of ministers and manse families;
 - (c) selection, training and on-going development of auxiliary ministers and accredited preachers;
 - (d) selection and initial training of deaconesses, including probationary period;
 - (e) reception of ministers and licentiates from other Churches, subject to rules approved from time to time by the General Assembly;
 - (f) management of Union Theological College and the Magee Fund Scheme;
 - (g) provision of a conciliation service.

C. CHANGES TO CODE – APPENDICES

GROUP A: GENERAL ASSEMBLY’S STANDING ORDERS

Anent Appendix 1 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Appendix 1 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

1. GENERAL ASSEMBLY’S STANDING ORDERS

I The stated annual meeting of the General Assembly shall be held beginning on the first Monday in June, with the opening session commencing at 7 o’clock p.m., to include the following:-

- (1) The Moderator shall conduct public worship and preach a sermon or give a retiring address; after which, should a quorum be present, he shall constitute the Assembly.

(2) The Moderator having requested the Assembly to appoint a successor, the names of members nominated by Presbyteries for the office shall be read. Others may also be proposed in the Assembly. Should a vote be necessary it shall be taken after the method prescribed in the Assembly's Rules.

(3) The member who is appointed Moderator shall be installed in office by prayer and may address the Assembly.

II (1) The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall be administered at the annual meeting. Communicants of this or any Church, desiring to share the fellowship of the Sacrament, shall be invited and made welcome to join with members of the General Assembly at the Lord's Table.

(2) The Arrangements Panel of the General Assembly Business Committee shall make all the arrangements for the observance of this ordinance.

III The General Assembly Business Committee shall submit its report, including the proposed Order of Business for the succeeding sessions together with any additions or amendments and the Assembly thereupon shall proceed to deal with the various matters proposed.

IV Every report submitted to the Assembly shall be presented in written or printed form; and, as far as possible, every such report shall be included in a Blue Book printed and circulated to members at least one week before the annual meeting of the Assembly.

V (1) A proposed resolution or resolutions of Assembly shall be appended to every report in the Blue Book.

(2) Each proposed resolution shall be based on information provided in the report and shall seek to express a clear and succinct mind of the Assembly upon it, without attempting to include such arguments as are more appropriate to speeches.

(3) (a) Where it has not been possible to include some resolution in the Blue Book, it shall be transmitted to the Clerk of Assembly (if necessary appended to a supplementary report giving the relevant information) at least one clear day before it may be considered by the Assembly.

(b) At the beginning of each session the Clerk shall intimate to the Assembly any additional business and, where possible, provide members with printed copies of it.

VI An amendment to a proposed resolution or overture which would substantially affect its scope shall be transmitted to the Clerk at least one clear day before it is due to be considered by the Assembly; and it shall be announced to members and, where possible, circulated to members as additional business. This rule shall not preclude the Assembly from altering or amending the proposed resolution, as it may judge right having regard to the whole discussion on the subject when considered.

VII (1) Speeches or addresses in the Assembly shall be limited as follows, unless in the circumstances judged by the Moderator to be exceptional:

- (a) The first speaker presenting a group of reports with appended resolutions on behalf of an Assembly Commission or Council shall not occupy longer than seven minutes.
- (b) The speaker seconding the foregoing presentation shall not occupy longer than seven minutes.
- (c) All other speakers shall not occupy longer than four minutes.

(2) Arrangements shall be made to give a speaker warning at one minute and again at half a minute before the time expires; and upon its expiry a bell shall be rung and the speaker shall immediately resume their seat.

(3) Speakers proposing or seconding a group of resolutions (including additional resolutions, and also where a Convener is speaking to those of his Commission, Council or Committee) shall not speak separately to them except by way of closing a debate upon them.

VIII (1) A ballot shall be taken at the discretion of the Moderator or when it is asked for by not less than twenty-five members of the House rising in their place.

(2) When a ballot has been decided on a bell shall be rung for two minutes, during which time all members who propose to take part in the vote shall take their places in the House; and thereafter none shall enter or leave until the vote has been taken.

(3) Each member shall record their vote by detaching from their member's ticket and placing in the ballot box the part of the ticket that indicates on which side they vote. If it should be found that more than one voting paper bear the same number, all the voting papers bearing that number shall be excluded from the count.

(4) No member shall record any vote but their own, or use a ticket belonging to a member absent for whatever cause. This exclusion also applies to any additional named elder, appointed by a Kirk Session, with permission to sit and deliberate only. No vote shall be counted in the absence of a member's ticket.

(5) When the tellers have met and counted the votes, one shall take the voting papers and statement of the vote to the Clerk of Assembly and the Moderator shall announce the result to the House.

(6) (a) Any member of the House may demand a scrutiny of the voting papers, provided they do so in open court immediately after the result of the vote is announced and are supported by fifty members standing in their places.

(b) The Moderator shall thereupon appoint as many scrutineers as he or she shall think fit, selecting a number from the supporters of each side of the question voted on, who with the tellers, shall at once proceed to carry out the scrutiny.

(7) The Clerk of Assembly shall take charge of the voting papers until the rising of the Assembly, after which he or she shall destroy them.

IX (1) The Arrangements Panel shall be responsible for providing a panel of tellers for each session and for stewarding arrangements.

(2) In making all the arrangements that may be necessary for the accommodation and discharge of the business of the General Assembly at its meeting, the Arrangements Panel is empowered to issue tickets of admission to the Assembly, both to the members thereof and to others attending, to regulate the conditions of admission and to make such reservations of seating and accommodation as may be required.

(3) Collections may be taken from those attending at one or more sessions of the Assembly, and grants made from the Assembly's Incidental Fund, to defray the expenses incurred by the Arrangements Panel.

X The nomination of members for all Commissions, Councils and Committees shall be made in the first instance by the Nominations Committee. When the nominations are submitted to the Assembly it is open to any member to propose alternative names for appointment.

XI No person who is not a member of the Assembly shall be permitted to address the House unless with the approval of the House or of the General Assembly Business Committee.

XII No Presbytery, Assembly Commission, Council or Committee shall meet during the period of the General Assembly except at its discretion or with its permission.

GROUP B: COMMISSIONS OF RULING ELDERS

Anent Appendix 3 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 3 of the Code, the words “(Synod of)/(General Assembly)” be deleted and the words “General Assembly” substituted in their place.

GROUP C: CREDENTIALS

Anent Appendix 4 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 4 of the Code, the word “he” be deleted and the words “he/she” substituted in its place.

GROUP D: FORMS OF CALL

Anent Appendix 5(A) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 5(A) of the Code, the reference “Par 274(14)” be deleted and the reference “Par 273(14)” substituted in its place.

Anent Appendix 5(A) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 5(A) of the Code, the words “Commission on Union of Congregations” be deleted and the words “Linkage Commission” substituted in their place.

Anent Appendix 5(A) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 5(A) of the Code, the number “19.....” be deleted and the number “20.....” substituted in its place.

Anent Appendix 5(B),(C) & (D) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that Appendix 5(B),(C) & (D) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in their place:

B: Form of Call to a Minister (Part-Time Ministry Scheme)

We, the members of
in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland having heard a good report of you
and being fully satisfied of your fitness to be our Minister in the Lord, do hereby call and invite you to undertake the work of the ministry among us.

We promise to respect you for your work's sake, to attend to your instruction in the Gospel, and to submit to the discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, according to the law of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we further promise as stipend in pursuance of our obligations under Paragraph 195(11) of the Code, the annual sum of £/€....., commencing from the date of installation and payable monthly, with increase in accordance with Paragraph 236 of the Code, together with the annual income of such endowments, held in connection with the Congregation, as are available for your benefit (if any) and the annual sum of £/€..... from investment income over which the Congregation or its Session or Committee or Trustees have absolute power of disposal; together with the use of the glebe (if any) and (tick as appropriate):

- right of residence in the manse, in which you are required to reside during the period of your active ministry in this Congregation, free of rent, rates and taxes, after which period you must vacate the manse; and promising that if a manse be not available then to provide other suitable residence on the same conditions, free of rent, rates and taxes, from which you can conveniently discharge your congregational duties, or to make such other arrangements as may be required under Paragraph 273(14).
- no right of residence in the manse. Housing Allowance £/€ _____ per annum.

And we hereby undertake to contribute to the Central Ministry Fund according to the regulations for the time being of the General Assembly; and to meet as a congregational expense the cost for a holiday pulpit supply for six weeks annually during vacation and acknowledge your entitlement to avail of both in-service and sabbatical leave under the terms approved from time to time by the General Assembly.

This Call is made out in conformity with the terms fixed by the Linkage Commission, a copy of which is herewith attached.

Dated and signed at this day of ..
..... in the year

We certify that we attended in the congregation of
this day of in the year

by appointment of the Presbytery of
..... as its Commission and that we were present at the signing of the call.

.....
Moderator
.....
.....

C: By a Congregation (for an Associate Minister)

We, the members of the congregation of in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, being fully satisfied of your fitness to be our associate minister in the Lord, do hereby call and invite you to undertake the work of the ministry among us.

We promise to respect you for your work’s sake, to attend to your instruction in the Gospel, and to submit to the discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland according to the law of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we further promise to provide for your livelihood and residence (or allowance in lieu thereof) as approved by the Linkage Commission.

And we hereby undertake to contribute to the Central Ministry Fund according to the regulations for the time being of the General Assembly; and acknowledge the Associate Minister’s entitlement to avail of both in-service and sabbatical leave under the terms approved from time to time by the General Assembly. This call is made out in accordance with the provisions of Paragraphs 128, 191, 193, 237, 273(4) of the Code and in conformity with the terms fixed by the Commission on Union of Congregations, a copy of which is herewith attached.

Dated and signed at this day of, 20....

Signed
.....
..... etc.

Certification:

We certify that we attended in the congregation of this day of, 20....., by appointment of the Presbytery of, as its Commission, and that we were present at the signing of the Call.

.....
Moderator
.....
.....

D: By a Kirk Session (for an Assistant Minister)

We, the Kirk Session of the congregation of in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, being persuaded of your fitness to minister to the congregation in the Lord, do hereby call and invite you to undertake the work of the ministry among us as Ordained Assistant Minister, in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 198 of the Code of this Church.

We promise to respect you for your work’s sake; to attend to your instruction in the Gospel; and to provide for your livelihood and residence as the said Paragraph 198 of the Code may require.

Dated and signed at this day of, 20....
..... Moderator of Kirk Session
..... Clerk of Kirk Session

E: By an Assembly Council (for Special Work)

We, the [name of Council]of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, being persuaded of your fitness to undertake such work in the name of our Lord, do hereby call and invite you to undertake the work of (within [name of Council or Department]) in accordance with the provisions of the Code, Paragraphs [here insert appropriate paragraph numbers such as 199, 200, 272(9), 301(3), 303(3)].

We promise, on behalf of the Church you will serve, to respect you for your work’s sake; and to support you with our interest and prayers; (and to provide for your livelihood and residence) as the said Paragraphs of the Code or Mission Rules may require.

Dated and signed at this day of, 20....

..... Convener
 Secretary

Anent Appendix 5 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 5 of the Code, a new Section (F) be added as follows:

F: By a Kirk Session (for an Auxiliary Minister)

We, the Kirk Session of the congregation of in connection with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, being persuaded of your fitness to minister to the congregation in the Lord, do hereby call and invite you to undertake the work of the ministry of the Word among us as Auxiliary Minister, in accordance with the provisions of Paragraphs 36, 72, 128 and 201 of the Code of this Church.

We promise to respect you for your work’s sake; to attend to your instruction in the Gospel; and to conform to the Terms of Call agreed with the Linkage Commission.

Dated and signed at this day of, 20....

..... Moderator of Kirk Session
 Clerk of Kirk Session

GROUP E: FORMS FOR USE IN CASES OF DISCIPLINE

Anent Appendix 11(1) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 11(1) of the Code, the words “Session, Presbytery Synod” be deleted and words “Session/Presbytery” substituted in their place.

Anent Appendix 11(13) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 11(13) of the Code, the words “Kirk Session/[Presbytery/Assembly]” be deleted and words “Kirk Session/Presbytery/General Assembly” substituted in their place.

Anent Appendix 11(14) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 11(14) of the Code, the words “Kirk Session/Presbytery/Synod” be deleted and words “Kirk Session/Presbytery” substituted in their place.

Anent Appendix 11(14) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Appendix 11(14) of the Code, the words “Presbytery/Synod” be deleted and word “Presbytery” substituted in their place.

RESOLUTION:

That the General Assembly authorise the Clerk to make all necessary amendments to the ‘Contents’ and ‘Index’ pages of the Code to reflect changes agreed by the General Assembly; and to make appropriate consequential changes to date numbering and symbols in the Appendices.

D. GENERAL OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS**Anent Par 23 of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact Par 23 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

23.(1) Any Church court may appoint a commission or committee, the latter being sometimes called a council, for such purposes as the court may determine, or may resolve itself into a committee of the whole court.

(2) In every case the commission, committee or council shall report to the court.

(3) Nothing in sub-paragraph (2) shall operate to prejudice any powers conferred on commissions of the Assembly under paragraphs 126-128.

Anent Par 24 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 24 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

24. Rules may make such provision as the Assembly shall think proper for the holding and functioning of Church courts, including provisions for -

(a) the appointment, powers and duties of commissions, committees, councils or members or officers of such courts and the fixing of a quorum for, or the appointment of an assessor to, any such court, commission, committee or council;

(b) the practice and procedure to be followed in or in connection with proceedings before such courts, commissions, committees or councils, or on appeals or references arising therefrom; or

(c) the records to be kept and reports to be made by such courts, commissions, committees or councils.

Anent Par 61(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 61(c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(c) chaplains to the Forces, ordained ministers and elders serving under the Council for Global Mission and other ministers serving under any Assembly Council in special work outside Ireland, who have been installed or inducted to their charge by Presbytery or have retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;

Anent Par 74 of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 74 of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

74. The Presbytery shall -

(a) inquire into and deal with reports affecting the character, usefulness or soundness in the faith of ministers in its congregations or in special work under the jurisdiction of the Assembly, and into the character and soundness in the faith of ministers retired or without charge or in work not under the jurisdiction of the Assembly, of deaconesses and auxiliary ministers, and of licentiates and students under its care. In the general case of ministers in special work or of students, the Presbytery shall invite four representatives of the appropriate Assembly Council to sit with them as assessors in the case, who shall for this purpose have the full powers of members of the court. In the special case of theological professors this procedure shall be followed if the College Management Committee, following preliminary investigation, requests the Presbytery to act;

(b) receive formal charges or complaints against ministers, licentiates, ruling elders, deaconesses or auxiliary ministers, summon witnesses and take evidence in cases of complaint or charge, and pronounce and publish judgment, in accordance with the disciplinary procedures of the Church.

Anent Par 78(b) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 78(b) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(b) co-operate with the Council for Training in Ministry in supervising the life and conduct of the students under its care. Where the character or work of a student is considered unsatisfactory, the Presbytery may proceed as in paragraph 74 or, if it deem it advisable, delegate its authority to the Council for Training in Ministry.

Anent Par 97(c) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 97(c) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(c) chaplains to the Forces, ordained ministers and elders serving under the Council for Global Mission and other ministers serving under any Assembly Council in special work overseas, or retired from active duty with the consent of the Assembly;

Anent Par 97(h)(ii)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 97(h)(ii) of the Code, the word “Boards” be deleted and the word “Councils” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 97(j) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 97(j) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(j) such elders as are direct nominees from Presbyteries or nominees of the Nominations Committee to Commissions of the Assembly, or whose membership is desirable in the interest of Assembly, and who are not otherwise members of the Assembly;

Anent Par 109(c)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 109(c) of the Code, the word “board” be deleted and the word “council” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 109(d)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 109(d) of the Code, the word “boards” be deleted and the word “councils” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 113(4) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 113(4) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(4) The administration of the Church’s missions and agencies shall be entrusted to commissions, councils, committees, and conveners or secretaries appointed by the Assembly.

Anent Par 114(1)(c)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 114(c)(1) of the Code, the words “Board of Mission in Ireland” be deleted and the words “Council for Mission in Ireland” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 114(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 114(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(2) Presbyterian Women, under the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and in association with the Council for Mission in Ireland, shall -

Anent Par 114(3)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 114(3) of the Code, the words “Board of Mission in Ireland” be deleted and the words “Council for Mission in Ireland” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 115(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 115(1) of the Code, the words “Board of Mission Overseas” be deleted and the words “Council for Global Mission” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 115(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that Par 115(2) of the Code be deleted and the following substituted in its place:

(2) Presbyterian Women, under the Council for Congregational Life and Witness and in association the Council for Global Mission, shall seek to further the work of the Church, especially amongst women and children, wherever the Overseas Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is at work and in such other places as the General Assembly may from time to time determine.

Anent Par 126(4)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 126(4) of the Code, the word “board” be deleted and the word “council” substituted in its place.

Anent Par 127(1)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 127(1) of the Code, the words “Business Board” be deleted and the words “Nominations Committee” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 127(2)(b)

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly to enact that in Par 127(2)(b) of the Code, the words “Business Board” be deleted and the words “Nominations Committee” substituted in their place.

OVERTURES RELATING TO THE LINKAGE COMMISSION

(Friday Morning – after Linkage Commission Report)

GROUP A: DIRECT LINKAGE COMMISSION**Anent Par 36(f) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 36(f) of the Code, the words “auxiliary ministers,” be inserted after the words “assistant ministers.”

Anent Par 201(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 201(2) of the Code the words “the appropriate Board” be deleted and the words “a Kirk Session (apart from missionaries) or the appropriate Council” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 201(3) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 201(3) of the Code the words “a Board” be deleted and the words “a Kirk Session (apart from missionaries) or the appropriate Council” substituted in their place.

Anent Par 202(2) of the Code

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 202(2) of the Code the words “supervising Board” be deleted and the words “Kirk Session, supervising Council” substituted in their place.

GROUP B: RELATED CHANGE FOR COUNCIL FOR MISSION IN IRELAND**Anent Par 277(4) of the Code**

It is hereby overtured to the General Assembly that in Par 277(4) of the Code the words “auxiliary ministers,” be inserted after the word “elders.”