

Item 1 – GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE (Initial Report) – Supplementary Report (Tuesday morning)

(A) ORDERING OF BUSINESS

1. The General Assembly Business Committee has sought to order the business of the Assembly in a way that will facilitate debate and ensure that decisions are taken in an open and orderly manner. The Committee has also sought to ensure in particular that certain items of the General Council's business are taken at a time when there is likely to be a good attendance. This has meant that there could be a potential pressure on time, especially on Wednesday afternoon.
2. Therefore, to ensure clarity in proceedings and, in particular, to attempt to avoid business lapsing, the Committee would recommend the following be adopted by the Assembly:
 - a. **That with regard to Business Item 11** - the Wednesday afternoon debate on the resolutions concerning the future of the Guysmere Centre (see resolutions on Reports pages 112-113), the following shall apply:
 - i. That the total time for the proposer and seconder of Section 2 of the General Council Report be reduced from 14 minutes to 10 minutes.
 - ii. That after the proposer and seconder have spoken, the period of questions (if any are necessary) should both be short and strictly confined to questions genuinely seeking additional information.
 - iii. That a representative of the Presbytery of Coleraine & Limavady be invited to make the first speech to resolution 11.
 - b. **That with regard to Business Item 12** - the Wednesday afternoon debate on the Memorial of the South Belfast Presbytery (see Reports pages 217-218), the following shall apply:
 - i. All speeches (including proposer & seconder) be limited to 4 minutes.
 - ii. After the proposer and seconder have spoken the period of questions (if any are necessary) should both be short and strictly confined to questions genuinely seeking additional information.
 - iii. That after the short period of questions, the Moderator shall invite the following speeches: one opposing the resolution, one in favour of the resolution, a further one opposing the resolution and then the proposer (or seconder) to respond.

Additional Resolution:

- 2 (a) That the recommendations of the General Assembly Business Committee in regard to Business Items 11 & 12 be adopted.

(B) ADDITIONAL REPORT FROM OTHER CHURCH ASSEMBLIES

Church of Ireland General Synod (2019)

The Very Rev Dr Noble McNeely reports:

1. The Church of Ireland General Synod was convened on 16th May 2019 in Londonderry, the host Diocese being Derry and Raphoe. The opening ceremony and the communion service was conducted in the Cathedral Church of Saint Columb within the walls of the ancient City of Londonderry. The service was conducted by The Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh and the sermon was delivered by Rt Rev Dr Ferran Glenfield, Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh.
2. Mr Alan Rowan (elder with Ebrington Presbyterian Church, Londonderry) and I were given a warm welcome with other invited guests at the opening session of business in the Millennium Forum. Following some customary procedures the General Synod was addressed by its President, Archbishop Richard Clarke, who presented an insightful analysis of the threat to the church of the 21st century technological revolution.
3. This year the Church of Ireland marks the 150th anniversary of the disestablishment of the church. During 2019 and 2020 there will be a number of initiatives to commemorate the sesquicentennial beginning with a national service in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin at which the Archbishop of Canterbury will preach.
4. There was a special civic reception in the Guild Hall, Londonderry on the first evening of the Synod when the members and guests were greeted by the Mayor of Derry City and Strabane District Council, Councillor John Boyle. The programme included a welcoming speech by the Mayor, some refreshments and a very professional dramatization of how the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland was initiated by an act of parliament in 1869 and the dialogue between Mrs Cecil Frances Alexander (who was opposed to disestablishment) and her husband Rt Rev William Alexander, Bishop of Derry.
5. The business of the Synod included three major bills and reports by the 10 committees or councils and the consideration of 18 motions. A second reading of the bill to bring together the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry and the United Dioceses of Limerick and Killaloe under one bishop was debated with sensitivity and good humour for the historical traditions of the dioceses enabling the motion to proceed to its third reading and approval on the closing day of the Synod.
6. Two bills regarding (a) the provision of a service for those unable to be present at the public celebration of the Holy Communion and (b) a service of prayer and naming and the funeral service in cases of miscarriage, still birth and neonatal death created extensive debate and some very moving personal stories of grief. The latter bill which included pastoral and liturgical guidelines for clergy engaged the Synod in a lengthy session which included the consideration of 34 amendments.

7. The Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, Rt Rev Kenneth Good was attending his last synod before his imminent retirement. In conveying greetings to the Synod I referred to the various ways the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland partner in significant areas of societal life. One area of partnership is in education and particularly in the Transferor Representatives' Council. Bishop Good served as chairperson of the TRC for eight years and I was able to convey to him the admiration and respect his Presbyterian colleagues had for his wise and insightful leadership.
8. Bishop Kenneth Good gave his swansong speech on education during the concluding day of the Synod. He was forthright in his criticism of local governance and referred to education being in the red zone and stated that failure can't be allowed to happen. He spoke of there being a deficit in regard to vision, finance and morale within the education system and especially declining morale among teachers and schools governors. He concluded that, despite the frustration of no leadership in Stormont there were some positives, including the devotion of Transferor Governors and the potential in shared education.
9. The Council for Mission report was brief but promoted the first of five marks of mission adopted by the church. The focus for 2019 is to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom. A video was presented to the Synod with the purpose of using it widely to encourage enthusiasm and fresh thinking in proclaiming the gospel message.
10. I was surprised that the General Synod was conducted less formally than the General Assembly and each of the sessions was conducted by a different Bishop in the chair. There were many eloquent speeches and some well-placed humour. I also noted that the makeup of the delegates includes one third clergy and two thirds laity and no retired bishops or clergy are present to contribute to the discussions.
11. It was a privilege to be part of the General Synod in Londonderry and be one of the guests who was most generously entertained and integrated into the whole proceedings. The opportunity to renew friendships with past acquaintances and share in the worship of the risen Lord with Church of Ireland colleagues was greatly appreciated.
12. The General Synod 2020 will be held from 7th-9th May in the Croke Park Meetings and Events Centre, Dublin.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN

Item 3 – CORRESPONDING MEMBERS & DELEGATES **Supplementary Report (Tuesday morning)**

Correction

Religious Society of Friends (not Religious Society for Friends)

Add

Ms Leah McKibben – Methodist Church in Ireland
 Rev George Adam - Greek Evangelical Church

TREVOR D GRIBBEN

Item 7 – LINKAGE COMMISSION

Supplementary Report (Tuesday evening)

AMALGAMATIONS AND THE CHARITY COMMISSION

1. In response to requests from presbyteries for advice on the correct procedures to use in respect of the Charity Commission (NI), the Business Panel instructed the Convener and Deputy Clerk to draw up a paper on the matter. After advice was received from the General Assembly Solicitor, the Financial Secretary, and the Clerk of Assembly, the Paper on Amalgamations and Charity Commission (Appendix 1) was received by the Linkage Commission at its meeting on 28th May 2019 and an accompanying set of Guidelines for Presbyteries in connection with Dissolution and Amalgamation (Appendix 2) were adopted.
2. Reference is made in the documents to a ‘cy-pres’ scheme. In relation to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland and charity law the meaning of a cy-pres scheme is a legal document made by the Commission which changes, replaces or extends the trusts of a charity. It comes from an old French term which can be translated "as near as possible" or "as near as may be". It will be seen that in most cases it will be necessary to have such a scheme drawn up to transfer the assets of a dissolving congregation to another, or to another PCI charity (such as a Presbytery Mission Fund), and to transfer the assets of amalgamating congregations to the new congregation which comes about through the amalgamation.
3. No congregations have been ‘dissolved’ in recent years, even though in practical terms that was what was happening, mainly because it was felt that future bequests that might come would have nowhere to go. It will be seen in Appendix 1 paragraph 7 that this problem, can be overcome through a cy-pres scheme. It may well be helpful for the Church for the future to be able properly to distinguish between dissolutions and amalgamations.
4. It should be noted that the guidelines apply only to congregations in Northern Ireland.
5. Appropriate revised resolutions and an additional resolution are appended.

Revised Resolutions 2-4

2. That the congregation of 1st Killyleagh be amalgamated with the congregation of Second Killyleagh on 31 December 2019, or other suitable date, on terms set by the Linkage Commission.
3. That the congregation of May Street be, as appropriate, dissolved, or amalgamated with the congregation of Fisherwick, on 31 December 2019, or other suitable date, on terms set by the Linkage Commission.

4. That the congregation of Crumlin Road be, as appropriate, dissolved, or amalgamated with the congregation of West Kirk, Belfast, on 31 December 2019, or other suitable date, on terms set by the Linkage Commission.

Additional Resolution 4a

That the Paper on Amalgamations and Charity Commission and the Guidelines for Presbyteries in connection with Dissolution and Amalgamation of Congregations in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Supplementary Reports, pp S5-11 be noted.

APPENDIX 1

Paper for Linkage Commission on Amalgamations and Charity Commission

Linkage Commission Business Panel minutes, 4/12/2018:

7. Amalgamations and Charity Commission
The Deputy Clerk and the Clerk spoke to this. Congregations which amalgamate need to be made aware of the correct process to use in respect of the Charity Commission.
It was agreed:
R7. That the Convener and Deputy Clerk draw up a paper on the proper process to use in respect of the Charity Commission at amalgamations.

Introduction

1. Up to now the term ‘amalgamation’ has been used to refer to two different things:
 - (a) One congregation has reached the end of its life and its entity is received into another, but the property and other assets are distributed mainly elsewhere. The receiving congregation is largely unaffected by this and is not in any real sense ‘new’.
 - (b) Two viable congregations come together to form a new congregation, often for missional reasons.
The former has become much more frequent than the latter in recent years.
2. The use of the same term for two very different situations is not helpful. Distinguishing between the two will also mean that the commission, presbyteries and congregations will better understand the legal procedures that ought to be followed, including with the Charity Commission.

A) ‘Dissolution’

3. Dissolution is a possible term to use to when one congregation has reached the end of its life and has the advantage of being a term already used in the Code. The congregation is absorbed into the congregation that receives it.
4. Those members, committee members and elders of the dissolved congregation who do not transfer elsewhere (or in the case of elders and committee members, also do

not resign their duties) become members, committee members and elders of the receiving congregation. Usually there is a small amount of money transferred to acknowledge a greater workload in pastoral care for the receiving congregation, but the financial assets of the dissolved congregation go elsewhere.

5. If the dissolved congregation's trust declarations set out what is to happen to its assets upon the closure of the congregation, then the holding trustees will have to ensure that the property is applied to that purpose.
6. If the trust documents do not contain any provision for what is to happen to the assets on closure then if the congregation's gross annual income is less than the statutory figure which in 2019 is £10,000 in the financial year prior to closure and it does not own any land and buildings valued at over the statutory figure which in 2019 is £90,000, then it may transfer its property to another PCI charity (e.g. Presbytery or another congregation). [NOTE: These two figures are liable to change, so care should be taken to find out what the actual figures are at the time of dissolution. The source of this information is Section 123 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. Section 103 authorises the Department of the Communities to change these figures, so it will always be necessary to check what these limits are.] It has to give prior notification to the Charities Commission, and the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2006 sets out the procedure which the congregation will have to adopt to carry this into effect. The holding trustees of the congregation shall consult with the Presbytery and the Linkage Congregation as to the PCI Charity to which the assets are to be transferred before any resolution is passed.
7. If the trust documents do not contain any provision for what is to happen to the assets on closure and either or both the income or value of land and buildings exceed the limits set out above, then the holding trustees congregation will have to make an application to the Charity Commission to approve a cy-pres scheme for the application of the congregation's property for the most similar charitable purpose (another PCI charity) and that scheme could also deal with any future bequests to the congregation. The holding trustees of the congregation shall consult with Presbytery and the Linkage Commission as to the terms of the scheme to be proposed to the Linkage Commission
8. The 'Terms of Dissolution' set by the Linkage Commission should then reflect the transfers of assets approved by the Charity Commission under paragraph 6, or the provisions of any cy-pres scheme under paragraph 7.
9. As far as the Charity Commission is concerned, a dissolved congregation closes and this will need to be reported to them. See Presbytery Guidelines on Dissolution. The receiving congregation, however, is unaffected: any elders who become part of the receiving congregation's kirk session simply need to register as Charity Trustees of the congregation.

B) 'Amalgamation'

10. Amalgamation is a term that more properly applies when two viable congregations conclude that their ministry would be more effective as one congregation.
11. Legal advice should be sought on the terms of the trust deeds under which the holding trustees of each congregation hold the assets of the respective congregations

to ensure that the trusts declared in the trust deeds do not contain provisions which prevent the congregations merging, or prevent each congregation transferring assets to a congregation other than the original congregation. If they do contain such provisions, then the provisions set out on paragraphs 6 and 7 above apply. The charity to which the assets would be transferred, by direct transfer or pursuant to a cy-pres scheme would be the new congregation.

12. The members, committee members and elders of both congregations come together to form a new congregation, congregational committee and kirk session.
13. As far as the Charity Commission is concerned the two congregations close as charities and a new charity comes into existence. The merger and two closures must be reported and the new congregation must be registered, along with the Charity Trustees. See *Presbytery Guidelines on Amalgamation*.

James Livingstone, Convener;
Jim Stothers, Deputy Clerk
28th May 2019

APPENDIX 2

Guidelines for Presbyteries in connection with Dissolution and Amalgamation of Congregations

[See note at the end of this document re Charity Commission]

A: Presbytery Guidelines on Dissolution

Dissolution. This applies to situations where one congregation is effectively closing and is absorbed by another. The receiving congregation is largely unaffected. It may receive a small financial contribution to recognise necessary additional pastoral work, and appropriate endowments, but normally none of the property or other assets. Those members, committee members and elders of the incorporated congregation who do not transfer elsewhere (or in the case of elders and committee members, also do not resign their office) become members, committee members and elders of the receiving congregation. Apart from i) registering as Charity Trustees any elders joining the kirk session from the incorporated congregation, and ii) reporting the incorporation in its Annual Monitoring Return, the receiving congregation does not need to take any action with the Charity Commission.

In respect of the congregation dissolved, **the presbytery should:**

1. Appoint a commission to oversee the process.
2. Obtain legal advice on the terms of any trust deeds under which the congregation's assets are held, and in particular:
 - (a) whether the trust deeds contains any provisions as to what is happen to the asset in the event of the congregation ceasing to exist.

- (b) if not, to determine whether the gross income of the congregation in the previous financial year and/or the value of the lands and buildings of the congregation do not exceed £10,000 and £90,000 respectively, and if so, to have the congregation pass a resolution to transfer the assets to another PCI charity, and to forward the resolution to the Charity Commission. [NOTE: there are 2019 figures and are liable to change, so care should be taken to find out what the actual figures are at the time of dissolution. The source of this information is Section 123 of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. Section 103 authorises the Department of the Communities to change these figures, so it will always be necessary to check what these limits are.]
 - (c) if not and the gross income of the congregation and/or the value of its lands and buildings exceed the figures referred to in (b) above, to arrange for the congregation to propose a cy-pres scheme be proposed to the Charity Commission.
3. Ensure that there is a functioning kirk session to act as Charity Trustees (and for the purposes of these guidelines, that is the same as the date of closure – *not* to be confused with the date of the last service).
 4. Understand that the Charity Trustees have some continuing responsibilities after dissolution, such as notifying the Charity Commission of the closure of the charity.
 5. Appoint an interim kirk session if necessary and ensure that the members of the interim kirk session are registered as Charity Trustees.
 6. Ensure that there is a treasurer in post and that control is retained within the congregation of the bank account(s) up to the point of dissolution.
 7. Finalise any Gift Aid reclaims and ensure that HMRC is notified of any relevant changes.
 8. Ensure all Funds are “cleared down/paid over” prior to dissolution as far as possible (e.g. Assessments United Appeal, Worlds Development and Special Appeals), as well as outstanding debts paid, and that arrangements are in place to pay any further bills etc. after the dissolution takes place.
 9. Draw up a schedule of all financial assets, including endowments, and all property.
 10. Arrange a congregational meeting to appoint the Education Board as (holding) trustees to allow appropriate assets to transfer to the presbytery without having to vest from one set of trustees to another if this is what the cy-pres scheme permits.
 11. Oversee any sale of property that takes place prior to the dissolution.
 12. Check any endowment funds and their purpose, and whether these can still fulfil their terms when transferred to either the receiving congregation or elsewhere.
 13. Advise insurers as appropriate.
 14. Cancel any registrations with outside organisations, for example the Information Commissioners Office.

15. Cancel any ongoing contracts, including, e.g., window cleaning and copyright licence.
16. Consider whether any redundancies (e.g. organist, cleaner) arise and take appropriate action.
17. Ensure that the Annual Monitoring Return to the Charity Commission for the calendar year(s) *prior* to the year of dissolution has/have been properly submitted.
18. Ensure that a Final Monitoring Return to the Charity Commission is made up to the date of dissolution: the final accounts must be submitted with the annual monitoring return within 10 months of the date of dissolution.
19. Notify the Charity Commission of a charity closure as soon as possible after the incorporation takes place.

B: *Presbytery Guidelines on Amalgamation*

Amalgamation. This applies to situations where two viable congregations are coming together to form a new congregation. All the financial assets (including endowments) and property become the financial assets and property of the new congregation, provided that there is power to do this in the trust deeds under which the assets of the respective congregations are held. If not, a cy-pres scheme may be required in respect of the assets of each congregation. The members, congregational committee members and elders become members of the new congregation, its congregational committee and kirk session. Both congregations will close as charities, and a new charity will come into being as the new congregation. Depending on circumstances, the Presbytery may wish to appoint a commission to oversee the process.

In respect of both the congregations to be amalgamated, **the presbytery should advise** them to:

1. Draw up a schedule of all financial assets, including endowments, and all property of each congregation.
2. Check any endowment funds and their purpose and whether these can still fulfil their terms in the new congregation. If not, a cy-pres scheme may be necessary to apply these to the new congregation.
3. Obtain legal advice on the terms of any trust deeds under which each congregation's assets are held, and in particular, in respect of each congregation.
 - (a) whether the trust deeds contain any provisions as to what is happen to the asset in the event of the congregation ceasing to exist.
 - (b) if not, to determine whether the gross income of the congregation in the previous financial year and/or the value of the lands and buildings of the congregation do not exceed £10,000 and £90,000 respectively, and if so, to have the congregation pass a resolution to transfer the assets to the new congregation, and to forward the resolution to the Charity Commission. [NOTE: these are 2019 figures and are liable to change, so care should be taken to find out what the actual figures are at the time of dissolution. The source of this information is Section 123 of the Charities Act (Northern

Ireland) 2008. Section 103 authorises the Department of the Communities to change these figures, so it will always be necessary to check what these limits are.]

- (c) if not and the gross income of the congregation and/or the value of its lands and buildings exceed the figures referred to in (b) above, to arrange for each congregation to propose a cy-pres scheme to the Charity Commission for the transfer of its assets to the new congregation. Legal advice should be sought on how to propose such a scheme.
4. Finalise any Gift Aid reclaims and ensure that HMRC is notified of any relevant changes.
 5. Ensure all Funds are “cleared down/paid over” prior to the amalgamation as far as possible (e.g. Assessments United Appeal, Worlds Development and Special Appeals).
 6. Ensure that the property is properly registered as the property of the new congregation and new holding trustees are appointed. If a cy-pres scheme is approved, it will provide, in any event, for the vesting of the property in the trustees of the new congregation.
 7. In most cases it will probably be administratively easier if each of the amalgamating congregations appoint the Education Board of the Presbytery as holding trustee of the property of each congregation. Accordingly, Presbytery should seek to arrange congregational meetings of each of the amalgamating congregations, prior to the amalgamation, to appoint the same (holding) trustees as each other (preferably the Presbytery Education Board) and then arrange a congregational meeting at some convenient point after the amalgamation either to confirm the Education Board of the Presbytery as the holding trustees of the property of new congregation; or, if the new congregation wishes to have individual communicant members as trustees, to appoint them in place of the Education Board of the Presbytery. In any case the Presbytery should ensure that the (holding) trustees of the amalgamating congregations consult with the Presbytery and the Linkage Commission as to the terms of the scheme to be proposed to the Linkage Commission.
 8. Advise insurers as appropriate.
 9. Amend if appropriate any registrations with outside organisations, for example the Information Commissioners Office.
 10. Amend any ongoing contracts, including, e.g., window cleaning and copyright licence.
 11. Consider whether any redundancies (e.g. organist, cleaner) arise and consider whether Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations apply (for instance where two people who did similar jobs will now doing those jobs for the new congregation but at greatly different rates), and take appropriate action.
 12. Ensure that the Annual Monitoring Returns to the Charity Commission for the calendar year *prior* to the year of amalgamation have been properly submitted.
 13. Ensure that Final Monitoring Returns to the Charity Commission is made up to the date of amalgamation: the final accounts must be submitted with the annual monitoring return within 10 months of the date of amalgamation.

14. Notify the Charity Commission of the charity closures as soon as possible after the amalgamation takes place.
15. Notify the Charity Commission of a charity merger – this has to take place after the merger (amalgamation) has actually taken place but notification can be given prior to the merger (amalgamation) taking effect.
16. Register the new congregation as a new charity with the Charity Commission.

[NOTE: In these guidelines, reference is made to the Charity Commission. It must be borne in mind that the Charity Commission recognises the Code as the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and all its presbyteries and congregations. The advice on the Charity Commission's website is generic and does not take account of this. Therefore, presbyteries and congregations are advised to follow these guidelines rather than to seek to adhere rigidly to the advice on the Charity Commission's website]

Adopted by the Linkage Commission 28th May 2019

JAMES LIVINGSTONE

Item 8 - COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Supplementary Report (Wednesday Morning)

(A) TRIBUTE

Rev Trevor Gribben writes:

1. If ever the phrase 're-tyred' was a more appropriate description for a minister emeritus than the normal 'retired', it is surely in the case of the Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton! For the past 7 years, the last 5 of which have been in 'retirement', Norman has led the body tasked with representing the views of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in the public square. He has done so with an enthusiasm and energy that has left many exhausted who have simply been watching him from the side-lines.
2. As the first ever convener of the new Council for Church in Society (later renamed the Council for Public Affairs) he has helped lead the transition from the old 'church and government committee' model within the then General Board. He has given countless hours of service in committees, panels and task groups. He has written numerous insightful articles, both for church publications and for newspapers, and has become a familiar and trusted voice on the broadcast media. This Church owes a significant debt to Norman for his willingness to lead in this way, often stepping up to the mark when an interview was requested on a challenging topic. Those who know him best will however be somewhat disappointed that the medium of radio was not necessarily the best platform to fully display our brother's legendary sartorial elegance!

3. In his role as Convener, Norman has been a mentor and encourager to PCI's Public Affairs Officer and he has worked closely in supporting the Moderator, the Clerk and the Press Officer. He has helped shape countless statements on numerous issues and has been a wise counsellor over these last seven years. He has first and foremost served in this important role as a follower of Jesus, whose aim has always been to commend his Lord and Saviour and to promote the values of His Kingdom. For that his colleagues in the Council for Public Affairs, and indeed the whole Church, will forever be in his debt.

(B) DEALING WITH THE PAST PROJECT TASK GROUP

1. The Task Group is pleased to report to the General Assembly that agreement has been secured with Merrion Press to publish the book *Consider Grace* which explores how Presbyterians responded to the Troubles from 1968 to 2000. It is expected that publication will be towards the end of October/early November, with a proposed launch date around Remembrance Sunday (10th November 2019).
2. The Task Group was also pleased to receive external funding to help support the development of resource materials for ministers and congregations which will accompany *Consider Grace*.

Additional Resolution

- 1(a) That the General Assembly welcome the move to publication of *Consider Grace* and the additional financial support available for the development of appropriate resource materials.

NORMAN HAMILTON

Item 11 – GENERAL COUNCIL (SECTION 2) Supplementary Report (Wednesday afternoon)

(A) GUYSMERE CENTRE TASK GROUP

Additional Report:

1. As reported, the 2018 General Assembly requested that a feasibility study of the redevelopment of the Guysmere Centre be brought to the 2019 General Assembly, “.....to enable a decision to be made regarding the sale, or otherwise, of the Guysmere site.” (see paragraph 1 on page 35 of the 2019 Reports). The report of that feasibility study is included on pages 35-56 of the 2019 Reports.
2. Resolutions 11 – 14 (Reports pages 112-113) are presented for the consideration of the Assembly. Resolution 11 is the substantive resolution, permitting the proposed redevelopment of Guysmere to proceed to the next stage – capital project development (technical and funding).

3. If resolution 11 is defeated, resolutions 12-14 will be withdrawn. In this eventuality, the Assembly would be asked to return to considering the resolutions that had been before the 2018 Assembly (see 2018 Reports page 144), namely:
- That the General Assembly agree that the Guysmere Centre be sold at the appropriate time.
 - That General Assembly direct that, once all financial liabilities are settled, steps be taken to establish a ‘Guysmere Fund’ under the control of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, to support ministry, mission and outreach with an emphasis where possible on residential ministry amongst young people and young adults.
 - That the General Council be authorised to oversee the sale of the Guysmere Centre and the drawing up of the terms of the “Guysmere Fund”, in consultation with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.

Revised Resolution 14

14. That a ‘Guysmere Development Panel’ (having an agreed membership with a ‘local emphasis’ and reporting to the General Council) be appointed by the 2019 General Assembly to present a robust business case and business plan for approval by the General Council before the project proceeds beyond the capital project development phase, as follows:

Moderator & Clerk of Assembly; Convener of the General Council; Rev Jim McCaughan (Convener);

Very Rev Dr Frank Sellar; Mr Jonathan Kelly, Mr Graham Patterson Mr Richard Russell;

Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton, Revs James Hyndman and Dr Trevor McCormick; Mrs Pat Hunter, Mr Jeremy Knox, Mr Basil McCorriston, Miss Heather McSparran, Mr Billy Pollock, Mr James Smyth and Mr David Stewart.

Additional Resolutions (only to be put if Resolution 11 is defeated):

- 11 (a) That the General Assembly agree that the Guysmere Centre be sold at the appropriate time.
- 11 (b) That General Assembly direct that, once all financial liabilities are settled, steps be taken to establish a ‘Guysmere Fund’ under the control of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, to support ministry, mission and outreach with an emphasis where possible on residential ministry amongst young people and young adults.
- 11 (c) That the General Council be authorised to oversee the sale of the Guysmere Centre and the drawing up of the terms of the “Guysmere Fund”, in consultation with the Council for Congregational Life and Witness.

(B) MODERATOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Moderator's Advisory Committee considered the request of the Rev Gabrielle Agnes Julie Farquhar to be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregation of Ballycarry. This request came to the Committee with the strong support of both the Kirk Session of Ballycarry and the Presbytery of Carrickfergus (at its May 2019 meeting). The Committee is also fully supportive and an additional resolution is appended for consideration by the General Assembly.

Additional resolution:

18(a) That, under Par 226(a) of the Code, the Rev Gabrielle Agnes Julie Farquhar be enrolled as Minister Emeritus of the congregation of Ballycarry.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN

Item 13 – COUNCIL FOR CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND WITNESS**Amended Resolution 2 (Wednesday afternoon – 4:45pm)**

That the General Assembly place the resources contained in the Church Hymnary Trust Fund at the disposal of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness for the support and development of all aspects of the worshipping life of congregations, including exploring ways to encourage contemporary re-engagement with psalmody.

COLIN MORRISON

**Item 15 – COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY
Supplementary Report (Thursday afternoon)****(A) RECEPTION OF MINISTERS AND LICENTIATES COMMITTEE**

As indicated in the reports, Appendix 6 on page 277, 'Recommendations concerning Ministers Without Charge and Licentiates Not Serving an Assistantship under Code Par 219A', a recommendation is included here concerning Mr J.R. Kernohan as follows:

Templepatrick

Mr J.R. Kernohan to be retained as licentiate; but that the Presbytery of Templepatrick be required to review his circumstances and status.

Revised resolution 7

That the recommendations in Appendix 6 and in Supplementary Reports page S14 concerning those whose retention as licentiates and ministers without charge has been sought by presbyteries be adopted.

(B) MINISTERIAL STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. The proposed Flexible Pathway Panel, as stated in the reports, Appendix 3, paragraph 4 on page 268, has been changed. The Council Convener and Secretary have been removed to allow them to be available for the hearing of any appeal. The new membership is: the Ministerial Studies and Development Convener and Secretary; the Principal, the Professor of Practical Theology and two other members of the Council. It is intended that the Council will appoint these additional members at the time when any review becomes necessary.
2. The following students for the ministry were presented with Certificates for Licensing at the Graduation Service on Thursday 23rd May: David Bingham, Peter Burke, John Graham, Gareth Keaveney, David Morrison.
3. The intended resolution concerning implementation of the Ministry Application Pathway Review referred to in Appendix 2 on page 267 of the reports has inadvertently been omitted. It is appended.

Additional resolution 3a

That the Assembly give approval for the proposals in Appendix 2 concerning the Ministry Application Pathway Review to be implemented beginning with applications made in 2020.

(C) UNION THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1. Further to the Council's report to the General Assembly as printed, the Union Theological College Review Task Group (see pages 248-249, paragraphs 10-13 of the reports) reported to the Management Committee that it had considered a range of options for the future of the college and discussions had taken place at various levels with representatives of a number of institutions in Britain and Ireland.
2. The Task Group recommended and the Management Committee agreed:
 - (a) That a response to the QUB Review is made to Queen's University.
 - (b) That a report to the General Assembly is prepared for the Supplementary Reports.
3. In addition, further exploration will be made concerning the obtaining of undergraduate degree awarding powers and of interim undergraduate validation options with other universities. As part of the report referred to at 2(b) above the narrative from the Management Committee, also adopted as the report of the

Council, is shown below, with the Management Committee's response referred to at 2(a) above attached as Appendix A and a submission made by the Principal to the University in January 2018 attached as Appendix B.

4. The Task Group also reported that it had looked at the financial implications of the various options it has examined. If the College teaches out the remaining Queen's students and continues to teach ministry students with a reduced staff it will face an increasing annual deficit. Although initially small, it is anticipated this will reach and stabilise at approximately £250,000 in 2021. This is obviously unsustainable and underlines the importance of securing additional income through recruiting other students and online courses.

Narrative concerning Union Theological College adopted by the Council for Training in Ministry

1. Union Theological College (UTC) was formed in 1978 through the merging of two previous colleges: the Presbyterian College Belfast (Assembly's College), formed in 1853 and Magee College Londonderry, formed in 1865. Since 1926, the College (then the Presbyterian College) has provided teaching on behalf of Queen's University for degrees in theology. Over the years Union College had been joined by Edgehill College (Methodist), the Irish Baptist College, St Mary's College and Belfast Bible College. Since 2015 however UTC has been the only college involved in the teaching of undergraduates.
2. The exodus of the other colleges led to QUB conducting a strategic review of theology in 2016. The review expressed concerns about the diversity of the theology degree and the College worked with the University to devise a new BA degree in Theology where 30% of the courses were taken outside Union College. This degree was fully approved by the University's academic approval processes and the first year of this programme began in September 2018.
3. In June 2018 the decisions of the General Assembly relating to a credible profession and to our relationship with the Church of Scotland resulted in a period of intense reporting and speculation around the relationship between Queen's and UTC. Some asked if it was appropriate for Queen's students to be taught by the theological college of the Presbyterian Church. One story (Belfast Telegraph 27 June) headlined 'QUB reviewing links to Presbyterian College' quoted a spokesperson from the University saying, 'Queen's said, "In light of a number of developments in recent weeks, the university is taking active steps to review the nature of its relationship with Union Theological College and several options are currently under consideration." In addition, when representatives of Union College met with University staff, including the Acting Vice Chancellor, reference was made to the General Assembly decisions, media reports and complaints that QUB was receiving, including some from those the University described as 'senior Presbyterians'. Subsequent statements have attempted to distance the University from linking the review to the decisions of the General Assembly but prior to June 2018 there had

been no indication that any review of the theology curriculum at UTC was planned for 2018. The evidence points inexorably to the conclusion that, were it not for the intense reporting during the 2018 General Assembly and speculation following it around the link with Queen's, no review would have taken place.

4. The review was concluded in early October 2018 but the college was not consulted nor engaged in the process of report preparation after the Review team had met in September. Despite the College's requests, the Report was withheld until after a final decision was made. There was therefore no opportunity for the College to correct inaccuracies or refute conclusions it felt were unwarranted. Despite this, on the basis of the Report, student intake for 2019 was suspended in December 2018 and on 9 April 2019 the University Senate decided to withdraw all undergraduate and postgraduate theology programmes, including postgraduate courses provided by the other colleges.
5. Whilst accepting that the University has come to its final decision, the members of the Management Committee take issue with many of the assertions of the review and has written to the University challenging its basis and conclusions (see the Appendix A). The main criticisms made of UTC are around the diversity of its teaching and its lack of engagement with the University, both of which we strongly refute and College's submission to the Review panel in September 2018 contradicted.
6. With regard to diversity, the BA in Theology (see paragraph 2 above) was the mechanism agreed by the University itself to address the question of diversity, yet the review declared it inadequate before its commencement. In addition, the Management Committee maintains that for many years the faculty has taught a broad range of perspectives. No question of bias or lack of breadth has been raised by external examiners.
7. With regard to engagement, the College engaged fully with the University in implementing the recommendations of the 2016 review. When these changes had been approved by the University's own academic approval processes and implemented, the Principal wrote to the University in January 2018 suggesting further ways in which the relationship could be developed and asking for an opportunity to discuss this (see Appendix B). Although some subsequent meetings were held the focus was financial matters raised by Queen's, and the College indicated its commitment to working positively with the University in addressing financial and governance issues relating to the Institute of Theology.
8. In addition, the impression has been given, in the media at least, that the teaching standards at UTC are less than adequate. This has caused hurt and reputational damage to academic staff some of whom have worked with Queen's University for many years and are globally recognised as experts in their field. In fact, the external examiners' reports consistently stated that the learning experiences offered by Union College compared favourably with other UK universities and the National Student

Survey results regularly placed Theology ahead of many other subjects within Queen's University.

9. UTC and the committee deeply regret that a way could not be found to continue to work together. We are grateful for the long and productive relationship we have enjoyed with the University and remain open to mutual cooperation in the future should the opportunity present itself.
10. Whilst we regret that our partnership with Queen's University has been ended, we believe the future provides new opportunities for Union College to deliver flexible and accessible programmes that will result in excellent training for our ministry students.
11. The College remains committed, in cooperation with Queen's University, to enabling all current Queen's students to complete their studies over the next two plus years.
12. The Committee is very grateful that 13 new ministry students are to be proposed to the General Assembly for acceptance as candidates for the ordained ministry. Much work has been done by the faculty to prepare the new Master of Divinity programme and we are excited about the flexible and integrated pathway that the students will follow.
13. Faculty have also worked hard at developing online courses which were first introduced at last year's General Assembly. It is believed these will be a blessing to the church in the UK and Ireland and across the world and this is borne out by the encouraging feedback which has been received to date.
14. The opportunity to teach theology at undergraduate level to non-ministry students has been very important and re-establishing such provision is a priority. This will require the obtaining of undergraduate degree awarding powers for the College or a validation agreement with another institution and, though work continues to make this happen, it may take some time.
15. It is intended that what is outlined in paragraphs 12-14 above will enable the College to continue to fulfil the General Assembly's requirements in Code Par 119: *It shall be a prime duty of the Union Theological College to provide for those theological studies or courses which may be required by the Assembly of its students for the ministry; and generally to promote theological education of high academic standard and practical training relevant to the work and witness of the Church.*

APPENDIX A

(as referred to in paragraph 5 of the Narrative above)

**Union Theological College Management Committee
Response to the Queen's University Belfast 2018 Review Report, 22nd May 2019****Introduction**

Queen's University's Review of Agreements and Relationships in the Institute of Theology was carried out in September 2018. On the basis of the review report, the Senate of Queen's University decided to withdraw all degree programmes in theology on 9 April 2019. Whilst we understand that the decision of the University is final, the members of the Management Committee of Union College wishes to put on record its response to this review report, and particularly to respond to the criticisms of the College presented in the report. In summary, we believe that the report arrives at conclusions which are based on a flawed review process and which did not provide adequate evidence to support its claims and conclusions.

1. Contrary to the claims made by the University, it is evident that the 2018 Review of the relationship with Union College was triggered by decisions made at the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) General Assembly in June 2018. No review of theology following the 2016 Strategic Review of Theology was alluded to by the University before that point. The following evidence may be presented to support this assertion:
 - In a conversation with the Pro Vice Chancellor (PVC) in Sept/Oct 2017, the Principal mentioned the University's concerns about breadth and diversity as outlined in the 2016 Strategic Review of Theology and was assured that this was not a major concern since these issues were being addressed by the diversity incorporated into the new degree programmes that had been approved by the University. If there were serious concerns about the modules offered by Union College it seems strange that these issues were not highlighted or mentioned by the University's Programme Evaluation/Validation Meeting in its approval of the new programmes in May 2017.
 - Following conversations with colleagues in the University at Christmas 2017, the Principal wrote to the PVC on 2 January 2018 and included a discussion paper in which he suggested that further consideration should be given to the place of theology in the University. The discussion paper, shared with the Director of the Institute of Theology, outlined some areas where improvements might be sought in seeking an enhancement of the work of the Institute of Theology. There was no response from the University to the issues raised in this paper. The subsequent claim in the 2018 Review Report that Union College was unwilling to make changes in its work as part of the

Institute of Theology is contradicted by this request which was made six months before the 2018 Review was even mentioned.

- The discussion paper submitted in January 2018 also opened the way for a conversation to take place in which, having considered all the options, the University and the College may have concluded that, for a variety of reasons, the relationship should be terminated. This could have been completed in a mutually-agreeable and respectful way without all the attendant negative publicity that surrounded the University's decisions in June and December 2018 and in April 2019. The fact that the review was announced so hastily, and that its terms of reference were changed at least twice over the summer of 2018, is a further indication that it was a response to internal and external pressures being placed on the University following the June 2018 meeting of the PCI General Assembly. This fact was stated in a meeting with the Acting Vice Chancellor in June 2018 following the media interest in the relationship between Queen's and Union College. The PVC said he had come under pressure from those whom he described as "senior Presbyterians" to review the relationship with UTC. It is disappointing that there was no engagement or discussion of the substantial issues raised last summer by the media and by vocal critics of the College.
2. It should also be noted that the College, as the major stakeholder in the work of the Institute of Theology, was not consulted nor engaged in the process of report preparation after the Review Team had met in September 2018. In spite of the College's requests, the Review Report was withheld from the College until after the Senate made its decision on 9 April 2019 to withdraw all theology programmes.
 3. The decision to suspend admissions for September 2019 intake was announced on 18 December 2018 without any prior consultation with the College. As a key stakeholder in the work of the Institute of Theology, it would seem necessary that the College would have been consulted with regard to the conclusions of the Review before critical decisions were made about suspending admissions, in the understanding that the decision would have a major impact on the College's finances and reputation. Also, given the allegations made in the report against the College, it is highly regrettable and unreasonable that the College had no opportunity to offer evidence to refute these allegations before a final decision was taken. Further, the College was not given access to the University's Withdrawal Pro Forma prior to the Senate's decision.
 4. If, as the report claims, the modules offered by Union College were unacceptable to the University, why was the BA in Theology programme approved by the University in 2017 and opened for admissions in September 2018? If the Review Report and its recommendations were based exclusively on academic concerns, it

- seems altogether strange and inappropriate that the University should initiate a review of recently-approved programmes before those programmes had even begun to be delivered. The normal review and quality assurance process requires monitoring and review of modules on an annual basis in line with the University's stated policies, but by initiating this review the University was contravening its own review process. It is clear that the motivation for the Review was not based on the poor performance of programmes that had not yet been delivered, the very programmes which the PVC said would deliver the required diversity. There was no indication from the University prior to June 2018 that the new programmes in theology failed to meet the University's standards and expectations or were an inadequate response to the 2016 Strategic Review of Theology.
5. The Review Report states that UTC did not accept the Strategic Review Panel's recommendation for formal University participation in appointment processes for College teaching staff on University-validated programmes. In several places the report states that one of the reasons for bringing the relationship to an end was the University's lack of involvement in the appointment of staff at Union College. Whilst no formal request was ever made with regard to this issue, representatives from the University were invited to participate informally in the appointment process for the three most recent appointments at Union College. The Director of the Institute of Theology, as an external assessor, was a member of the selection and interviewing panels, and made significant contributions to the process. Since the University made no direct contribution to the funding of these positions, and since they were appointments made by the General Assembly of PCI and its Council for Training in Ministry in order to deliver the mission of the College, the governance arrangements of the College did not allow for the University to have a direct, formal input into these appointments. All Union College academic staff are subject to the teacher recognition process administered through the Collaborative Provision Group of the University, which is the University's own appointment and recognition process. In this way, the University retains total control over those who teach on University-validated programmes.
 6. The Review Report states: "*Evidence from external examiners/advisors confirmed that UTC was not in a position to change their modules to meet the requirements of the Review.*" No documentary evidence to support this assertion has been provided to the College and none is offered in the Review Report. There is no evidence of communications from the University to the College requesting changes to modules nor were major concerns recorded through the University's module review and monitoring process. The evidence arising from a detailed examination of the modules offered through the College in terms of reading lists, learning outcomes, and assessment regimes does not support the accusation that the modules were taught from only one perspective and lacked breadth and diversity. There was no evidence offered that the modules had failed to meet the requirements of the University's external examiners. In fact, the external

examiners' reports consistently stated that the learning experiences offered by Union College compared favourably with other UK universities and the National Student Survey results regularly placed Theology ahead of many other subjects within Queen's University. The students at Union regularly reported a high degree of satisfaction with their courses in recent years.

7. The Review Report says: "*While the IOT Director was actively engaged in driving the required changes, it became apparent that some issues remained unresolved.*" There is no written evidence and no minutes of meetings as to what these unresolved issues were, or how they were communicated to the College. In his discussion paper of January 2018 the Principal reports that the good relationship between the College and the Director of the Institute of Theology was one of the strengths which provided a good foundation for the future of Theology in the University. This is quite different from the Review Report's narrative about the College not responding to the issues raised by the Director. Up to June 2018, the Principal regularly reported on the good relationship between himself and the Director, and their ability to address issues in an open and constructive way. If the Director of the Institute had identified any unresolved issues then it would be expected that they would have been reported in the minutes of the Institute's Education/Postgraduate Committee or Theology Management Board and should be referenced in the minutes of the Theology Board.
8. The Review report alleges that there was a lack of encouragement by Union College for students to attend a student development event on Ecumenism in May 2018. This event was arranged by the Director of the Institute in cooperation with the Corrymeela Community, and there was no active involvement by the Principal in making the arrangements. When the Principal heard about the event, and asked about arrangements, participation and promotion of the event, the Director reported that the support of the Principal had not been sought directly because the event was a cooperative one between the Institute and Corrymeela. The implication was that the Director recognized that this development week event was promoting concerns that were relevant to the work of the Corrymeela Community. The event was held after classes had concluded for the academic year and when members of the Union faculty had taken on other commitments. The poor student response might have been avoided if there had been more active engagement with the College at an earlier stage, but the general uptake by students for these events has been poor. The College has arranged a number of development events, and has supported and commended all development events arranged through the Institute. The claim that UTC's lack of encouragement to students hindered the development of research excellence is over-stated, and not set in the context of overall very poor student participation in other development activities at this time.

9. The Review Report includes details of the new first-year module, “Religion, Faith and Society” without indicating that this module included much active involvement by Union College faculty, one of whom acted as module co-ordinator, as well as the College assuming all the staffing arrangements for tutorial support. Union College invested considerable time and money in the development of this module and had discussed with the Director of the Institute the development of additional modules at different levels. The report mentions the important and valuable involvement of St Mary’s University College in the delivery of this module, but this involvement was minimal compared to UTC’s contribution. By failing to mention UTC’s activity in the management and delivery of this module, and the discussion about future developments, it is hard to resist the conclusion that a restricted and limited picture is being painted in this report.

10. The Report states: *“However the content of the Theology modules that make up the major element in the new BA in Theology had not changed significantly and they continued to be taught almost entirely from the theological ethos and doctrinal framework of UTC. UTC’s response to enhancing the breadth and diversity of their offer appeared to provide very little opportunity for students to gain from other theological perspectives which was an essential requirement for the undergraduate programmes.”* These statements call into question the academic integrity of all faculty who have ever taught in Union College throughout its relationship with QUB. At no time have members of the College faculty adopted a doctrinaire or narrow approach to their subject area. Their research, publications and teaching have been recognized consistently over many years by their academic guilds and monitored by their external examiners. This allegation is not supported by any written evidence. The fact that limited changes were made to existing modules is an indication that they, in many aspects, already met the requirements for breadth and diversity. To support this allegation of teaching from a narrow perspective, the University needs to provide minutes of their quality assurance process, and particularly their module review meetings and external examiner reports, where this issue was identified and the required changes were described. It should also produce correspondence from the programme external examiners indicating the nature and extent of the changes that were required as part of the University’s review and monitoring process.

11. The Report says that *“UTC’s insistence that a clause be inserted into the 2018-19 one-year MOA to state that the UTC Equality and Diversity Policy applies in relation to the appointment of staff, which is at odds with the University’s commitment to equality and diversity, concerned the University”*. The clause that the College had asked to be inserted into the MOA was on the recommendation of the General Assembly Solicitor, and simply stated that in the appointment of any staff to Union College, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland would follow its own Equality and Diversity policy. The PCI policy has been approved by the Labour

Relations Agency and the Equality Commission and it seems strange that this policy would concern the University. The subsequent statement in the report, *“It has been confirmed that UTC is unable to meet the University’s expectations regarding equality and diversity”*, requires some explanation. There are no barriers placed on anyone coming to study at Union College and the admissions process to all University programmes taught at Union College is fully under the control of the University. If it means that the Presbyterian College in Belfast tends to employ Presbyterians as members of its teaching staff then that should not surprise or concern anyone. It has always been the case, but it has not prevented the faculty of Union College from engaging in academic work which examines the key issues from a variety of perspectives.

12. Throughout the Review Report there is a series of comments which lack supporting evidence such as “the student experience may be compromised”, or “has the potential to impact negatively on the student experience”. These provisional statements indicate that there may be some risks to the student experience, but there is no evidence to support the negative conclusions. Even when students report positively on the sense of community experienced at Union College, the report re-interprets this to mean that students were not exposed to the intellectual and cultural diversity normally associated with a University undergraduate experience. In order to support this allegation, the University would need to demonstrate how that “intellectual and cultural diversity of perspective” is experienced by students in all other schools, subjects and Colleges of the University, and give evidence of how this is ensured and evaluated.
13. Prior to the meeting of the Review Team, Union College submitted a paper outlining its understanding of the issues that were under review and offering some areas for consideration by the Review Team. It is disappointing that no reference was made to this submission in the report and there is no acknowledgement that Union College’s input was given serious consideration. This is further evidence that the review process failed to engage adequately and respectfully with one of the main stakeholders in the Institute of Theology.

We conclude that this Review Report:

- is based on a flawed and confused review process that did not permit engagement on the substantial issues;
- lacks supporting evidence for its claims and conclusions;
- did not adequately or respectfully include Union College in its consultations.

Whilst we regret the University’s decision to withdraw theology programmes, the College remains committed to ensuring that all students in theology at Queen’s are able to complete their programmes of study in line with all the expectations of the Quality Code.

APPENDIX B

(as referred to in paragraph 7 in the Narrative above)

A submission by the Principal of UTC to the Queen's University made on 2nd January 2018 - suggesting further ways in which the relationship could be developed and asking for an opportunity to discuss this

Theology at Queen's

The Strategic Review of Theology in 2016 helped to identify a number of curricular changes which are currently being implemented. But there may be need for a more radical assessment of the place of Theology at Queen's than was possible at the time of the Review, and in the light of some current issues summarised below.

Current issues

1. Union Theological College has become the only provider of undergraduate degrees in Theology and carries the main burden of teaching at undergraduate level and supervision at postgraduate level. It is important to recognise that UTC is a confessional, denominational college and, while it does not aspire to be the Religious Studies department of the University and does not have unlimited personnel and financial resources, it is willing to continue to be an active partner with others in the delivery of Theology at Queen's.
2. The other colleges in the Institute of Theology have sought accreditation by other UK universities for degree programmes at all levels and seem to have less commitment than before to the work of the Institute. Most recently, Belfast Bible College has introduced a new Masters programme entitled 'Bible and Ministry in the Contemporary World', accredited by the University of Cumbria. It is not clear whether the University has sought to ascertain why the colleges have moved in this direction. One assumes that the presumed restrictions of the Irish Universities Act regarding confessional content provides at least some explanation. The work of the Institute would be greatly strengthened by the renewed commitment of all the Colleges, the active participation of St Mary's University College, Belfast and the incorporation of the work in Religious Studies at Stranmillis University College. If that is not possible, then an alternative model might need to be developed.
3. The preparation of the Memo of Agreement between UTC and the University requires a more efficient process, a clearer description of the responsibilities of both parties, and a full commitment to its implementation. Both this year's and last year's MOA contained at least one commitment which has not been honoured. Some "wrinkles" in the collaboration between UTC and the University might be smoothed out by clearer agreement on issues like teacher recognition, student engagement, the quality assurance process, and the support of students with disabilities.

4. An alternative for UTC would be to follow the trend of the other colleges in the Institute and seek a lighter touch validation of its degree programmes through another UK university, or more likely, to use its degree-awarding powers granted under the charter of The Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland.

Current strengths

1. An excellent working relationship exists between the faculty of UTC and the Director of the Institute of Theology, and there is a shared desire to see Theology at Queen's enhanced and contributing to the life and vision of the University. We put on record the professional and positive way in which the Director has sought to facilitate and implement the innovations proposed through the Strategic Review of Theology, and her energy and commitment to the future of Theology at Queen's.
2. The work of the Religious Studies Research Forum confirms that there is a significant number of faculty members from across the University who appreciate the importance of the influence of faith and religion in their disciplines and who are willing to explore that interface in a way that will contribute to the enhancement of Theology as well as their own discipline. The subject areas include History, Geography, Anthropology, Philosophy, Psychology, Law, Medical and Biological Sciences, and Architecture. Professor Stephen Williams' current research on the ethical and moral issues connected with developments in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence is another example of this interface. If these resources could be harnessed and channelled it might make Queen's attractively distinctive in both its undergraduate teaching and research opportunities. The repeal of the Irish Universities Act restricting the teaching of Theology at Queen's opens the door for a new approach in this area.
3. There is a growing number of RS and RE A level students in local feeder schools who have an enthusiasm for Theology. By actively supporting the teaching staff of these schools we hope to see an increased number of applicants with suitable grades wishing to pursue Theology at Queen's. While it has a global vision, Queen's remains the provider of higher education for a significant number of young people in this region, and many of them wish to study Theology.

Opportunities

1. The events of 9-11, and continuing terrorist attacks across Europe, have ensured that religion and faith will continue to occupy an important place in the life of our world, as well as our local community. If Queen's is to continue to shape the world, then its graduates (in almost every discipline) must have an appreciation of the religious, ethical and faith-informed issues that affect our common life.
2. The repeal of the Irish Universities Act is an opportunity for Queen's to develop courses and learning experiences that will address the needs of every faith community and will "ensure that in matters of religion, debate is well-informed and of high quality".

“The interface between academic study and practicing religious communities is complex and significant. Critical analysis may challenge profoundly held convictions producing sharp rejection of academic study, but may stimulate engagement with contemporary concerns. Such study is a major contributor to community understanding and development and the avoidance or challenging of prejudices arising from misinformation. Contemporary society in the UK has an interest in ensuring that in matters of religion, debate is well-informed and of high quality.”

QAA Subject Benchmark Statement, *Theology and Religious Studies*, October 2014.

Conclusion

Theology at Queen’s, appropriately managed and resourced, can make a significant contribution to the University’s vision and mission. We ought not to miss the opportunity that is currently before us and we should begin a conversation immediately to outline the practical steps we need to take. Specifically, this conversation needs to begin before any MOA for the 2018-21 period is agreed.

*Stafford Carson
Principal
Union Theological College*

NIGEL McCULLOUGH

Item 17 – GENERAL COUNCIL (SECTION 3) Supplementary Report (Thursday Evening)

Correction - Finance Panel Report, page 65, paragraph 13

Rev K Nelson (Castlewellan and Leitrim)
Rev RD Maxwell (St Andrew’s, Belfast)

TREVOR D GRIBBEN

**ITEM 18 – OVERTURES ON THE BOOKS
(Thursday Evening, pp308-309)**

GENERAL - Overtures anent Pars 53, 57, 70(b) and 70(d) of the Code (p308-309)

Resolution:

1. That the Overtures anent Pars 53, 57, 70(b) and 70(d) of the Code, having lain on the books for one year, be enacted as the law of the Church.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN

**ITEM 19 – AD HOC OVERTURES
(Thursday Evening, pp 310-313)**

A. GENERAL

Overture anent Par 219(5) of the Code (pp310-311)

Resolution:

1. That the Overture anent Par 219(5) of the Code be received and that, under Par 111 of the Code, it be made the rule of the Church.

Overture anent Par 72(j) of the Code (p311)

Resolution:

1. That the Overture anent Par 72(j) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
2. That the Overture anent Par 72(j) of the Code be made an Interim Act.

Overture anent Par 222(3) of the Code (p311)

Resolution:

1. That the Overture anent Par 222(3) of the Code be received and that, under Par 111 of the Code, it be made the rule of the Church.

B. LINKAGE COMMISSION

Overture anent Par 128(5)(b) of the Code (p312)

Resolution:

1. That the Overture anent Par 128(5)(b) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
2. That the Overture anent Par 128(5)(b) of the Code be made an Interim Act.

Overtures anent Par 198(b) and 237 of the Code (p312)

Resolution:

1. That the Overtures anent Par 198(b) and 237 of the Code be received and that, under Par 111 of the Code, they be made the rule of the Church.

C. COUNCIL FOR TRAINING IN MINISTRY

Overture anent Par 69(2) of the Code (p312)

Resolution:

1. That the Overture anent Par 69(2) of the Code be received and placed on the books.
2. That the Overture anent Par 69(2) of the Code be made an Interim Act.

Overture anent Par 73 of the Code (pp312-313)

Resolution:

1. That the Overture anent Par 73 of the Code be received and placed on the books.
2. That the Overture anent Par 73 of the Code be made an Interim Act.

Overture anent Par 275(3)(b) of the Code (p313)

Resolution:

1. That the Overture anent Par 275(3)(b) of the Code be received and that, under Par 111 of the Code, it be made the rule of the Church.

TREVOR D GRIBBEN

**Additional Item 25(a) – MEMORIAL TRANSMITTED
Supplementary Report (Friday Morning)**

MEMORIAL TRANSMITTED

**To the Venerable the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to
meet in Belfast on 3 June, 2019.**

The memorial of the Kirk Session of the congregation of Third Portglenone respectfully showeth:

That the congregation known as Third Portglenone was established in 1839; that it has been the case for many years that there have been only two Presbyterian congregations in Portglenone; that the congregation is commonly referred to in the community as ‘Townhill Church’; and that the Kirk Session for the facilitation of the work of the gospel in the community desire that the name of the congregation be changed to ‘Townhill’.

That under the Code Par 106(e) the General Assembly is the only court of the Church which can exercise powers to change the name by which congregations shall be known.

Memorialists, therefore, pray your Venerable Assembly to change the name of the congregation of Third Portglenone to ‘Townhill’.

And memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Adopted by the Kirk Session at its meeting on Thursday 6th September 2018

Rev Philip McCullough, Moderator
Robin Dickey, Clerk

Licensed by the Presbytery of Ballymena at its meeting on 4th December 2018 and transmitted to the General Assembly with the strong recommendation that its prayer be granted.

Martin D. McNeely (Moderator)
Joseph J. Andrews (Clerk)

Resolution: That the Memorial be received and its prayer granted.

Proposed by: Eric McCallum

Seconded by: Rev Philip McCullough

