

Presbyterian Women

Name of Organisation at central level:

Presbyterian Women (PW)

Name of Organisation at congregational level:

PW Group

Motto of Organisation:

Living for Jesus

Mission Statement and Aims of Organisation:

Presbyterian Women encourages women to become disciples of Christ.

Presbyterian Women aims to highlight the need for:

1. Love and unity
2. Obedience to God
3. Christian living and spiritual maturity
4. Service using gifts, time and money
5. Local and global mission

Logo of Organisation:



Presbyterian Women is to be a Christ centred Organisation. In the logo the circle around the cross represents women whose lives are centred on the Lord Jesus Christ.

CONSTITUTION

1. Name

The name of the organisation shall be *Presbyterian Women*, incorporating the former *Presbyterian Women's Association* and the former *Young Women's Groups*, and may be referred to as PW.

2. Motto

The motto of *Presbyterian Women* shall be: Living for Jesus

3. Mission Statement and Aims

Presbyterian Women encourages women to become disciples of Christ. *Presbyterian Women* aims to highlight the need for:

- i Love and unity
- ii Obedience to God
- iii Christian living and spiritual maturity
- iv Service using gifts, time and money
- v Local and global mission

4. PW Groups

Where possible a group shall be formed in each congregation to bring together women at a congregational level, encourage them to become disciples of Jesus Christ and work to fulfil the aims of *Presbyterian Women*. Each group shall operate under the authority of the Kirk Session. Stated meetings shall be held and membership shall be open to all women who accept the aims of *Presbyterian Women*.

5. PW LINK (Living, Inspiring and Nurturing for the Kingdom)

There shall be in each Presbytery a PW Committee known as the PW LINK to bring together members of *Presbyterian Women*.

Constituent members:

Three members from each PW Group, at least one of whom should be an Office Bearer. Each member to serve for three years, unless:

- (i) elected to serve on the PW Forum or the PW LINK Planning Subgroup;
or
- (ii) appointed to represent *Presbyterian Women* at the General Assembly or Presbytery.

In these circumstances membership of the PW LINK should be extended until the additional responsibilities end.

6. PW Forum

There shall be a PW Forum to bring together PW LINK representatives at a central level. The PW Forum shall be made up of:

- (a) members of the PW Panel and its Subgroups
- (b) five representatives from each PW LINK:
 - i. the three serving PW LINK Office Bearers i.e. Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer; and
 - ii. two others from each PW LINK, appointed to attend for three years.

Others may also be invited to attend, as appropriate.

7. PW Panel

The decision-making body of the Organisation shall be a PW Panel under the Women's Strategy and Coordination Panel (WSCP).

Constituent members:

- (a) Council Convener, Council Secretary, Convener of WSCP, PW President, PW Home Vice President, PW Overseas Vice President;
- (b) Two members drawn from the membership of the WSCP;
- (c) Seven members drawn from a PW Volunteer Bank into which members' names were submitted.

The Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer, the PW Support Officer and the Moderator's wife shall be invited to sit and deliberate.

Voting members will serve a maximum of four years and can serve two consecutive terms.

8. Finance

The financial year of PW shall end on 31st December. A statement of income and expenditure shall be submitted to the Annual Meeting of *Presbyterian Women*. A report and statement of annual accounts shall be submitted to the PW Panel, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, the General Assembly and, if appropriate, other relevant Councils. Each PW Group will receive a copy of an Annual Report including a Financial Supplement.

A. Role of the PW Panel

This is the decision-making body of the Organisation of *Presbyterian Women* and the main delivery unit of women's ministry under the Council for Congregational Life & Witness (CCLW).

1. It will be concerned with the **spiritual life** of the Organisation as it:
 - decides the theme and direction of *Presbyterian Women* taking into account the theme and direction of the CCLW and the wider church
 - promotes women's ministry
 - encourages prayer
 - educates regarding mission at home and overseas
 - organises the Annual Meeting and other conferences in association with the CCLW Events, Training & Resources Coordination Panel
 - produces resources
 - provides guidance for PW LINK and PW Group meetings
2. It will be concerned with **finance** as it:
 - educates about the PW Mission Fund
 - allocates grants
 - decides projects
 - formulates financial policies for speakers' fees etc. at central level in consultation with the CCLW Events, Training & Resources Coordination Panel
3. It will be responsible for **policy making**:
 - reviewing existing policies as necessary
 - communicate current policy to PW LINKs and PW Groups
4. It will work in **partnership** with the **Committees of the Council for Congregational Life & Witness**, the **Council for Mission in Ireland** and the **Council for Training in Ministry** in relation to Deaconesses; the **Council for Global Mission** in relation to overseas mission personnel; and other **Councils and Committees** as necessary.
5. It will oversee the **production of the magazine of *Presbyterian Women*; *Wider World*.**
6. It will be consulted on **staffing arrangements** as they relate to *Presbyterian Women*.

B. Membership of the PW Panel

Constituent members:

- (a) Convener of the Council for Congregational Life & Witness, Secretary of the Council for Congregational Life & Witness, Convener of Women's Strategy &

Coordination Panel (WSCP), PW President, PW Home Vice President, PW Overseas Vice President;

(b) Two members drawn from the membership of the WSCP;

(c) Seven members drawn from a PW Volunteer Bank into which members' names were submitted.

The Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer, the PW Support Officer and the Moderator's wife shall be invited to sit and deliberate.

Voting members will serve a maximum of four years and can serve two consecutive terms. The PW President will leave the panel after her term of service and a replacement will be taken from the PW Volunteer Bank.

PW Volunteer Bank

The PW Volunteer Bank is similar to the Pool nominations for the various Councils and Committees except it will be limited to Presbyterian Women.

The following members of the PW Panel (Council Convener, Council Secretary, Convener of the WSCP, PW President, PW Home Vice President, PW Overseas Vice President, Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer and the two members drawn from the membership of the WSCP) will nominate seven members from the PW Volunteer Bank to the WSCP for their consideration as members of the PW Panel, seeking to represent variety in terms of geographical area, age, skills, experience and lifestyle.

One member of the PW Volunteer Bank will be selected each year to join the PW Panel as the President will cease to be a member of the PW Panel at the end of their term of office.

The PW Volunteer Bank will also be used to identify women who could be involved in Task Groups, Subgroups or *Presbyterian Women* events.

C. Office Bearers

The Office Bearers shall meet, as necessary, with the Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer to oversee the workings of the Organisation.

Members of the PW Panel will vote for a Vice President each year from among their membership. They will serve two years as Vice President and become President in the third year.

Office Bearers of the PW Panel shall not normally be eligible for re-appointment for a period of three years.

If for any reason the President is unable to complete her term of office, the longest serving Vice President will take over this role.

If both Vice Presidents have been elected at the same time the incoming President should not have held the same Vice Presidency as the outgoing

President - this ensures that the 'expertise' of the incoming President is alternated each year.

If for any reason a Vice President is unable to complete her term of office, a replacement will be elected from the PW Panel and another Panel member will be selected from the PW Volunteer Bank.

If necessary, any Office Bearer may be selected from the PW Volunteer Bank.

A **President**, appointed for one year to:

- act as Chairperson for the *PW Panel*, the *PW Business and Finance Subgroup* and the *Wider World Subgroup*
- keep up to date with all aspects of *Presbyterian Women* and liaise with the Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer
- represent *Presbyterian Women*, as appropriate
- chair the PW Panel and other PW meetings, as required
- go on an overseas trip on behalf of *Presbyterian Women*, if required
- undertake deputation which should be booked through the PW staff in the CCLW Office

A **Home Vice President**, appointed for two years to:

- keep up to date with all aspects of the Mission at Home, including South Belfast Friendship House and the work of Deaconesses, reporting to the PW Panel as required
- liaise with the Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer
- represent *Presbyterian Women*, as appropriate
- chair meetings as required
- undertake deputation which should be booked through the PW staff in the CCLW Office
- deputise for the President when necessary

An **Overseas Vice President**, appointed for two years to:

- keep up to date with all aspects of overseas mission personnel, reporting to the PW Panel as required
- liaise with the Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer
- represent *Presbyterian Women*, as appropriate
- chair meetings as required
- undertake deputation which should be booked through the PW staff in the CCLW Office
- deputise for the President when necessary

D. Subgroups and Task Groups

The PW Panel will stipulate the make-up of each Subgroup and Task Group. Those from the PW Volunteer Bank with relevant expertise may be invited to become members of any one of the Subgroups or Task Groups. A PW Office

Bearer will be appointed as Chairperson of the *Inspirations Task Group*. A PW Panel member will act as Chairperson if an office bearer is not available.

The PW Panel shall have the following Subgroups:

1. A ***Business and Finance Subgroup*** to:

- prepare business for the PW Panel and carry out its directives
- provide the PW Panel with:
 - i accurate information about the finance of the Organisation
 - ii the annual accounts for consideration and approval
 - iii proposals regarding grants to the relevant Councils
 - iv prepared budgets, taking into account both the present income and expenditure and the forecasted income and expenditure
- take responsibility for making practical arrangements for the Annual Meeting of *Presbyterian Women*, the PW Forum, *Presbyterian Women* conferences and other events

Membership: PW President (Chairperson), PW Vice Presidents, WSCP Convener, Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer, PW Support Officer, members of the PW Panel and those from the PW Volunteer Bank with relevant expertise. Membership will be reviewed annually and not exceed five years unless serving as WSCP Convener or a PW Office Bearer.

2. An ***Inspirations Subgroup*** to:

- take responsibility for the preparation of new programme material for *Inspirations* under the direction of the PW Panel.

Membership: PW Vice President (Chairperson), WSCP Convener, Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer, PW Support Officer, members of the PW Panel and those from the PW Volunteer Bank with relevant expertise. Membership will be reviewed annually and not exceed five years unless serving as WSCP Convener or a PW Office Bearer.

3. A ***Wider World Subgroup*** to:

- support and encourage the Editor
- provide feedback
- contribute ideas and suggestions for inclusion in the magazine

Membership: PW President (Chairperson), WSCP Convener, Women's Ministry and PW Development Officer, PW Support Officer, members of the PW Panel and those from the PW Volunteer Bank with relevant expertise. Membership will be reviewed annually and not exceed three years unless serving as WSCP Convener or a PW Office Bearer.

Other Subgroups and Task Groups may be set up as required.

E. Rules and Stipulations

1. In cases of emergency, a committee, consisting of the Office Bearers, WSCP Convener, and Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer, shall have the power to act. Decisions taken must be ratified by a subsequent regular meeting of the PW Panel.
2. In accordance with Paragraph 270(4) of The Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, any member who, without giving due reason, has failed to attend any of the meetings of the PW Panel for three successive meetings, shall be deemed to have retired from membership, and the subsequent vacancy shall be filled.
3. A special meeting of the PW Panel may be called by the Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer and President after consultation with the other Office Bearers, or on the decision of a full meeting of the PW Panel, or at the written request of five PW Panel members.
4. Members of the PW Panel shall represent PW on other Councils, Panels and Committees as required.
5. The Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer shall be responsible for the administration of the Organisation.
6. The PW Annual Report shall be prepared by the Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer and shall be circulated at the Annual Meeting and a copy given to CCLW. A detailed financial report will be circulated to all PW Groups and a copy given to CCLW.
7. Accounts, including the *Wider World* account, shall be kept and shall be examined by the General Assembly's auditors and published in PW's Annual Report.
8. Arrangements for all meetings to be addressed by Deaconesses or members of the PW Panel shall be made through the PW staff within the CCLW Office. Overseas mission personnel deputation is arranged through the CGM.
9. The Editor of *Wider World* shall undertake responsibility for the publication of the magazine of *Presbyterian Women in conjunction with the Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer*.

F. Standing Orders for Meetings

1. A quorum shall consist of five members, two of whom shall be Office Bearers or Convener of WSCP.
2. The agenda shall normally be sent out not less than seven days prior to the meeting and shall, as far as possible, list all business to be considered at the meeting. The Chairperson of the meeting should be informed before the commencement of the meeting of any other business to be considered.
3. All meetings shall be opened and closed with prayer.
4. Minutes: (1) The minutes shall normally be presented at the next stated meeting and, when confirmed, signed by the Chairperson. (2) Particular care is to be taken when recording sensitive matters in the minutes. Confidential information disclosed and details of discussions which take

place at meetings are to be considered private. Members are required to treat them as such.

5. Rescinding of resolutions or decisions: Once the minutes have been confirmed and signed, any notice of motion to rescind or alter an existing resolution or decision must be given in writing in time to appear on the printed agenda for the next meeting, or be given verbally at a meeting to be tabled on the Agenda of the subsequent meeting. No alterations or retractions may otherwise be made.
6. Every speaker shall address the chairperson.
7. The ruling of the Chairperson shall be final. In the case of equality of votes the Chairperson shall have the casting vote.
8. Amendments: (1) All amendments to a written resolution shall be submitted to the Chairperson in writing, signed by the proposer and seconder, and shall be read to the meeting. (2) All amendments to a verbal resolution may be made verbally and, when seconded, shall be dealt with in accordance with the standing orders and rules in force at the time.
9. Order of amendments: When an amendment has been moved and seconded, no subsequent amendments shall be moved, until the first amendment shall have been disposed of. When an amendment has been carried, the motion amended must be put to the meeting as the substantive resolution (in place of the original motion). A further amendment will then be in order.
10. A resolution or an amendment may be withdrawn with the consent of the proposer and seconder and the permission of the meeting.

G. Representation on Assembly Councils and Committees

Background

It is widely recognised that the women of the Church have long displayed a special interest in supporting missionary endeavour. This interest has been encouraged by the women's organisations which have existed within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. In recognition of the integral role PW continues to have in this regard there are PW representatives on the following Councils, Panels & Committees:

1. Council for Congregational Life and Witness – PW President

Women's Strategy & Coordination Panel –

Convener of WSCP

PW President

Two members with a detailed experience of PW who also serve on the PW Panel

2. Council for Mission in Ireland – Two PW representatives

Home, Irish Mission & Deaconess Committee – a PW representative

Irish Mission Workers and Deaconess Panel – a PW representative
Strategy for Mission Coordination Panel – a PW representative
South Belfast Friendship House Management Panel – a PW representative

3. Council for Social Witness – a PW representative

4. Council for Global Mission – Two PW representatives

Global Mission Partnership Panel – a PW representative

The Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer and the PW Support Officer are invited to sit and deliberate at Councils and Panels as necessary.

DRAFT

The **PW Forum** is crucial in the two-way communication between the PW Panel and PW LINKs. The PW Forum shall normally meet twice a year – usually in September and February. The PW Panel reserves the right, on occasion, to substitute PW Forum with a larger conference.

A. Role of PW Forum

1. To bring together PW LINK representatives at a central level.
2. To provide a forum which allows the work of *Presbyterian Women* to be considered in an atmosphere of worship.
3. To be an educational and a motivational body which equips, enthuses and empowers women to serve Christ.
4. To act as a link between the PW Panel and PW LINKs allowing information to be passed on including the introduction of new themes, circulation of resources and feedback about *Presbyterian Women*.
5. To support those planning and conducting PW LINK meetings and share ideas for PW LINK events.
6. To facilitate discussion and share ideas about the work of *Presbyterian Women*.
7. To exchange news and views on topics relevant to the work of *Presbyterian Women*.

B. Make-up of PW Forum

PW Forum shall be made up of:

- (a) Members of the PW Panel and its Subgroups
- (b) Five representatives from each PW LINK:
 - i. the three serving PW LINK Office Bearers, i.e. the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer; and
 - ii. two others from each PW LINK, appointed to attend for three years.

If any one of these representatives is unable to attend the PW Forum, her PW LINK meeting should send another representative in her place.

Others may also be invited to attend, as appropriate.

C. Planning of PW Forum

This shall be undertaken by the PW Panel.

There shall be in each Presbytery a PW Committee known as the PW LINK to bring together *Presbyterian Women*.

LINK – Living, Inspiring, Nurturing, for the Kingdom

A. Role of PW LINK

1. To bring together *Presbyterian Women* at a Presbytery level.
2. To provide an opportunity to pray together for the work of PW within their congregations and Presbytery.
3. To be a source of encouragement which will equip, enthuse and empower women to serve Christ.
4. To discuss ways in which the work of *Presbyterian Women* can be strengthened within Congregations.
5. To organise LINK events at Presbytery level.
6. To appoint representatives to attend PW Forum with responsibility to communicate to the LINK Planning Subgroup the content of the PW Forum which would be the basis for the next LINK meeting. (please consult the PW Forum section of this Guidebook for the exact details of the required representation).
7. To nominate, if required by Presbytery, representatives who will attend the General Assembly and Presbytery meetings. This will give opportunity for input and involvement into the wider church.
8. To submit an annual report on the work of *Presbyterian Women* to a stated meeting of Presbytery in consultation with the LINK Office Bearers.
9. Each LINK must comply with their Presbytery's policy on data protection.

B. Constituent Members and Length of Service

Constituent members:

Three members from each PW Group, at least one of whom should be an Office Bearer and preferably two from the PW Group Committee. Each member to serve up to five years. Others may be invited to attend as appropriate; eg. ministers' wives, deaconesses, women workers, female youth workers.

C. PW LINK Office Bearers

The LINK Chairperson, appointed for three years to:

- oversee the running of LINK meetings and events
- set the tone at LINK meetings
- encourage enthusiasm for the work of *Presbyterian Women*
- chair LINK meeting and LINK Planning Subgroup meetings

The LINK Secretary, appointed for not more than five years to:

- book speakers for LINK events and meetings
- notify LINK Planning Subgroup and LINK members of the dates, times and venues of LINK Planning Subgroup and LINK meetings

- keep minutes of business of LINK Committee meetings and planning meetings
- pass on information and distribute *Inspirations*
- produce a report on *Presbyterian Women* for presentation at a meeting of Presbytery in conjunction with Office Bearers

The LINK Treasurer, appointed for not more than five years to:

- be responsible for LINK finances and bank account
- collect a set fee from each PW Group to cover the expenses of LINK meetings/events
- receive payment from each group for *Inspirations*
- keep accurate financial records
- prepare an Annual Financial Statement for presentation at a LINK meeting
- pay all expenses relating to LINK meetings including the payment of travelling expenses to visiting speakers

None of these shall be available for immediate re-election. Ideally the appointments of Office Bearers should be staggered to avoid all three positions becoming vacant in the one year. Consider a period of shadowing for new Office Bearers before they take on their full responsibilities in any of these positions.

D. PW LINK Planning Subgroup

Each LINK shall elect a Planning Subgroup consisting of the LINK Chairperson, LINK Secretary, LINK Treasurer and three additional members appointed for three years from within the membership of the LINK. This Subgroup will:

- prepare business for the LINK meeting in accordance with the role of the PW LINK (see Section A on previous page)
- help facilitate the organisation of LINK events and if necessary carry out any directives from the PW LINK.

Final decisions will be the responsibility of LINK members.

A planning meeting should occur after the PW Forum, ensuring suggestions from the PW Forum are incorporated into the subsequent LINK meeting.

E. Frequency and Timing of PW LINK Meetings

To meet twice a year at a time most suitable for members – ideally in the evening. Please note; a LINK event is not considered to be one of your LINK meetings.

F. Guidance for PW LINK Meetings

Ensure the focus for your LINK meeting reflects the content of the previous PW Forum.

Make prayer a priority at each meeting providing opportunity to pray together for the work of *Presbyterian Women*

It is recommended that at each meeting some time should be given to enthusing, encouraging, equipping and empowering each other for their role in their PW Group.

Items to include:

- Welcome on arrival/Refreshments allowing those attending to get to know each other
- Opening devotions and prayer
- Minutes - ideally these should be sent out in written form with the notification of the meeting. They can then be agreed without being formally read aloud at the meeting.
- Forum focus
- Business including information, reports, announcements etc
- Prayer time
- Closing

G. Suggestions for PW LINK Events

Please note a PW LINK event is not considered to be one of your LINK meetings. The LINK should plan LINK events and the LINK Planning Subgroup help facilitate with the detailed organisation. If an event is to be held in a church, the minister, or in the case of a vacancy, the convener, should also be consulted regarding the speaker and the order of service.

Each LINK needs to develop and adapt the events it organises in response to the needs of the local PW Groups. One type of event may run successfully on a number of occasions and then benefit from a change. Consider both the format and the content of events and pray that they will be a source of encouragement which will equip, enthuse and empower women to serve Christ.

Some suggestions for possible events:

Breakfast/Coffee Morning

Choose a suitable venue with a speaker to focus on work related to the PW Mission Fund, PW Theme or relevant topic.

Morning Conference/Day Conference

This could take place in a Church hall/hotel and could include praise, worship, speaker, interviews and discussion times. Plan the day with coffee and lunch, allowing time for building relationships.

Workshop

This could be a morning, afternoon or evening event. The speaker could give guidance on a relevant topic. This may include: how to lead a meeting; be an office bearer; plan a programme; lead worship. A suitable topic could be chosen that is relevant to the needs of the local groups.

Sanctuary Evening

An evening of worship and prayer that creates space for women to rest in God's presence and be ministered to. Interactive prayer spaces could be created and used between times of praise and reflection.

Service/Evening Meeting

This may be a more formal event with a speaker, deaconess or Global Mission Worker. It should include worship and perhaps a testimony or drama.

When planning any event be aware of time constraints. Allow adequate time for refreshments, the speaker and any room changes that may be necessary. A provisional timetable for the event should be drawn up with every participant made aware of the exact length of time they have been allocated.

DRAFT

In accordance with Paragraph 38(a) of The Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the group shall operate under the authority of the Kirk Session.

A PW Group may choose a suitable name for their own group subject to the approval of the Kirk Session. The name should be appropriate and in line with the Constitution and aims of *Presbyterian Women* (pages 3-4).

A. Role of the PW Group

1. To **bring together women at a congregational level at times and frequency suitable for the congregation**
2. To **encourage women to become disciples of Christ**. *The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost (Luke 19:10)*. Every woman's greatest need is to be found by Jesus Christ and enter into a personal and saving relationship with Him. Groups should point women to Christ for salvation so that, when He comes or calls, they may be found to be disciples who are **living for Jesus**.
3. To highlight the need for –
 - (a) **Love and unity**. *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and Love your neighbour as yourself (Luke 10:27)*. Groups should encourage women in their love for the Lord and for others. Warm fellowship, practical care and compassion are attractive expressions of Christian love. These can be fostered within a group as women are given informal opportunities to get to know one another and as they *rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. (Romans 12:15)*
 - (b) **Obedience to God**. *If you love me, you will obey what I command... (John 14:15)*. The Word of God must have a central place in each group. As it is publicly read and explained it should be allowed to shape the group and individual lives.
 - (c) **Christian living and spiritual maturity**. *Let us... go on to maturity... (Hebrews 6:1)*. The teaching within the programme and the godly example of believers in the group should combine to nurture spiritual growth.
 - (d) **Service using gifts, time and money**. *Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord... (1 Corinthians 15:58)*. Each group provides an opportunity for women to serve God through leadership and practical tasks. Groups also allow women to contribute to support Global Mission Workers, Deaconesses and *Presbyterian Women* by giving to the PW Mission Fund. In addition, various PW projects can be financially supported.
 - (e) **Local and global mission**. *Go and make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19)*. Groups need 'mission vision' for their local area, the island of Ireland and beyond. Locally, the group can

arrange special events for women and actively support evangelistic programmes such as 'Fit for Life' and 'Mother and Toddler' groups. Each group should share information about Deaconesses who are serving God in Ireland, praying that God will use their ministries for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom. Groups also have both the responsibility and privilege of practically and prayerfully supporting the work of Global Mission Workers who are serving God in other countries, particularly those who are serving with the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

B. Constituent Members

Women who attend *Presbyterian Women*

C. PW Group Committee

PW groups shall elect a committee which shall be responsible for the general oversight of their group. Committee members should be committed to Christ and in agreement with the mission statement and aims of *Presbyterian Women*. They should be members of the congregation.

Electing Committee

Election format should be approved by the Kirk Session of the congregation.

It is strongly recommended that committee elections are held no less frequently than every two years. Ideally the appointments of Office Bearers should be staggered to avoid all four positions becoming vacant in the one year. It may also be beneficial to keep a certain number of the experienced committee members in place whilst electing new faces to join them. This will balance the need for both fresh thinking and experience.

Ballot Voting avoids anyone being embarrassed if they are unable to serve or are not eligible to serve on committee. Prayerful consideration should be given to committee elections.

Who is eligible to vote?

Women who attend *Presbyterian Women* on a regular basis

Who is eligible to serve on the group committee?

Women who are:-

- committed to Christ
- in agreement with PW Mission Statement and Aims
- regular attendees of *Presbyterian Women*
- members of the Congregation

Procedure

Committee members may be elected and then the committee appoint office bearers - state number of committee members required.

Or

Each office which is up for election can be voted for in turn.

Method

- Name of person(s) being voted for should be written on a piece of paper, signed and placed in ballot box.
- Name(s) of those receiving the highest number of votes are then taken to the Kirk Session for approval.
- Eligible person(s) receiving the highest number of votes should then be approached privately and, if unable to serve, the person who received the next highest number of votes is then approached.

Sensitivity and confidentiality should be given careful consideration. For example, it may be preferable that the signed segment be cut off before the counting of votes takes place, or the votes may be placed in an envelope and signed on the outside.

When should elections take place?

Allow an adequate amount of time for elections to be completed before the end of the session.

C1. Duties of Committee

The committee shall -

- prayerfully **seek God's guidance** for their group.
- **promote** *Presbyterian Women*.
- meet to **plan the programme** and consider how best to invite new women, lead opening devotions, share information, welcome everyone to meetings, serve supper, arrange the group's finances etc. In addition, consider hosting additional **special events/meetings** to encourage women to become disciples of Christ.
- meet prior to group meetings/events in order to **pray for what is planned**.
- share the responsibility of making sure the **room is prepared** and that all the **arrangements work smoothly**.
- recognise and **encourage the use of the gifts and talents** within the group.
- make a special effort to **befriend women who come on their own**.
- appoint three group **representatives to the local PW LINK**, at least one of these representatives should be an Office Bearer and preferably two from the Committee.
- oversee the appointment of a **Wider World agent** to promote this magazine at congregational level.

- make prayerful and considered decisions regarding the **allocation of monies** raised by the group, taking into account the primary financial responsibilities to support the PW Mission Fund and nominated special projects.
- **organise committee elections** to take place in a manner and at a frequency most suited to their group. They shall also decide how long each Office Bearer shall serve.
- each PW Group must comply with their congregation's **data protection policy**.

C2. Size of Committee

Recognising the wide and varied make-up of groups, the following figures are presented for guidance purposes only:

Groups with 10-30 members	-	6-8 member committee
Groups with 30-60 members	-	8-10 member committee
Groups with 60-100 members	-	10-12 member committee

Important Note: The suggested figures for the size of the committee are inclusive of the Office Bearers.

D. PW Group Office Bearers

PW groups shall elect four of their committee members to serve as Office Bearers within the group. There shall be a Leader, a Deputy Leader, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Ideally each one should serve for a prescribed period e.g. two to three years.

D1. Duties of Leader

The Leader must be an able communicator. She should be enthusiastic about *Presbyterian Women* and its place within her congregation and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Her role is to set the tone for the group and share responsibility of leadership with the other Office Bearers and committee members. In addition the Leader shall:

- work towards the creation of a warm and welcoming group with opportunities for women to get to know one another.
- personally encourage women and take an active interest in their lives.
- lead the group to rejoice with those who have special events to celebrate and come alongside those who are experiencing difficult times.
- be responsible for opening and closing of meetings - involving others is to be encouraged.
- chair committee meetings.
- liaise closely with the Secretary and Treasurer about all matters relating to the group.

- co-sign all necessary documents with the Secretary to confirm they are a true and accurate record.

D2. Duties of Deputy Leader

- share responsibility of opening, leading and closing meetings, as required.
- prayerfully and practically support the Leader in preparing for meetings.

D3. Duties of Secretary

- receive all correspondence and take responsibility for passing on information to the Leader and group.
- keep minutes of Committee meetings. A short and concise written record of business decisions is essential.
- Keep an annual record of Office Bearers and Committee Members.
- complete programme cards so they are ready at the beginning of the year.
- keep a copy of the annual programme as a record of the group's activities. If desired, a short report of each meeting may be written for record purposes only. The formal reading of reports is not necessary.
- take responsibility for booking speakers. This should be done well in advance with the following details given to the speaker:
 - **the subject to be addressed.**
 - **the time allocated for the talk.**
 - **a contact name and telephone number in case of an emergency.**
 - **clear directions to where your group meets.**
 - **the size and nature of the group.**
 - **ask if any specific requirements are needed, eg laptop, PowerPoint , sound etc**

(If requesting to book PCI personnel please complete the official booking forms. The form to book Deaconesses is available from PW staff in the Council for Congregational Life & Witness Office. The form to book Global Mission Workers is available from the Global Mission Office.) **The secretary should confirm the original booking in writing and then contact the speaker again two to three weeks before the meeting to review all the earlier arrangements and check if the speaker has any special requirements for the meeting.**

- complete all forms sent out from the PW staff within the specified time.
- organise publicity by giving the minister pulpit announcements relating to *Presbyterian Women*. Also have announcements

ready in time for inclusion in printed church announcement sheets.

- in consultation with the Leader arrange dates, venues and times for committee meetings and circulate details to all committee members
- in line with the congregation's data protection policy, keep a note of contact details of those attending meetings.
- send congratulations/sympathy/get well cards as appropriate.
- prepare Annual Report for Congregational Annual General Meeting, if necessary.

D4. Duties of Treasurer

- receive all money and keep relevant records.
- prepare Annual Financial Statement for presentation at an appropriate group meeting and inclusion in the congregation's Financial Report.
- pay all expenses relating to the group on the committee's instructions.
- be responsible for the payment of realistic travelling expenses/thank you gifts to visiting speakers.
- be responsible for the group's bank account
- update the group on the main funds of *Presbyterian Women*
- make mission boxes available to women within the group and congregation.
- be responsible for sending contributions for the PW Mission Fund to the Financial Secretary's Office, Assembly Buildings
- liaise with the congregational Gift Aid secretary with regards to the Gift Aid scheme
- liaise with the congregational Treasurer with regards to Direct Debit payments

E. Planning the Programme

"Be committed to cultivating a women's ministry in the local church that complements and supports the work of the pastors, elders, and deacons, that nurtures and equips our women for growth and service, and that promotes a comprehensive biblical view of manhood and womanhood". J Ligon Duncan & Susan Hunt

View every year as a fresh opportunity to be led by God to a new programme which will serve the local church and the community in which you are placed. The PW committee should serve alongside the leadership of the church and the programme should be submitted to the Minister/link elder/Kirk Session for approval.

E1. Keys to Programme Planning

Prior planning and detailed preparation provides a good basis for positive outcomes from programmes and events during the PW session, so:

- call a meeting to plan your programme and circulate *Inspirations*, allowing all committee members to prayerfully read through it before the meeting.
- in advance of the meeting, prepare a list of the dates of meetings and the PW service.

E2. Programme Planning Meeting

- review the past year. Allow committee members to share which meetings they found most helpful. This may indicate the type of meeting which will be most effective and is worth repeating.
- remind committee members of the mission statement and aims of PW and the theme for the year.
- pray that God will be the unseen programme planner as He guides the committee's thinking.

E3. The Aim of the Programme

Programmes should:

- encourage women attending to become disciples of Christ as described in Section A.
- Special events can encourage intergenerational relationships and outreach opportunities.

E4. Suggestions for Suitable Programmes

Find suggestions for programmes and ideas on the year's theme in *Inspirations*.

Invite speakers:

- Global Mission Workers and Deaconesses to tell about their work.
- Those who have visited Global Mission Projects.
- Volunteers who have been on short-term overseas visits, youth teams or church exchanges.
- Speakers from the Councils and agencies of PCI.
- Christian professionals with a special interest in topical issues e.g. health matters, parenting etc.
- Christians who will share their testimony.
- Speakers to highlight the theme.

Interview/Panel Nights – have a list of questions prepared for visitor/s to answer, perhaps ask women from the group to contribute to these in advance. Use the interview to get to know the visitors, highlighting their Christian faith or drawing out Christian truths.

Sanctuary Evening - an evening of worship and prayer that creates space for women to rest in God's presence and be ministered to. Interactive prayer spaces could be created and used between times of praise and reflection.

Develop relationships with other groups by asking them to take the meeting.

DVD Night - watch a DVD about some aspect of Christian work or testimony.

Quiz Night - a round on Global Mission work, Deaconess work or aspects of the wider work of PCI for which the group prays.

Special Events – Pamper evenings, women's health focus, fit for life, days away or outing for a Christmas meal.

F. Guidance for Running PW Group Meetings

It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that deciding the content of the programme is all that matters. However, how we open, conduct and close our PW meetings will either enhance or detract from our programmes. Sometimes small changes can have a huge impact. To run a warm and welcoming PW Group think about:-

Publicity

- The best way to invite someone is to approach them in person.
- Use all available opportunities to advertise your meetings, e.g. church announcements, Facebook.
- Printed invitations or Programme Cards highlight the programme or key events for the year ahead.
- Local press can be used to promote special events.

Practical Preparation

- Have a few women to welcome everyone as they arrive – create a rota if necessary.
- Play background music.
- Have up to date display boards in your meeting area with recent photographs.
- Relaxed seating arrangements.
- Use a PA system, if available.
- Make sure any requirements for the speaker are available, projector for PowerPoint, laptop, tables.
- Provide supper/refreshments

Content of Meetings

- Opening worship should be an integral part of all meetings. This should include prayer, a Bible reading and praise. A short devotion may also be included.
- Where possible or appropriate include a Global Mission Worker/ Deaconess/Social Witness slot to encourage informed prayer.
- Use all available prayer information provided by PCI (see PCI website)
- Consider doing different activities from time to time e.g. a reflection/poem/book review/drama.

Business

- Keep business short and at the most suitable part of the meeting. If the committee needs guidance or direction for a particular issue a show of hands can quickly allow everyone to express their opinion.

PW Mission Fund

- PW Groups are asked to contribute to the PW Mission Fund
- Use available resources to explain what the PW Mission Fund is used for so that everyone is informed how their partnership makes a difference. (see PW website)
- PW Mission Boxes are available from the office.

G. Guidance for Planning a PW Service

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen... (Ecclesiastes 5:1). A PW service is, first and foremost, a service of worship to Almighty God. It therefore must not be undertaken lightly but with an attitude of reverence and prayerful consideration. The service provides an ideal opportunity to bring the work of PW before the wider congregation.

G1. Planning the Service

Consult with the minister, or in the case of a vacancy, the Convener, regarding the speaker and content of the service. Make use of the themed resources in *Inspirations* and other resources on the PW website. When planning the service, be aware of time constraints: adding in too many 'extras' can result in not enough time for the speaker to bring the message.

G2. Leading in Worship

Opening the Service. The minister may invite the PW group to lead the service. The following Bible verses are suitable for the start of a church service, (other suggestions may be found in *Inspirations*):-

Psalm 66:16-20 Luke 1:68 Psalm 66:1-2 Psalm 96:1-4
Isaiah 41:10 Psalm 139:1-4 Jeremiah 29:11 Psalm 145:1-3

Opening Prayer. This sets the tone for worship. It usually includes adoration/praise, confession of sin and a request for God's presence in the service.

Praise. The first hymn is usually a hymn of praise to God and the others could be on the theme of service or commitment to Christ. Also consider hymns/worship songs on mission or the year's theme.

Prayer of Intercession

Remember the work of PW by praying for some of the following:-

- PW Groups
- Deaconesses
- Global Mission Workers
- PW Special Projects
- PW Office Staff
- Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer
- PW Office Bearers
- PW Panel issues especially relevant to women
- needs in the local community and congregation.

Closing the Service

The Benediction - *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore, Amen.*

GROUP AMALGAMATION GUIDELINES

A. Amalgamation at Congregational Level

How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity (Psalm 133:1).

Successful amalgamation will require grace and goodwill from both existing groups. It will also require resolve and effort. However, this investment of time and energy has the potential of leading to the formation of a stronger, more effective group with the following advantages:-

- i. A united witness. *By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another (John 13:35).*
- ii. A united purpose. Clearly defined in the Mission Statement and Aims of Presbyterian Women.
- iii. Brings together the talents and gifts of a wider cross-section of women enabling new things to be attempted for the Lord.
- iv. Allows women of all ages to learn from each other in groups in which enthusiasm and energy are combined with experience. It will also help prevent polarisation based on age.

Amalgamation will be prone to the teething problems common to all new ventures. It is vital that there is good communication between the existing Presbyterian Women groups and prior to the amalgamation. It is also vital that these channels of communication remain open after the new group is formed so that concerns can be addressed as they arise. It may be beneficial to involve a third party from outside the amalgamating groups to act as a mediator between them before and during the amalgamation process. The PW Office may be contacted for practical advice in this regard. Amalgamation presents an opportunity for a fresh, reinvigorated re-launch of women's work in a congregation.

The following practical guidelines for amalgamation are commended for use.

B1. Electing a PW Committee

In the special circumstance of amalgamation, women from both existing groups must be elected by their respective organisations onto a new PW committee which shall serve for two years. This should take place at the final meeting of the groups. The recommended number of committee members is given below –

Number of women in existing group	Number of members to be elected onto the new PW committee
0-10	2
11-20	3-4

21-30	4-5
31-40	6-7
41-60	7-8
61-100	9-11

This should result in both groups being represented in a proportional manner on the new committee.

Example 1: If a PW group with 30 women combines with another group which has 40 the new committee should be made up in the ratio of 3:4.

Example 2: If a PW group with 80 combines with another group which has 20, the new committee should be made up in the ratio of 8:2. It is recognised that the figures suggested above may result in a larger committee than recommended in the PW Group section of this Guidebook. This is to allow adequate representation from both groups. This larger committee will serve for the first two years of the amalgamated group. After this period of time a committee should be elected from the PW Group in accordance with the guidance in the PW Group section of this Guidebook.

B2. Electing Office Bearers

If both groups are to have ownership of Presbyterian Women, sensitivity is required. Women from both must be elected by the new committee as Office Bearers. Generosity of spirit is commended so that the smaller group in the amalgamation is conscious that they are a vital/ integral part of the newly formed PW Group. To ensure both groups have adequate input into the leadership of Presbyterian Women, one or more of the following options must be adopted for the first two years of the amalgamated group:-

Option 1: Appoint a Joint Leadership - have one woman from each group acting as joint leaders

Option 2: Appoint a Leader and Deputy Leader – with one from each group

Option 3: Appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer – with one from each group

Option 4: Appoint a Secretary and an Assistant Secretary – with one from each group

Option 5: Appoint a Treasurer and an Assistant Treasurer – with one from each group

B3. Committee Meetings

In addition to the duties given in the PW Group section of this Guidebook, the committee leading an amalgamated group must decide how the new group should be organised. To this end it should meet soon after its election. All decisions taken at this meeting should be formally recorded for future reference. These must then be adhered to unless amended at a later date by the entire committee.

B4. Opening PW Meetings in an Amalgamated Group

It is much more likely for women of both groups to feel 'at home' in their new PW Group if familiar faces appear at the front. It is therefore recommended that the opening of meetings should be shared between the former group now serving on the newly constituted committee. This should be done in a proportional manner.

B5. Procedure to be Followed After Two Year Interim Period

Assuming the PW Group is now established in its own right, it is time to follow the guidelines in the PW Group section of this Guidebook, whilst remaining conscious of the needs highlighted above.

DRAFT

FINANCE

Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. ¹² For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

¹³ Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. ¹⁴ At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, ¹⁵ as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little." 2 Corinthians 8:11-15

A. Financial Contributions

Presbyterian Women is funded solely by contributions.

PW Groups contribute financially to the work and witness of the Organisation through the **PW Mission Fund**. PW aims to 'highlight the need for local and global mission'. Annual Donations to the Mission Fund are used to support:-

(a) Local Mission, through:

- funding Presbyterian Women at central level so that women can be equipped and motivated in keeping with the mission statement of the organisation
- the Deaconess Training Fund; the continued support of the vital work of Deaconesses and the work of South Belfast Friendship House in partnership with the Council for Mission in Ireland

(b) Global Mission, through:

- the support of Global Mission Workers in partnership with the Council for Global Mission

(c) Special Projects, through:

Supporting various projects at home and overseas which are chosen annually by the PW Panel.

(d) The PW Office, within the Council for Congregational Life & Witness, so that it can provide effective administration and accordingly facilitate all of the above 'local and global' missionary endeavour.

B. Direct Giving

(a) Personal giving is usually found to be the most successful means of raising money.

(b) The primary financial responsibility of each group is the important and valuable work supported by the PW Mission Fund.

(c) All proceeds from Mission Boxes/containers/envelopes must be allocated to the PW Mission Fund.

(d) A PW Service gives an opportunity for the wider congregation to contribute to the work of Presbyterian Women.

(e) Contributions can be given directly to the work of Presbyterian Women through the Donations section on the Presbyterian Women website.

C. Fundraising

(a) The method used to raise money should always be worthy of the purpose of PW and be in accordance with paragraph 37(e) of The Code: 'The Kirk Session shall refuse to sanction the holding of a bazaar, sale of work, or entertainment of any kind for the purpose of raising funds for religious or philanthropic objects until the promoters have undertaken that no money shall be raised by means of balloting, raffling, or lottery tickets.'

(b) All fundraising must state clearly in advance the church Charity Number and the object for which the money is to be raised.

(c) Fund raising under the name of Presbyterian Women must be for purposes in accordance with the aims of the Organisation.

(d) It is recommended that fundraising should always include a donation to the PW Mission Fund.

D. Bank Accounts

No Group should operate a private bank account for congregational activities. Each Group should maintain a bank account in the name of the Group, a congregational account, eg. ...Presbyterian No.3 Account, or request their congregational committee to allow them to use a fund within the main congregational bank account. Any account should operate with at least two signatories to maintain accountability.

E. The Gift Aid Scheme

Gift Aid permits charities to recover income tax on donations received from donors who sign Gift Aid declarations. Contributors are encouraged to discuss participating in the Gift Aid scheme with the congregational Gift Aid Secretary.

F. Direct Debit Payments

Donors may wish to contribute to the work of Presbyterian Women through Direct Debit. Some congregations will operate a Direct Debit scheme for paying monies into congregational accounts. Donors are encouraged to discuss paying by Direct Debit with their Group Treasurer/congregational Treasurer. For congregations which do not operate Direct Debit, this can be arranged through the Financial Secretary's Office, Assembly Buildings. It should be noted that payments made through Assembly Buildings cannot be allocated to a particular PW Group.

G. Sending Money to Assembly Buildings

PW Treasurers should forward all contributions to the Financial Secretary's Office, Assembly Buildings, Belfast BT1 6DW, accompanied by the remittance sheet provided, or by a statement showing clearly how the money is to be allocated. Cheques should be made payable to *The Presbyterian Church in*

Ireland. The financial year end is 31st December. Contributions must be received by Assembly Buildings before this date for inclusion in the current year's accounts. Contributions received after this date will be included in the accounts of the following year.

Note: Groups may send their contributions at any time throughout the year.

H. PW Financial Accounts

The accounts of Presbyterian Women are managed by the Financial Secretary's Office in Assembly Buildings. The financial year of the Organisation ends on 31st December. A report and summary of accounts shall be submitted to the Annual Meeting of Presbyterian Women each year. A report and statement of annual accounts shall also be submitted to the PW Panel, the Council for Congregational Life and Witness, the General Assembly and other relevant Councils.

I. Bequests

Women may wish to consider Presbyterian Women as a possible beneficiary of their will. Legacies provide an extremely valuable source of income. Bequests will be allocated to the PW Mission Fund unless specified otherwise. The following is a suggested Form of Bequest.

**Form of Bequest to *Presbyterian Women*
to be Incorporated in Will**

“I bequeath to
the Organisation of *Presbyterian Women* in connection with the
Presbyterian Church in Ireland of Assembly Buildings, Fisherwick
Place, Belfast BT1 6DW
the sum of *
(alternatively the whole/one-half/one-quarter/etc. of the residue
of my Estate both real and personal and wheresoever situated) to
be applied by it for the work of the said *Presbyterian Women* and
I direct that the receipt of the Financial Secretary for the time
being of the said Church shall be a sufficient discharge to my
executors of the payment of the said legacy.”

*The sum to be written in full.

Note:

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is a charity, Inland Revenue
Number XN 45376, Revenue Commissioners Number CHY 7328.
Each congregation in Northern Ireland will have its own charity
number. Bequests to a charity in Northern Ireland are exempt
from inheritance tax and in the Republic of Ireland from Capital
Acquisitions Tax.

Social Media Guidelines

1. Introduction and Overview

The purpose of this paper is to provide guidance, in terms of general practice and procedure to *Presbyterian Women* in relation to communicating the work, Christian ministry and mission of *Presbyterian Women* through effective management of its, and associated PW Groups', social media platforms. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland's guidelines on General Data Protection Regulation should be followed if information that identifies any living individual is published.

This paper is not a *Presbyterian Women* staff or volunteer policy for personal use of social media.

It should also be noted that when *Presbyterian Women* or a PW Group facilitates the content of any communication it will be in a manner keeping with the Christian ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

2. Communicating the work, mission and ministry of PW on social media

As it says in Psalm 27:4:

*One thing I ask from the Lord,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord
and to seek him in his temple.*

In communicating the work, ministry and mission of *Presbyterian Women* via social media, we must ensure that the gaze of those who will interact with our posts will always be drawn to the beauty of God and that they will be encouraged to seek out His face in their daily walk as disciples of Christ. Therefore, Christ must be honoured in both what *Presbyterian Women* and PW Groups say and how it is said. Scripture should inform all areas of life, including the way in which we communicate on social media.

Our communication values derive from the aims of *Presbyterian Women*:

Love and unity (Luke 10:27)

Obedience to God (John 14:15)

Christian living and spiritual maturity (Hebrews 6:1)

Service using gifts, time and money (1 Corinthians 15:58)

Local and global mission (Matthew 28:19)

Our aims and values should inform the way in which *Presbyterian Women* communicates corporately.

The following sections provide guidance on how *Presbyterian Women* communicates through its social media platforms. It should be noted that social media communication channels are developing all the time and that this policy initially references the current status of *Presbyterian Women*. There are areas which *Presbyterian Women* could potentially benefit from, but as not yet fully explored that are not gone into detail within this policy, such as Instagram. *Presbyterian Women* will use imagery which it has created, owns or has licensed in its social media and will avoid copyright infringement.

3. Facebook

Presbyterian Women uses Facebook to post items such as scripture, interesting links, relevant events etc. to keep those who have 'liked' and 'followed' the page up-to-date. This content can then be liked and shared by those followers. Traffic would also be encouraged to visit the main *Presbyterian Women* site, as well as other sites relating to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, such as Mission and Discipleship. *Presbyterian Women's* page currently reaches close to 10,000 users and so the power of this method of communication of the gospel and the work of the

Additional details

- Provide regular content for the existing Facebook page of the church in which the group is based
- Explore ways of developing a social media presence for the group with the minister and Kirk Session
- Gain agreement from church leaders if PW groups wishes to create an independent Facebook page for their group

organisation should not be underestimated.

4. Creating Trends

In order to reach a wider audience on Facebook, it is useful to include hashtags with posts. By using agreed hashtags, *Presbyterian Women's* official page and PW Group pages will be able to create trends and raise profiles further – improving event reaches and the reach of the gospel. The following are appropriate hashtags for use by groups:

#pw

#presbyterianwomen

#pwnews

#pwevent

#pwblog

#pwglobal

#pwmissionireland

#pwhome

#pwoverseas

#pwvisit

#pwannualmeeting

#pwforum

#pwlink

ADMINISTRATION

The administration of PW is coordinated by the PW staff, located within the Congregational Life and Witness Department, Assembly Buildings in Belfast. Staff serve as a point of contact and provide administration and secretarial support for the Organisation.

A. Role of Office

- To answer enquiries, offer advice and give support regarding PW
- To facilitate the work of the PW Panel and its subgroups facilitating accurate minutes and records as well as giving the necessary secretarial support
- To oversee the administration of *Wider World* by managing subscriptions and responding to any queries
- To liaise with the Financial Secretary's Office regarding financial issues
- To maintain the PW website and prepare promotional material
- To coordinate central events and conferences
- To produce any written material required for the Annual Meeting, the PW Forum and PW conferences
- To keep LINK and PW Group Secretaries up to date with information about PW
- To contribute to the management of South Belfast Friendship House
- To support the management of deaconess work
- To be involved in the management of training of deaconesses
- To organise/coordinate deputation for PW Panel members and Deaconesses

B. Staff

- Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer - to assume overall responsibility for the day-to-day administration of the Organisation, to facilitate all aspects of the strategy and coordination of women's ministry across the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, with particular responsibility for enabling Presbyterian Women (PW) to achieve its stated vision: "Presbyterian Women encourages women to become disciples of Christ".
- PW Support Officer – to provide support to the Women's Ministry & PW Development Officer and to contribute to the effective working of *Presbyterian Women* at central organisational level, particularly in the areas of communication, finance and promotion of projects, and to edit the PW magazine.
- Senior Administrative Assistant
- Receptionist/Administrative Assistant
- Other staff appointed as required

WIDER WORLD - The Magazine of PW

History

When the first Presbyterian women Missionaries set sail, groups were formed to support them in congregations throughout Ireland. For three years every letter from the fledgling Overseas Mission Personnel was passed around these groups. By 1877 it was recognised that this was too slow a method of communication. It was then that a small leaflet called *The Pink Paper* was launched giving snippets of information from the various missionary letters coming from India. In 1886, due to increased interest in the expanding work, *The Pink Paper* became a more substantial publication entitled *Woman's Work*. This title remained unchanged for over one hundred years until in 1988 *Wider World* was launched.

Contents

Published quarterly, *Wider World* places the same emphasis on mission as the publications which preceded it. It continues to give information about those who have obeyed Christ's commission to 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19). Articles about Global Mission workers sit side by side with articles about deaconess work in Ireland. Reports and photographs from PW Groups and events are found alongside articles on issues facing Christians today. On a personal level, readers are both challenged and encouraged through the pages of *Wider World* through articles which:

- Promote, embed and develop the annual theme
- Share stories and news from groups
- Provide ideas for developing group meetings
- Build on events, such as the Annual Meeting and Forum
- Reflect the reality of being a woman follower of Jesus
- Encourage a deepening of personal prayer life
- Inform readers about how the PW Mission Fund supports Kingdom work in Ireland and globally.

Ethos

The message underlying the production of *Wider World* is that *God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)*. The pages of *Wider World* give information about God's work to encourage practical, personal and prayerful support for the spreading of the Gospel.

Distribution

Every congregation should have a *Wider World* agent who promotes the magazine throughout the congregation. Subscription details are published in each issue of the magazine or can be obtained from the PW Office. Any profits made from the sale of *Wider World* are reinvested in the work of PW as it seeks to extend Christ's Kingdom.

SOUTH BELFAST FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

South Belfast Friendship House was the third Friendship House to open in Belfast with the aim of offering friendship in the name of Jesus to people living in needy areas. It had been preceded by Friendship Houses in North and East Belfast. North Belfast Friendship House was opened in 1966 and sold in 1982. East Belfast Friendship House was opened in 1971 and closed in 1999.

South Belfast Friendship House opened in 1976 in Primitive Street. After some years the area surrounding the original House was undergoing redevelopment. This meant that new premises were required and so a House was purchased in nearby Malone Place, close to Sandy Row. As the work of the House expanded, a larger building became necessary. In the late 1980's the present House in Blythe Street was purchased and was officially opened in 1991.

South Belfast Friendship House, at 1-5 Blythe Street, continues to maintain a Christian witness in the Sandy Row community. It is ideally situated on a residential street adjacent to shops, factories and other community facilities. It is a place in which fellowship and support are available. The work undertaken in the House continues to grow and develop. The After School Club, the Young Mums' Group and the Older People's Work all aim to improve the quality of life for the people in this area of South Belfast. The staff of the House also reach out into the community by offering friendship to the residents of a neighbouring Men's Hostel.

In the early days of South Belfast Friendship House the PWA was responsible for its management and funding. In 2004 the Board of Social Witness also became involved in the management of the House.

In 2017 the Council for Mission in Ireland assumed responsibility for the management of South Belfast Friendship House in partnership with *Presbyterian Women*. South Belfast Friendship House continues to have a crucial role in working with families in this area of Belfast

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

A. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF PW

There have been women's organisations within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for over one hundred and thirty years.

The Women's Missionary Association

The earliest organisation began in 1873 under the formidable title of *Female Association in connection with the Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for promoting Christianity Among the Women of the East*. Very soon branches or auxiliaries grew up all over the country. In response to specific needs, single lady Overseas Mission Personnel were trained and sent to the mission field where the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was involved. The Association continued to support these women both financially and prayerfully.

In 1911, as a result of a proposal from the Executive Committee, a *Girls' Auxiliary* of the *Women's Association for Foreign Missions* (as it was now known) was set up to give support to the missionary outreach to girls in India and China.

By 1927 the work of the Association had expanded so much that it was necessary to open an office in Assembly Buildings. In 1949 the General Assembly recognised the *Women's Association for Foreign Mission* as a mission of the Church and the President, Secretary and Treasurer were appointed to represent it on the Council of Missions. The name was changed in 1960 to *Women's Missionary Association*. Financially the Association trained and supported all the single lady Overseas Mission Personnel. It also undertook to pay half the block grant to India, and to share in the grants given by the Foreign Mission to other younger churches.

The Women's Home Mission

In 1904, the General Assembly, concerned for the needs of women and girls working long hours in factories and mills, made a recommendation that "an agency of fully trained women workers should be introduced into congregational work". Following this, the Assembly sanctioned the formation of *The Women's Association for Home Mission*. The *Deaconess Guild* was set up. In 1908, a Deaconess House was purchased in Botanic Avenue, Belfast and three candidates were admitted for training. The first deaconess was appointed in 1909. By 1943 the numbers of those serving as Deaconesses had so increased that a meeting of the *Deaconess Guild* Committee was called to consider the situation as regards payment of salary, recruitment and spheres of service. As a result of this meeting, the *Women's Home Mission*, into which the *Deaconess Guild* merged, came into being in 1944 and was officially recognised as a mission of the Church in 1949.

The first candidate of the *Women's Home Mission* was accepted in 1944 for service at home and sent for two years training to St Colm's College, Edinburgh. From 1946-1965, the women, in their grey uniform, were known as Church Sisters. In 1965 the General Assembly decided to restore the original title of 'Deaconess'. Deaconesses have now a recognised status in the Courts of the Church and membership in a worldwide Diaconate.

Presbyterian Women's Union

In 1905 the *Presbyterian Women's Union* (PWU) was founded as "a union of women of the Church" who met for fellowship and to hear and discuss lectures on "edifying" matters. Members soon realised that there was a need to provide help for girls coming from the country to the city to work in offices, factories and as domestic servants. When Assembly Buildings was first opened in 1905, two rooms had been set aside for women, in recognition of their help in the building project. In these rooms, a Bible class was held on Sunday afternoons followed by tea. During the week, evening classes were run in cooking, dressmaking, and handcrafts. At lunch times many girls used the rooms to make tea and eat their sandwiches. Later the PWU provided a link with the women of other churches in Ireland and throughout the world, especially with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches.

Amalgamation

It became clear that the support of the *Women's Missionary Association*, the *Women's Home Mission* and the *Presbyterian Women's Union* was drawn largely from the same body of women. The WMA was the largest and the only one with a branch and Presbyterian structure, and the women within these branches tended to take part in supporting the efforts of all three organisations. Consequently, when the General Assembly undertook the study of all mission agencies within the Church, they advocated the merging of the three organisations into one. This resulted in the formation of the Presbyterian Women's Association in 1971.

The Presbyterian Women's Association and Young Women's Groups

The three organisations which had merged to form PWA all contributed to the new organisation's ethos. As PWA developed, it endeavoured to unite the women of the church in the dedication of their lives to Jesus Christ and to inspire interest in both home and overseas mission.

Over the years prior to 1971 Young Women's Groups had been starting to meet regularly in many congregations. In 1971 they were officially recognised by the General Assembly as they became the *Young Women's Groups* of the *Presbyterian Women's Association*. In this way they retained their own identity and accepted the challenge of helping younger women play their part in the mission of the Church. In addition, specific projects at home and abroad were highlighted every year and given extra support.

The formation of the PWA in 1971 coincided with the formal recognition of the valuable role women could play in the wider church. PWA representatives

were invited to 'sit and deliberate' in the Courts of the Church. In addition, one female representative from each Presbytery was included in the newly constituted Home, Overseas and Social Witness Councils.

The onset of a new century seemed an ideal time to take stock and re-evaluate the role of PWA and YWG within the church. It was recognised that Ireland had changed dramatically in the three decades since PWA was formed. The thirty years of 'the Troubles' in Northern Ireland had given way to peace. The country had become more secular and Church attendance was no longer normal practice. Moral values were in steep decline and marriage and family life were under threat. In particular, women's lives had altered beyond recognition. No longer primarily homemakers, many were now in full-time employment. In this new era women no longer felt bound by tradition or a sense of loyalty to the local church.

If the PWA and YWG were to become relevant to a new generation of women, reassessment was required. While the PWA had the strength of over 14,000 members and the YWG had 1,000 members, it was recognised that, in an increasingly informal culture, change was needed. It was also recognised that while both groups had been diligent in supporting mission overseas and in Ireland, they were in danger of ignoring the needs of women in their own area.

Accordingly, the structure and practice of PWA and YWG was prayerfully put under the spotlight. Members were asked to seek God's guidance for the future which resulted in PWA and YWG coming together as *Presbyterian Women*.

Presbyterian Women

This organisation aims to provide an opportunity for women to have fellowship with one another and to actively seek to win women for Jesus Christ. It also aims to encourage Christian discipleship among women and foster support among them for local and global mission.

Following the introduction of the new structures within PCI *Presbyterian Women* became part of the Council for Congregational Life and Witness at the General Assembly in 2016.

Milestones at a Glance

	Overseas	Home	
1873	<i>Female Association in connection with the Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for promoting Christianity Among the Women of the East</i> (commonly known as the <i>Zenana Association</i>).		
1874	Susan Brown, first missionary of the Association, sent to India.		
1877	The <i>Pink Paper</i> launched.		
1885	The Missionary Prayer Union formed.		
1886	New and enlarged format of <i>Pink Paper</i> launched as <i>Woman's Work</i> .		
1904		Formation of the <i>Women's Association for Home Missions</i> .	
1905			<i>Presbyterian Women's Union</i> (PWU) founded.
1908		<i>Deaconess Guild</i> formed. 3 deaconess candidates admitted for training. A Deaconess House purchased in Belfast.	
1909		Miss Bessie Barkley (first deaconess) appointed.	
1911	<i>Girls' Auxiliary</i> set up by the <i>Women's Association for Foreign Mission</i> .		
1927	WAFM Office in Assembly Buildings and first General Secretary appointed.		
1944		<i>Deaconess Guild</i> merged into the newly formed <i>Women's Home Mission</i> (WHM). Deaconesses (now known as Church Sisters) began training at St. Colm's College.	
1949	WAFM officially recognised by General Assembly.	WHM officially recognized by General Assembly	
1960	WAFM renamed <i>Women's Missionary Association</i> (WMA)		
1965		Church Sisters renamed Deaconesses.	
1969			Young Women's Groups Central Committee formed.

1971	Young Women's Groups officially recognised by the General Assembly. WMA, WHM, and PWU united to form <i>Presbyterian Women's Association (PWA)</i> . YWG integrated into the PWA while maintaining its own identity. PWA representatives invited to sit and deliberate in the Church Courts.
1974	Married women (Woman Workers) accepted at Union Theological College for part-time training in pastoral work.
1975	<i>Girls' Auxiliary</i> disbanded.
1988	<i>Woman's Work</i> became <i>Wider World</i> .
1992	The two departments of PWA (Overseas and Home) amalgamated.
2000	PWA, in partnership with the Overseas Council, became involved in the financial support of all missionary personnel. Deaconesses now trained at Union Theological College.
2005	New financial partnership with Council of Mission in Ireland for support of Deaconesses.
2008	PWA and YWG combined to form <i>Presbyterian Women</i> .
2016	PW fully integrated into PCI structures

B. HISTORY OF THE BIRTHDAY PROJECT

As a result of a suggestion which appeared in the *Woman's Work* magazine, a Birthday Thank Offering Fund was established in 1909 to raise all or part of a missionary's salary. From 1913 those contributing undertook to give at least one shilling as a thank offering every birthday and to pray especially that day for the 'Birthday Missionary' and her work. Rosa Hudson was appointed as a 'Birthday Missionary' to China from 1913 to 1936. In 1937 the Birthday Thank Offering began to fund a special project instead of a missionary. A new hospital in Hsinking in China was chosen to receive support in that particular year. In more recent years the Birthday Thank Offering was used to support various Home and Overseas projects and has been incorporated into the PW Mission Fund since 2008. Presbyterian Women continues to support special projects through the PW Mission Fund.

C. HISTORY OF MISSION OVERSEAS

The desire to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the women and girls of India was the prime motivation for the formation of the first women's organisation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in 1873. This came about thirty-three years after Rev James Glasgow and Rev Alexander Kerr and their wives began the overseas work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in Sarurashtra (North East India).

The two ministers soon learned that social customs made it impossible for them to preach to Indian women. Dr Fleming Stevenson, Joint Convener of the then Foreign Mission, became convinced that a special organisation devoted to women and girls was necessary. Eventually, in response to the pleas of Dr Stevenson and two veteran Overseas Mission Personnel from the Free Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian women in Ireland formed the *Female Association in connection with the Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for promoting Christianity Among the Women of the East*. This Association

began to support teaching in private families, schools for girls, orphanages and medical work. The first missionary of the Association left for India in 1874 and began to develop the work done by the wives of the Overseas Mission Personnel.

Between 1874 and 2000 the PWA and its preceding organisations sent a total of two hundred and thirty-nine full-time Overseas Mission Personnel into eleven countries. Throughout these years the aim of the Overseas Mission Personnel remained the same - to make Christ known in all the world through their life and witness. In this they were faithfully supported through prayer and finance by the women's associations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Presbyterian Women continues this support in partnership with the Council for Global Mission.

**Overseas Mission Personnel Fully Supported by the
Women's Organisations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

Country	Total number of Overseas Mission Personnel who served from 1874 to 2000	First missionary to serve	Year in which missionary service began
India	116	Susan Brown	1874
China	47	Sandra Nicholson	1889
Malaya and Singapore	1	Hester Stewart <i>(formerly of China)</i>	1949
Jamaica	10	Dorothy Crawford <i>(formerly of China)</i>	1953
Malawi	39	Leonora McBriar	1960
Asians in Britain	12	Hazel McClenaghan	1971
Nepal	10	Marlene Evans	1982
Brazil	1	Mabel Coulson	1990
Hungary and Romania	1	Ilona Walsh	1993
Israel	1	Fiona Smyth	1997
Kenya	1	Naomi Martin	1998

Those wanting more information about Irish Presbyterian Women in Mission can contact the PW Office where the following two books are available for reference purposes:-

Into All the World: A History of the Overseas Work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1840/1990, edited by Jack Thompson.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland: 1840/1990. A Celebration of the Presbyterian Witness during 150 Years, edited by RFG Holmes and R Buick Knox.

D. HISTORY OF MISSION AT HOME

In 1908 a Deaconess House was purchased in Belfast and three deaconess candidates were accepted for training. The first deaconess, Miss Bessie Barkley, was appointed in 1909. From the mid-1940s until 2000 Deaconesses were trained in St. Colm's College in Edinburgh. In 2000, Union Theological College Belfast became the principal training college for Deaconesses.

Over the years the role of the Deaconesses has developed in response to the need for evangelism and pastoral care in a changing society. Deaconesses have offered practical Christian love and friendship to many in the community through a number of Centres and Houses in Belfast. There was a Home Advice Centre which helped women and girls with domestic, matrimonial and personal problems. For some years a deaconess also worked in the Vine Community and Advice Centre on the Crumlin Road. Hope House in the lower Shankill Estate and South, North and East Belfast Friendship Houses were other places in which Deaconesses exercised community-based ministries. For a few years a deaconess led a multi-media workshop. This innovative ministry aimed to encourage congregations and individuals to develop the use of drama in evangelism. The first time a deaconess was appointed to serve as part of a hospital chaplaincy team was in 1973. Since then hospital Deaconesses have served in hospitals in Belfast, Dublin, Antrim and Craigavon. In 2007 a deaconess was appointed to chaplaincy work in Maghaberry Prison – yet another 'first' in the history of deaconess work within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The year 2007 also saw the re-appointment of a Deaconess to South Belfast Friendship House in the Sandy Row area of Belfast. Although Deaconesses have had, and continue to have, many different roles, their main sphere of service has been within Presbyterian congregations. This remains unchanged. Serving alongside ministers, and as part of ministry teams, they continue to assist in the work and witness of the Church.

For almost one hundred years the PWA had sole responsibility for deaconess training and the management of deaconess work. This only changed in 2006 when the PWA entered into a partnership with the Board of Mission in Ireland. Presbyterian Women replaced PWA in this partnership in 2008.

In 2015 the Board of Mission in Ireland became the Council for Mission in Ireland and Presbyterian Women continues to support Deaconesses financially and prayerfully.

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JARGON BUSTER

PCI	Presbyterian Church in Ireland
CCLW	Council for Congregational Life and Witness
WSCP	Women's Strategy and Coordination Panel
CGM	Council for Global Mission
CMI	Council for Mission in Ireland
CSW	Council for Social Witness