

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND 2024

Building Together

REMITTS
BOOKLET

Therefore encourage one another and **build each other up**, just as in fact you are doing.

Thessalonians 5:11



The Church of Scotland

Remits booklet for General Assembly 2024

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GENERAL INFORMATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2025

The next General Assembly will meet from Saturday 17 May 2025 in Edinburgh in person and online.

CHURCH COURTS ACT - REMINDER

The Church Courts Act (Act VI 2023) is on the website here:

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/110089/vi-church-courts-act.pdf

The Act sets out for each of the Church courts (ie Kirk Session, Presbytery and General Assembly) clear basic information on matters such as their Functions and Responsibilities, Meetings, Membership, Delegated Authority, Relationship with other Church courts and Appeals.

SELECTED REMITS FOR INFORMATION

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

3. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee to report to the General Assembly of 2025 on its ongoing engagement with the Presbyteries of the Church of Scotland (*Section 5*).
4. Approve the form of the Scottish Christian Forum, and the participation of representatives of the Church of Scotland within it, and recognise it as the National Ecumenical Body within Scotland (Appendix I) (*Section 7.8*).

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

2. Agree that the Church's financial situation demands further urgent attention supported by a focus on the agreed priorities (*Section 1.8*).

Note: Section 1.8 of the Report says:

The 2023 General Assembly agreed three main priorities which remain important and totally valid on our journey and are being actively used in prioritising work at a national level.

- i. *An emphasis on progressing the growth and development of the Church through the new Presbyteries working closely with the local congregations.*
 - ii. *Ensuring that the work of the national is focused on the local need with a particular emphasis on recruiting and equipping our future leaders for the ministries of the Church in light of the different challenges ahead.*
 - iii. *Progressing the identified imperative of modernising and simplifying our governance, structure and processes.*
4. Agree the total number of planned ministry posts for 2025 remains at the previously approved 600 plus 60 vacancies and for this to be the basis for the next five years, subject to annual reporting and agreement of the General Assembly (*Section 2*).
 5. Note the ongoing work in relation to reviewing the suitability of Vacancy Allowance, current Tenure arrangements, Stipend and Benefits Structure, International Presence and work within the Priority Areas (*Sections 5, 6, 10.7, 15.6, 15.7*).
 8. Note the expectation that the Trustees will require to bring proposals to adjust the parameters of the components of Giving to Grow to the General Assembly of 2025, if forecasts indicate that sufficient funding is not likely to be available for the expected cost of ministry from 2026 onwards; nevertheless urge the Assembly Trustees to bring proposals to the General Assembly of 2025 which will deliver the Church of Scotland (Unincorporated Entities) (SC011353) a balanced budget position by 31 December 2027 at the latest (*Section 8.6*).
 12. Approve the amended structure, remit and membership of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team as set out in Appendix III (*Section 14 & Appendix III*).
 13. Invite the Assembly Trustees to bring proposals to the General Assembly of 2025 for a new Standing Committee of the General Assembly to have oversight of and responsibility for the Church's work in relation to external affairs (potentially including public life and social justice, ecumenical relations, international work, partnerships and presence, and interfaith matters) and to liaise with the Ecumenical Relations Committee, Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, Nomination Committee, and others as deemed appropriate, to prepare and implement any changes which may be required, including the drafting of a detailed remit.

Further note: The Purposes of the Seeds for Growth Fund as specified in Regs IV 2022 were expanded to include:

- iii Foster discipleship and revitalisation within established congregations, with the aim of growing an existing congregation or developing a new worshipping community (*Section 11.3 & Appendix II*).

COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND CASES

2. (iii) Transmit again the Overture, as amended, to the Presbyteries for their consideration under the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921), directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2024, and noting for the avoidance of doubt that the Book of Confessions referred to in the Overture will contain the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith and the 1992 Statement of Faith.

INTERIM JOINT REPORT OF THE THEOLOGICAL FORUM AND FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM ON ASSISTED DYING

2. Note the work of the Assisted Dying Working Group to date and that further consultations will be undertaken prior to a final report being produced for the General Assembly of 2025.

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL (KNOWN AS CROSSREACH BOARD)

2. Recognise the continued pressures with recruitment across the sector, commend the workforce for all they are continuing to achieve in the face of that, and encourage the sharing of recruitment resources across wider Church of Scotland networks (*Section 1.3*).
3. Note the initiative being piloted with Scottish Workforce Chaplaincy and endorse the move to ensure that spiritual wellbeing remains a priority for the CrossReach workforce and those it supports (*Section 1.3.5*).
4. Commend the ecumenical and interfaith efforts to bring attention to the issue of Fair Work in social care and endorse further collaboration in this area (*Section 1.4*).
5. Express alarm about the cuts to vital care services being experienced by CrossReach and other care providers in the social care sector and ask CrossReach, working with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, to raise awareness about the crisis in social care with Presbyteries and congregations and to make representations to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government (*Section 2.8*).

GUILD

6. Commend the Guild for the work of its Project Partnership Scheme 2021-24 and recognise the important issues tackled and vital monies raised (*Section 4.2*).
8. Commend Guilds Together Groups for exploring new ways of working together and welcome the new structure of Guilds at a Regional Level agreed by the Guild conference (*Section 5.2.2*).

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM

PEOPLE

4. Encourage FAPLT, in relation to the basic level for locum remuneration, to consider moving towards benchmarking this against the real living wage rather than the national minimum wage.
5. Adopt the 'Terms of Responsibility for Ministers Serving in the Church of Scotland', as contained in Appendix II, as a standard for the duties of the office of Ministry of Word and Sacrament, instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to make this available to all Ministers of Word & Sacrament as well as including it in the Ministers' Handbook and encourage ministers to study and adhere to these (*Section 2.16 Appendix II*).
6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to consider introducing, in relation to ministers in their First Five Years, an annual two week allocation for study leave and investigate whether the present financial allocation for the Continuing Ministerial Development Fund can be increased from £200 to £275 for ministers in their First Five Years; strongly encourage all ministers in their First Five Years to utilise the resources available,

including the Continuing Ministerial Development Fund, and urge all congregations with ministers in their First Five Years to encourage their minister to take up what is on offer.

8. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in consultation with the Assembly Trustees, to review the support which may be provided to those ministers from overseas who have completed their familiarisation periods and presently seek a charge, with the administrative and financial challenges of renewing visas, and report to the General Assembly of 2025, and in the interim supply any support which may be provided without budgetary implications.

PRAISE

9. Commend the Church Hymnary Supplement 'God Welcomes All' and thank the Hymnary Supplement Committee for their work in producing this resource of contemporary songs supporting the renewal of worship (*Section 3.1*).

POVERTY

12. Call for the introduction of a Minimum Income Guarantee (*Section 4.7*).

PEACE

17. Call on the whole Church of Scotland to pray for peace in the conflict in Gaza between Israel and Hamas and in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, and restate the 2015 General Assembly call urging the UK Government to recognise without delay the State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, as a contribution to securing lasting peace and justice for all (*Section 7.2*).
18. Note the monthly Prayers for Peace in the Middle East being held online on the 24th of each month, jointly with Christian Aid Scotland, since the latter part of 2023, as an opportunity to join in such prayers together with Christians and Christian Aid partners in the Middle East, and express thanks for those involved.

PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANNING

27. Approve the allocation of the total number of planned ministry posts among the Presbyteries as contained in Appendix VI for 2025, recognising that some of a Presbytery's overall allocation of posts may be divided into part-time roles (*Section 10.6 and Appendix VII*).
30. Instruct that the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) shall be amended so as to require only comments from the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and the General Trustees on an annual evaluation and development, with approval from the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and the General Trustees only being required every five years, and to that end pass an Act amending the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) as set out in the Appendix to the Overture.

REMITTS AND THE CREATION OF PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (PMPIG) AS AN ADDITIONAL PROGRAMME GROUP

32. Note the creation of an additional Programme Group, Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group, in terms of the remit contained as Appendix IX (*Section 11 and Appendix IX*).

APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE

33. Approve the direction of travel offered by the Apprenticeship Route (Context based Education and Training for the Church of Scotland Family of Ministries) and note its possibilities towards encouraging people to consider their calling to the various recognised ministries of the Church.
34. Approve the introduction of a two-year foundational programme to provide a general qualification for ministry, equivalent to a Certificate level education of 120 credits (*Section 1.4.2*).
35. Encourage the development of the Apprenticeship Route to provide a way of developing new forms of ministry required by the Presbytery Mission Planning Process, Team Ministry and the changing needs of the Church.

Initial Ministerial Education for full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate

36. Approve the principle of context-based formation for Initial Ministerial Education for full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate with a view to achieving a clearer integration of practice and theory.
37. Approve, as the normal model of training for ordination to full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate, a full-time formation process leading to a revised BD/ MDiv degree (of at least 360 SQA credits) combined with SQA credit-bearing ministry placements; reducing the current pattern of three years plus probation to three full years (which will include formative activity outwith academic semesters), with equality of time between study and placements.
38. Approve the development of a faster-track model, as an option for candidates for full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate under listed criteria, of two years context-based education and training prior to ordination, involving a Diploma qualification (240 SQA credits) (or Graduate Diploma) combined with SQA credit-bearing ministry placements; with an equality of time between study and placements; listed criteria being, for example those with significant practical experience in ministry as a non-ordained worker; those with a prior degree in theology; those who are close to age restrictions in entering training.
39. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to enter into discussions with Academic Providers, the Theological Forum, the Assembly Trustees, the Diaconate Council, and other relevant parties to bring a set of proposals to the General Assembly 2025 together, if required, with legislation to replace Act X 2004 and Act VIII 2010.

Continuing Professional Development

40. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to explore with the Registration of Ministries Committee, the principle of introducing compulsory continuing professional development for those ordained to Full-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and those ordained to the Diaconate, noting that Readers and OLM are already required to undertake such, post their Initial Ministerial Education (*Section 1.5.3.2*).

Funding

41. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to work with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to make provision in the 2025 budget for funding for the Apprenticeship Route and the new programme of Initial Ministerial Education (*Section 1.5*).

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES

2. Note with concern the lack of applications for military chaplaincy, and encourage all eligible ministers of the Church to consider service as a Chaplain to HM Forces, Regular or Reservist (*Section 1*).
6. Note the significant contribution of HM Forces personnel in a variety of theatres, notably the NATO response to the war in Ukraine and current operations in the Red Sea area (*Section 2.1.1*).
7. Welcome the review by Lord Etherton KC into the historic treatment of LGBT+ personnel, and urge HM Government to implement the recommendations in full and note with regret any breach, in the past, of the pastoral relationship between Chaplain and military personnel (*Section 3.5*).

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

5. Note the ongoing work by the Safeguarding Service to assess child and adult wellbeing and protection concerns and provide professional advice to congregations, Presbyteries, CrossReach, the national offices of the Church of Scotland and the Girls Brigade (*Section 5*).
8. Note the ongoing work by the Safeguarding Service to manage those who pose a risk in Church Communities (*Section 6.3*).
9. Approve the Support for Survivors of Historical Abuse Policy as set out in the Appendix and encourage its implementation in Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and the National Office (*Section 7*).

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

5. Welcome the proposal by Monica Lennon MSP for an Ecocide Prevention (Scotland) Bill in the Scottish Parliament which seeks to deter mass environmental damage and destruction taking place in Scotland, and aims to protect the environment, habitats, and natural resources by introducing the crime of ecocide into Scots Law; note the engagement by both members of the Iona Community Environment Common Concern Network and the Public Life and Social Justice Programme Group in the consultation about this proposal; note the involvement of the World Council of Churches in the Faith for Ecocide Law initiative, and support further development of legal protections of the environment both in Scotland and internationally (*Section 4.3*).

GENERAL TRUSTEES

3. Note the disappointing level of information on current manse condition which has been returned by Presbyteries (Sections 6.2.3, 6.2.4 and Appendix 3).
4. Remind Kirk Sessions of their existing obligations under Church law to send manse condition schedules and Property Registers (for Churches and Halls) to Presbyteries by 31 May in each year and remind Presbyteries to send the Returns Sheet to the General Trustees by 31 August in each year, and instruct the General Trustees to report back to the General Assembly in 2025 on the extent to which this is being done.
5. Commend the report into provision of manses with specific reference to the question of ministers living in their own homes and accept the recommendation of the Manse Liaison Group (Provision) that the default position should continue to be that ministers live in

manses and that for other circumstances the Manse Adjudication Committee may be utilised (Section 6.3).

9. Approve the two proposals set out in section 7.1.4 of this Report as to permitting disbursement for non-fabric purposes from the Consolidated Fabric Fund (Section 7.1).

Note: Section 7.1.4 of the Report says:

7.1.4 The General Trustees have been investigating what options there may be for increasing the flexibility and simplifying the administration of the CFF in order to permit disbursements for non-fabric purposes. The following two proposals have emerged:

7.1.4.1 Revenue Accounts: That, with effect from 1 June 2024, Revenue may be disbursed to congregations for any purpose that is aligned with the Five Marks of Mission subject only to the congregation's application indicating how it intends to use the money. To be clear, it would no longer be limited to fabric work or utility costs and receipts would no longer be required.

7.1.4.2 Capital Accounts: That, with effect from 1 June 2024, Capital may also be released for non-fabric projects. This would be considered on a case-by-case basis and would require consideration of how much Capital is likely to be required for future building works, maintenance and fabric-related costs in coming years. An allowance would be made for any locally held restricted fabric funds. If there is still likely to be a very substantial amount of Capital remaining, it may be possible for some of that Capital to be released for non-fabric projects aligned with the Five Marks of Mission.

Note: Also, the Church of Scotland General Trustees (Properties, Funds and Endowments) Act (Act V 2024) was passed. This is a consolidation of all General Trustees' legislation, bringing all Acts and Regulations into one document with the subject matter divided across five schedules: (1) Care of Ecclesiastical Buildings, (2) Central Fabric Fund, Consolidated Fabric Fund, Consolidated Stipend Fund and the application of Fabric and Stipend Endowments, (3) Disposal of Land and Property, (4) Manses, and (5) Glebes.

INSTRUCTIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO PRESBYTERIES

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

6. Instruct all Presbyteries to work with the Office of the General Assembly and the Human Resources Department to establish consistency of terms and conditions across Presbyteries and to align as appropriate with the Central Services employment terms and conditions as well as to develop a competency and capability procedure with regards to Presbytery Clerks' and deputes' employment contracts (*Section 4*).

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

3. In relation to Presbytery Review (*Section 4 – Presbytery Review*):
- c. Instruct Presbyteries to send comments on the draft Act to the Principal Clerk by 31 December 2024, and instruct the Committee to bring a Presbytery Review Act in final form to the General Assembly of 2025;

Note: The draft Presbytery Review Act is found at page 23 of this Remits booklet.

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

2. Reaffirm the ecumenical vision articulated in the Declaratory Act anent the Third Article Declaratory (2010), and instruct the unincorporated entities of the Church of Scotland to take account of this in their future work (*Sections 2.5, 2.6, 14.2*).

COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND CASES

2. (i) Note that the requisite proportion (two thirds) of the Presbyteries of the Church have approved the text of the proposed amendments to Articles II and V of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921) enacted by the General Assembly of 1926 and to the Preamble, Questions and Formula authorised by the General Assembly of 1929, all of which are contained in the Confessions of Faith Overture sent down for the consideration of Presbyteries by the General Assembly of 2023;
- (ii) Resolve in this immediately successive year to adopt the Overture a second time, but as amended, as set out in Appendix B; and also amended as follows:

At 1.1, in relation to Article II, after:

“II. The subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland are contained in its Book of Confessions.”

Add:

“The Book of Confessions contains the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith and the 1992 Statement of Faith.”

At 4.1, change the last paragraph of the Preamble from that in the print to:

“The subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland are contained in its Book of Confessions. The Book of Confessions contains the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith and the 1992 Statement of Faith. The Church recognises liberty of opinion on such points of

doctrine as do not enter into the fundamental doctrines of the Faith, claiming the right, in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, interpret or modify its subordinate standards: always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds - of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge."

- (iii) Transmit again the Overture, as amended, to the Presbyteries for their consideration under the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921), directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2024, and noting for the avoidance of doubt that the Book of Confessions referred to in the Overture will contain the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith and the 1992 Statement of Faith.

Note: The Confessions of Faith Overture as approved by the General Assembly of 2024 is found at page 21 of this Remits booklet.

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

2. Receive the appended report "Transgender Identities in the Church of Scotland" in fulfilment of the instruction of the General Assembly of 2023, and commend it to congregations, Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries for study (Section 3).

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL (KNOWN AS CROSSREACH BOARD)

6. Note the extensive consultation exercise undertaken by CrossReach to set a clear way forward which will allow it to continue to play its part in the overall mission of the Church of Scotland, and urge Presbyteries to continue to work with CrossReach in a spirit of collaboration and mutual support (Section 3.5).

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

2. Continue to encourage uniting congregations to ensure that the Guild is involved in discussions and enabled to explore ways in which Guilds merge or work in new ways, welcoming those mergers that have taken place (Section 2.4).
5. Encourage youth workers, ministers, Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to support the work of the Young Adult Guild (Section 3.6).

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM

PEOPLE

2. Instruct Presbyteries to appoint Church of Scotland representatives to local authority committees which deal with education, according to the principles set out in the report; and affirm the report on Church of Scotland representatives' voting powers on education committees (Section 2.1).

PRAISE

10. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to consult with Presbyteries, Readers and local worship leaders about the use of local worship leaders and Readers across the church, and to report to the General Assembly in 2025 with recommendations on how these roles should be shaped to best support the emerging shape of the Church of Scotland and its

worshipping communities and in the interim encourage Presbyteries to promote the use of Readers already set apart and willing to serve (*Section 3.8*).

POVERTY

11. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to encourage Presbyteries to engage with Priority Areas to explore ways in which the Church of Scotland's priority for the poorest and most marginalised in society can continue to be delivered in areas where major adjustments have taken place to Priority Area parishes (*Section 4*).

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

2. Instruct the Safeguarding Committee to develop and implement processes and working practices which ensure compliance with The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, to be enacted in April 2025, and instruct Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to cooperate with such processes and work practices (*Sections 2.4 & 3*).
3. Instruct the Safeguarding Service to consider the vision of safeguarding across all areas of the Church and encourage all to support the development of a positive Safeguarding Culture (*Sections 2.4.3 & 4.5*).
4. Note the ongoing work of the Safeguarding Committee to roll out the Leadership and Trustee Safeguarding training courses and encourage those for whom such training is mandatory to attend training and use their learning to promote a positive safeguarding culture (*Section 4*).
9. Approve the Support for Survivors of Historical Abuse Policy as set out in the Appendix and encourage its implementation in Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and the National Office (*Section 7*).

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

2. Encourage the Church of Scotland at every level - nationally, at Presbytery and in congregations - to identify specific ways in which the different strands of the work of the Iona Community might inform and influence the future planning and delivery of mission and outreach work of the Church.
3. In the face of Brexit and ongoing rise of populism across Europe, urge Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and congregations to take up opportunities to forge links, cross-cultural learning and partnerships across Europe.

GENERAL TRUSTEES

4. Remind Kirk Sessions of their existing obligations under Church law to send manse condition schedules and Property Registers (for Churches and Halls) to Presbyteries by 31 May in each year and remind Presbyteries to send the Returns Sheet to the General Trustees by 31 August in each year, and instruct the General Trustees to report back to the General Assembly in 2025 on the extent to which this is being done.
6. Affirm the important place of the arts in worship and mission, their contribution to knowledge and culture; recognise that our rich heritage results from many years of generous giving from forebears, congregations and benefactors; seek to protect this vital part of Scotland's story for the future through consultation and collaboration with relevant bodies; acknowledge that the arts are a source of religious knowledge and experience; and urge the General Trustees to take all reasonable steps to safeguard this potential resource for worship in the future.

7. Urge the General Trustees, in consultation with Presbyteries, to give urgent thought to how pipe organs in church buildings scheduled for closure might be widely publicised as available for relocation to churches (and other appropriate locations) continuing in use, and report on action taken to the General Assembly of 2025.
8. Urge Presbyteries to work collaboratively with congregations, the General Trustees and the Law Department so as to enable the strategic release of church buildings in accordance with the time-frame set out in the Presbytery Mission Plan, taking into account local sensitivities and including the possibility of community buyouts and a consequent delay in the sale process; urge the General Trustees, in consultation with the Law Department, to liaise with Presbyteries in accommodating these timeframes, without putting such congregations under undue time pressure; and encourage congregations not to close such buildings until such time as a sale has been effected.

INSTRUCTIONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO KIRK SESSIONS AND CONGREGATIONS

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Scottish Bible Society

7. Commend the Scottish Bible Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members, and support the Society in its desire to work in partnership with congregations to encourage confidence in the gospel and in sharing the Bible (*Appendix A*).

THEOLOGICAL FORUM

2. Receive the appended report "Transgender Identities in the Church of Scotland" in fulfilment of the instruction of the General Assembly of 2023, and commend it to congregations, Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries for study (*Section 3*).

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GUILD

2. Continue to encourage uniting congregations to ensure that the Guild is involved in discussions and enabled to explore ways in which Guilds merge or work in new ways, welcoming those mergers that have taken place (*Section 2.4*).
3. Encourage Kirk Sessions to consider if establishing a Guild can assist in their mission to their local community (*Section 2.8*).
4. Welcome the ways in which Guilds are reaching out to local communities and encourage Guilds and congregations to see this as an opportunity for mission together (*Section 3.3*).
5. Encourage youth workers, ministers, Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to support the work of the Young Adult Guild (*Section 3.6*).

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM

PEOPLE

5. Adopt the 'Terms of Responsibility for Ministers Serving in the Church of Scotland', as contained in Appendix II, as a standard for the duties of the office of Ministry of Word and Sacrament, instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to make this available to all Ministers of Word & Sacrament as well as including it in the Ministers' Handbook and encourage ministers to study and adhere to these (*Section 2.16 Appendix II*).
6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to consider introducing, in relation to ministers in their First Five Years, an annual two week allocation for study leave and investigate whether the present financial allocation for the Continuing Ministerial Development Fund can be increased from £200 to £275 for ministers in their First Five Years; strongly encourage all ministers in their First Five Years to utilise the resources available, including the Continuing Ministerial Development Fund, and urge all congregations with ministers in their First Five Years to encourage their minister to take up what is on offer.

PEACE

15. Encourage anyone who is in future planning a pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine to seek out and meet with the contemporary Christian community – and their Muslim and Jewish neighbours – who seek justice and peace; listening to their concerns and experiences, and

offering accompaniment and solidarity with those suffering under occupation and discrimination.

16. Encourage Church members to take note of the requests from the Palestinian Christian Communities for help in their non-violent struggle to bring peace with justice, including consideration of previous General Assembly statements to refrain from buying goods from illegal settlements.
17. Call on the whole Church of Scotland to pray for peace in the conflict in Gaza between Israel and Hamas and in Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, and restate the 2015 General Assembly call urging the UK Government to recognise without delay the State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel, as a contribution to securing lasting peace and justice for all (*Section 7.2*).
18. Note the monthly Prayers for Peace in the Middle East being held online on the 24th of each month, jointly with Christian Aid Scotland, since the latter part of 2023, as an opportunity to join in such prayers together with Christians and Christian Aid partners in the Middle East, and express thanks for those involved.

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES

2. Note with concern the lack of applications for military chaplaincy, and encourage all eligible ministers of the Church to consider service as a Chaplain to HM Forces, Regular or Reservist (*Section 1*).
3. Encourage those eligible to consider service as Chaplains in any of the Cadet organisations and thank all serving Cadet Chaplains (*Section 1.3*).
5. Thank those who serve in His Majesty's Forces as Chaplains for their service to Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force personnel, their families, and the wider military community, and commend them, and their own families, to the prayers of the Church (*Section 2*).

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

2. Instruct the Safeguarding Committee to develop and implement processes and working practices which ensure compliance with The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, to be enacted in April 2025, and instruct Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to cooperate with such processes and work practices (*Sections 2.4 & 3*).
3. Instruct the Safeguarding Service to consider the vision of safeguarding across all areas of the Church and encourage all to support the development of a positive Safeguarding Culture (*Sections 2.4.3 & 4.5*).
4. Note the ongoing work of the Safeguarding Committee to roll out the Leadership and Trustee Safeguarding training courses and encourage those for whom such training is mandatory to attend training and use their learning to promote a positive safeguarding culture (*Section 4*).
9. Approve the Support for Survivors of Historical Abuse Policy as set out in the Appendix and encourage its implementation in Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and the National Office (*Section 7*).

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

2. Encourage the Church of Scotland at every level - nationally, at Presbytery and in congregations - to identify specific ways in which the different strands of the work of the Iona Community might inform and influence the future planning and delivery of mission and outreach work of the Church.
3. In the face of Brexit and ongoing rise of populism across Europe, urge Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions and congregations to take up opportunities to forge links, cross-cultural learning and partnerships across Europe.

GENERAL TRUSTEES

4. Remind Kirk Sessions of their existing obligations under Church law to send manse condition schedules and Property Registers (for Churches and Halls) to Presbyteries by 31 May in each year and remind Presbyteries to send the Returns Sheet to the General Trustees by 31 August in each year, and instruct the General Trustees to report back to the General Assembly in 2025 on the extent to which this is being done.
8. Urge Presbyteries to work collaboratively with congregations, the General Trustees and the Law Department so as to enable the strategic release of church buildings in accordance with the time-frame set out in the Presbytery Mission Plan, taking into account local sensitivities and including the possibility of community buyouts and a consequent delay in the sale process; urge the General Trustees, in consultation with the Law Department, to liaise with Presbyteries in accommodating these timeframes, without putting such congregations under undue time pressure; and encourage congregations not to close such buildings until such time as a sale has been effected.

INSTRUCTIONS TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEES AND TRUSTS

LEGAL QUESTIONS COMMITTEE

3. In relation to Presbytery Review (*Section 4 – Presbytery Review*):
 - a. Instruct that the Presbytery Review Committee (“PRC”) be established as a Standing Committee of the General Assembly, comprising a Convener, Vice-Convener and eleven members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly, together with *ex officio* the Principal Clerk and the Depute Clerk; and otherwise in terms of section 1b) of the draft Presbytery Review Act attached to this Report and set out in Appendix A (“the draft Act”);
 - b. Instruct the PRC to carry out in 2024-2025, as pilots, Reviews in the Presbyteries of (1) Edinburgh and West Lothian and (2) Perth, working in accordance with the principles and processes set out in the draft Act, with Summary Reports as referred to in the draft Act being submitted to the General Assembly of 2025;
 - c. Instruct Presbyteries to send comments on the draft Act to the Principal Clerk by 31 December 2024, and instruct the Committee to bring a Presbytery Review Act in final form to the General Assembly of 2025; and
 - d. Instruct the PRC to submit a Report on inspection of Presbytery Records in accordance with the draft Act to the General Assembly of 2025.
6. Instruct the Committee to develop a process for dealing with complaints made against a Presbytery committee and a bespoke process for a complaint against a Presbytery Clerk and to report to the General Assembly of 2025 (*Section 5.4*).

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

2. Reaffirm the ecumenical vision articulated in the Declaratory Act anent the Third Article Declaratory (2010), and instruct the unincorporated entities of the Church of Scotland to take account of this in their future work (*Sections 2.5, 2.6, 14.2*).
3. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee to report to the General Assembly of 2025 on its ongoing engagement with the Presbyteries of the Church of Scotland (*Section 5*).
7. Commend the Ecumenical Relations Committee on its work with the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland, the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of England, and instruct the Committee to ensure that it is engaging, or offering to engage, with other churches across Scotland, directly and through the Scottish Christian Forum, and to report to the General Assembly of 2025.
8. Instruct the Ecumenical Relations Committee and the Theological Forum to reflect on the contemporary significance of the Council of Nicaea, and to report to the General Assembly of 2025 (*Section 13.6*).

ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

8. Note the expectation that the Trustees will require to bring proposals to adjust the parameters of the components of Giving to Grow to the General Assembly of 2025, if forecasts indicate that sufficient funding is not likely to be available for the expected cost of ministry from 2026 onwards; nevertheless urge the Assembly Trustees to bring proposals to the General Assembly of 2025 which will deliver the Church of Scotland (Unincorporated

Entities) (SC011353) a balanced budget position by 31 December 2027 at the latest (*Section 8.6*).

9. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to devise a scheme to enable the defined contribution pension scheme for Ministers to be assessed at reasonable intervals against good practice modelling principles to assure scheme members of an appropriate retirement income and report to the General Assembly of 2025.
13. Invite the Assembly Trustees to bring proposals to the General Assembly of 2025 for a new Standing Committee of the General Assembly to have oversight of and responsibility for the Church's work in relation to external affairs (potentially including public life and social justice, ecumenical relations, international work, partnerships and presence, and interfaith matters) and to liaise with the Ecumenical Relations Committee, Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, Nomination Committee, and others as deemed appropriate, to prepare and implement any changes which may be required, including the drafting of a detailed remit.

COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND CASES

3. Instruct the Theological Forum to produce an online companion volume to the Book of Confessions, containing the additional documents mentioned in the Second Article Declaratory (namely: "The Directory for the Public Worship of God", "The Form of Presbyterian Church Government" and "The Form of Process") and the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms.

SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL (KNOWN AS CROSSREACH BOARD)

5. Express alarm about the cuts to vital care services being experienced by CrossReach and other care providers in the social care sector and ask CrossReach, working with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, to raise awareness about the crisis in social care with Presbyteries and congregations and to make representations to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government (*Section 2.8*).

FAITH ACTION PROGRAMME LEADERSHIP TEAM

PEOPLE

3. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in consultation with the Assembly Trustees, to review the Income Protection and Ill Health Act (Act VI 2019) in light of its operation in practice over the past five years (such review to include consulting with people who have had direct experience of it) and report to the General Assembly of 2025 (*Section 2.12.2*).
4. Encourage FAPLT, in relation to the basic level for locum remuneration, to consider moving towards benchmarking this against the real living wage rather than the national minimum wage.
5. Adopt the 'Terms of Responsibility for Ministers Serving in the Church of Scotland', as contained in Appendix II, as a standard for the duties of the office of Ministry of Word and Sacrament, instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to make this available to all Ministers of Word & Sacrament as well as including it in the Ministers' Handbook and encourage ministers to study and adhere to these (*Section 2.16 Appendix II*).
6. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to consider introducing, in relation to ministers in their First Five Years, an annual two week allocation for study leave and investigate whether the present financial allocation for the Continuing Ministerial

Development Fund can be increased from £200 to £275 for ministers in their First Five Years; strongly encourage all ministers in their First Five Years to utilise the resources available, including the Continuing Ministerial Development Fund, and urge all congregations with ministers in their First Five Years to encourage their minister to take up what is on offer.

7. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and other relevant parties, recognising the pace of societal change at this time, acknowledging the significance of the recently released Cass Report, and informed by the work done by the Theological Forum on Transgender Identities, to consider the implications of the Cass Report to the work of the Church, particularly amongst young people, and report to a future General Assembly.
8. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in consultation with the Assembly Trustees, to review the support which may be provided to those ministers from overseas who have completed their familiarisation periods and presently seek a charge, with the administrative and financial challenges of renewing visas, and report to the General Assembly of 2025, and in the interim supply any support which may be provided without budgetary implications.

PRAISE

10. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to consult with Presbyteries, Readers and local worship leaders about the use of local worship leaders and Readers across the church, and to report to the General Assembly in 2025 with recommendations on how these roles should be shaped to best support the emerging shape of the Church of Scotland and its worshipping communities and in the interim encourage Presbyteries to promote the use of Readers already set apart and willing to serve (*Section 3.8*).

POVERTY

11. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to encourage Presbyteries to engage with Priority Areas to explore ways in which the Church of Scotland's priority for the poorest and most marginalised in society can continue to be delivered in areas where major adjustments have taken place to Priority Area parishes (*Section 4*).

PEACE

14. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to share the voices of Palestinian Christians, and to continue to support the Church's contribution to interfaith dialogue (*Section 7.1*).
19. Call on the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to publicly and explicitly call on the UK Government to call for an immediate and permanent Ceasefire in Gaza, to cease granting export licences for the sale of armaments to Israel and to reinstate UNRWA funding immediately.
20. Express our gratitude to Britain Yearly Meeting for its liberality in funding the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) UK and Ireland, and instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to give prayerful consideration to reinstating the annual Church of Scotland grant to support the work of EAPPI UK and Ireland, at least to its previous level, and to report back to the General Assembly of 2025.
21. Urge political leaders and media institutions to avoid the use of dehumanising and hostile language when describing migrants, refugees and asylum seekers; and instruct the Faith

Action Programme Leadership Team to work with partners in challenging this rhetoric through advocacy, encounter and practical initiatives (*Section 7.3*).

PRESBYTERY MISSION PLANNING

28. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, in consultation with the Legal Questions Committee, to review the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021) and to report to the General Assembly of 2025 with proposed revisions, particularly in relation to team ministry and the adjustment process, and meantime note the willingness of the Principal Clerk's office to assist Presbyteries with flexible solutions, in particular to issues arising with team ministry.
31. Invite the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to record the number of 'Bases of Adjustment' being processed by Presbyteries (in terms of the various forms of Adjustment referred to in Section 7 of the Presbytery Mission Plan Act (Act VIII 2021)), the time taken to process these and whether or not these Bases were consistent with the relevant Presbytery Mission Plans; and report to the General Assembly of 2025.

APPRENTICESHIP ROUTE

Initial Ministerial Education for full-time Ministry of Word and Sacrament and the Diaconate

39. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to enter into discussions with Academic Providers, the Theological Forum, the Assembly Trustees, the Diaconate Council, and other relevant parties to bring a set of proposals to the General Assembly 2025 together, if required, with legislation to replace Act X 2004 and Act VIII 2010.

Continuing Professional Development

40. Instruct the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to explore with the Registration of Ministries Committee, the principle of introducing compulsory continuing professional development for those ordained to Full-Time Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and those ordained to the Diaconate, noting that Readers and OLM are already required to undertake such, post their Initial Ministerial Education (*Section 1.5.3.2*).

Funding

41. Instruct the Assembly Trustees to work with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team to make provision in the 2025 budget for funding for the Apprenticeship Route and the new programme of Initial Ministerial Education (*Section 1.5*).

COMMITTEE ON CHAPLAINS TO HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES

4. Acknowledge the Committee's tireless work towards recruitment and instruct the Committee to produce a letter defining the role, rights, and deployment protections for Reservist Chaplains, Cadet Chaplains and Kirk Session.
7. Welcome the review by Lord Etherton KC into the historic treatment of LGBT+ personnel, and urge HM Government to implement the recommendations in full and note with regret any breach, in the past, of the pastoral relationship between Chaplain and military personnel (*Section 3.5*).

SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

2. Instruct the Safeguarding Committee to develop and implement processes and working practices which ensure compliance with The Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020, to be enacted in

April 2025, and instruct Kirk Sessions and Presbyteries to cooperate with such processes and work practices (*Sections 2.4 & 3*).

3. Instruct the Safeguarding Service to consider the vision of safeguarding across all areas of the Church and encourage all to support the development of a positive Safeguarding Culture (*Sections 2.4.3 & 4.5*).
10. Invite the Safeguarding Committee to consider its processes as they relate to people who have been found not guilty in criminal proceedings but who are subject to Safeguarding procedures.

IONA COMMUNITY BOARD

4. Commend the work of the Church of Scotland in Israel and Palestine, while regretting the withdrawal of Church of Scotland funds from the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (*Section 4.2*).

GENERAL TRUSTEES

4. Remind Kirk Sessions of their existing obligations under Church law to send manse condition schedules and Property Registers (for Churches and Halls) to Presbyteries by 31 May in each year and remind Presbyteries to send the Returns Sheet to the General Trustees by 31 August in each year, and instruct the General Trustees to report back to the General Assembly in 2025 on the extent to which this is being done.
6. Affirm the important place of the arts in worship and mission, their contribution to knowledge and culture; recognise that our rich heritage results from many years of generous giving from forebears, congregations and benefactors; seek to protect this vital part of Scotland's story for the future through consultation and collaboration with relevant bodies; acknowledge that the arts are a source of religious knowledge and experience; and urge the General Trustees to take all reasonable steps to safeguard this potential resource for worship in the future.
7. Urge the General Trustees, in consultation with Presbyteries, to give urgent thought to how pipe organs in church buildings scheduled for closure might be widely publicised as available for relocation to churches (and other appropriate locations) continuing in use, and report on action taken to the General Assembly of 2025.
8. Urge Presbyteries to work collaboratively with congregations, the General Trustees and the Law Department so as to enable the strategic release of church buildings in accordance with the time-frame set out in the Presbytery Mission Plan, taking into account local sensitivities and including the possibility of community buyouts and a consequent delay in the sale process; urge the General Trustees, in consultation with the Law Department, to liaise with Presbyteries in accommodating these timeframes, without putting such congregations under undue time pressure; and encourage congregations not to close such buildings until such time as a sale has been effected.

Notes: The Overture is sent down again for further consideration by Presbyteries. Cumulatively, all proposed changes are shown in bold and italics.

The General Assembly again adopt the Overture the tenor whereof follows, and transmit the same a second time to Presbyteries for their consideration under the provisions of Article VIII of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921), directing that returns be sent to the Principal Clerk not later than 31 December 2024.

The General Assembly, with consent of not less than two-thirds of the whole of the Presbyteries of the Church obtained in two immediately successive years, enact, ordain and declare that Articles II and V of the Articles Declaratory in Matters Spiritual (1921) enacted by the General Assembly of 1926 and the Preamble, Questions and Formula authorised by the General Assembly of 1929 shall be amended as follows:

1. Articles Declaratory

1.1 Change Article II from:

II. The principal subordinate standard of the Church of Scotland is the Westminster Confession of Faith approved by the General Assembly of 1647, containing the sum and substance of the Faith of the Reformed Church. Its government is Presbyterian, and is exercised through Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and General Assemblies. Its system and principles of worship, orders, and discipline are in accordance with “The Directory for the Public Worship of God,” “The Form of Presbyterial Church Government” and “The Form of Process,” as these have been or may hereafter be interpreted or modified by Acts of the General Assembly or by consuetude.

To:

II. The subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland are contained in its Book of Confessions. The Book of Confessions contains the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith and the 1992 Statement of Faith. Its government is Presbyterian, and is exercised through Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries, and General Assemblies. Its system and principles of worship, orders, and discipline are in accordance with “The Directory for the Public Worship of God,” “The Form of Presbyterial Church Government” and “The Form of Process,” as these have been or may hereafter be interpreted or modified by Acts of the General Assembly or by consuetude.

1.2 Also change Article V from:

V. This Church has the inherent right, free from interference by civil authority, but under the safeguards for deliberate action and legislation provided by the Church itself, to frame or adopt its subordinate standards, to declare the sense in which it understands its Confession of Faith, to modify the forms of expression therein, or to formulate other doctrinal statements, and to define the relation thereto of its office-bearers and members, but always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith contained in the said Confession, of which agreement the Church shall be sole judge, and with due regard to liberty of opinion in points which do not enter into the substance of the Faith.

To:

V. This Church has the inherent right, free from interference by civil authority, but under the safeguards for deliberate action and legislation provided by the Church itself, to frame or adopt its subordinate standards, to declare the sense in which it understands its ***Book of Confessions***, to

modify the forms of expression therein, or to formulate other doctrinal statements, and to define the relation thereto of its office-bearers and members, but always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith contained in the said **Book of Confessions**, of which agreement the Church shall be sole judge, and with due regard to liberty of opinion in points which do not enter into the substance of the Faith.

2. Ordination and Induction Vows

2.1 *Change the vow:*

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church?

To

Do you believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith ***expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds?***

2.2 *Also create a new vow after the aforementioned one:*

Do you confess the Catholic and Reformed Faith of the Church as contained in its Book of Confessions, and promise to be guided by the said Book in your life and doctrine?

3. Formula of Subscription

3.1 *Change the first paragraph of the Formula from:*

I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained in the Confession of Faith of this Church.

To

I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith ***expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. I promise to be guided in my life and doctrine by the Book of Confessions of this Church.***

4. Preamble

4.1 *Change the last paragraph of the Preamble from:*

The Church of Scotland holds as its subordinate standard the Westminster Confession of Faith, recognising liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the substance of the Faith, and claiming the right, in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, interpret or modify its subordinate standards: always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith contained in the said Confession – of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.

To:

The subordinate standards of the Church of Scotland are contained in its Book of Confessions. The Book of Confessions contains the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, The Scots Confession, The Westminster Confession of Faith and the 1992 Statement of Faith. The Church recognises liberty of opinion on such points of doctrine as do not enter into the ***fundamental doctrines*** of the Faith, claiming the right, in dependence on the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, to formulate, interpret or modify its subordinate standards: always in agreement with the Word of God and the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith ***expressed in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds*** – of which agreement the Church itself shall be sole judge.

PRESBYTERY REVIEW ACT

Edinburgh, [] May 2025, Session []

In requiring Presbytery Review, the General Assembly seeks (1) to further the mission of the Church of Scotland by ensuring the good governance and oversight of congregations within the bounds of each Presbytery and by facilitating the sharing of good practice throughout the Church and (2) to fulfil the terms of the Church Courts Act (*section 22.2*), which states that the General Assembly shall exercise powers of oversight of Presbyteries and these may be exercised generally, or as specified in legislation.

Accordingly, the General Assembly hereby enact and ordain:

1. DEFINITIONS

- a) the “Aims” shall mean:
- (i) to encourage and enable a Presbytery to reflect on its life and work;
 - (ii) to assess whether a Presbytery is satisfactorily fulfilling its Functions and Responsibilities;
 - (iii) to enable action to be taken when in the life of a Presbytery there is conflict or when there are issues of non-compliance with the Functions and Responsibilities;
 - (iv) to give the opportunity for the leadership and the wider membership of the Presbytery as a whole to challenge one another as to the effectiveness or otherwise of the Presbytery's structures and the functioning of them;
 - (v) to hear of and celebrate good practice by Presbyteries and share such with the wider Church; and
 - (vi) to assist with the co-ordination of the central resourcing of the wider Church.
- b) the “Committee” shall mean the Presbytery Review Committee, a Standing Committee of the General Assembly, comprising a Convener, Vice-Convener and eleven members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly, together with *ex officio* the Principal Clerk and the Depute Clerk. In making nominations to the Committee, the Nomination Committee shall seek to ensure a balance of ministers, elders and members on the Committee, and also shall aim for gender and geographical balance. Membership of the Committee shall include persons with considerable experience of Presbytery life, of Church life, of regulatory functions, of charity governance, of Church law, practice and procedure and of the operation of Church courts. Appointments shall be for a three year term with some initial appointments being of shorter terms to stagger those stepping down from the Committee in future years. No current employee of a Presbytery shall be a member of the Committee or co-opted onto a Review Group.
- c) “Functions and Responsibilities” shall mean the Functions and Responsibilities of a Presbytery set out in section 10 of the Church Courts Act (Act VI 2023).
- d) “Presbytery Review” shall mean the process of review of a Presbytery by the Committee as set out in this Act, in addition to the annual inspection of records referred to in section 4, and “Review” and “Reviewed” shall be construed accordingly.
- e) “Review Group” shall mean the Review Group appointed under section 3.3.

f) "Review Report" shall mean the Review Report referred to and the contents of which are described in section 6.1.

g) "Summary Report" shall mean the Summary Report described in section 6.4.

2. PRESBYTERY REVIEW

2.1 Each Presbytery shall be subject to Presbytery Review, to achieve the Aims, according to a schedule of visits determined by the Committee.

2.2 Presbyteries shall participate and cooperate in Presbytery Review (*Church Courts Act (Act VI 2023), sections 10.1.14 and 15.5*).

2.3 A Presbytery shall normally be subject to Review once every five years but a Review may be delayed or brought forward or an extra Review may be conducted, as the Committee sees fit, where the Committee is concerned that a Presbytery may not be fulfilling its Functions and Responsibilities.

3. THE COMMITTEE'S ROLE

3.1 Responsibility for Presbytery Review is delegated by the General Assembly to the Committee. The Committee shall be clerked by the Office of the General Assembly.

3.2 The role of the Committee is to be satisfied: -

- that each Presbytery Review is thorough and forward looking;
- that key points (a Summary Report) of the Review Report are shared with the General Assembly;

and in particular that:

- good practice is highlighted and shared across the Church;
- problems are faced and tackled with appropriate support and input; and
- non-compliance is addressed and rectified.

3.3 The Committee shall appoint a Review Group of three persons to act on its behalf when embarking on the Review of a Presbytery. None shall be members of the Presbytery under Review. The Review Group may consist wholly of members of the Committee, or it shall be competent for the Committee to co-opt suitably qualified individual(s) from outwith its membership to be part of particular Review Groups, provided that there shall be no more than one co-opted member per Review Group.

3.4 Members of the Committee must adhere to the conflict of interest policy specified in Guidance.

4. ANNUAL INSPECTION OF RECORDS

4.1 Each Presbytery shall submit annually to the Committee for examination the rolls and records of the Presbytery and shall also submit for attestation by the Committee the trustees' report and annual accounts of the Presbytery.

4.2 The Committee shall report annually to the General Assembly on this inspection of all Presbyteries' records.

5. DOCUMENTS AND VISITS/MEETINGS FOR PRESBYTERY REVIEW

5.1 When a Presbytery is to be Reviewed, on a *proforma* devised by the Committee, the Presbytery will be asked to provide:

- factual and statistical information to allow the Review Group to grasp something of the geography and demographics of the area;
- confirmation that specific requirements laid upon it by Church and civil law have been complied with;
- a description of the life and work of the Presbytery in terms of the Functions and Responsibilities, including the ways in which it resources local congregations, acts as the voice of the Church in relation to wider society, and engages with the processes of the General Assembly;
- an outline of the shared vision and guiding principles for the way ahead in the life and work of the Presbytery leading into as detailed as possible an anticipation of what lies ahead and how the Presbytery hopes to meet the specific challenges it faces; and
- any other documents and information as the Review Group may reasonably require in order to carry out the Review properly and effectively.

5.2 On such visits and meetings as they may consider relevant and over such timescale as may be required, the Review Group will enter into conversation with groups and individuals at Presbytery, and also at local and national level, all as it thinks fit, taking account of recommendations in the Guidance. Such discussions shall explore further any aspects of the life and work of the Presbytery in order to learn more about work that is going well or where there may be problems, and to help develop the framework for forward planning.

6. PREPARATION OF A PRESBYTERY REVIEW REPORT

6.1 Having received the documentation and carried out the visits and meetings referred to in section 5, the Review Group shall prepare a written Review Report according to a *proforma* set up by the Committee, which shall include the following:-

- a description of the activities of Presbytery at the time of the Review, giving an indication of priorities, why these were chosen, and how these were implemented, as well as its spiritual life, governance, Committee structure, staffing and how collective decision-making is working in practice;
- the identification of good practice and of areas of work in need of development;
- an outline of any future plans for altering the patterns of Presbytery life and why these changes are envisaged; and
- an assessment of whether the Presbytery is satisfactorily fulfilling its Functions and Responsibilities; and
- any other matters which may seem relevant to the Review Group.

6.2 The initial draft of the Review Report shall be submitted to the Presbytery and an opportunity given to submit comments to the Review Group if desired.

6.3 The Review Group shall then finalise the Review Report and present it to the Committee.

6.4 The Committee shall consider the Review Report and shall ensure that key points including those sharing good practice and making recommendations, are reported in a written Summary Report to the General Assembly. The Presbytery shall be entitled to ask that comments from the Presbytery are included as an Appendix to the Summary Report.

6.5 The Committee's Summary Report for the General Assembly shall be submitted to the Principal Clerk no later than 1st February each year [*Note: once Act is finalised, date can be 1st March*].

6.6 The Committee's Summary Report may make recommendations as to good practice, and may include a proposed deliverance with instructions to a Presbytery or Presbyteries.

7. TERRITORIAL EXTENT

7.1 This Act extends to all Presbyteries of the Church, including those furth of Scotland.

8. GUIDANCE

8.1 Detailed guidance ("the Guidance") for the conduct of Presbytery Review shall be produced initially by the Legal Questions Committee and thereafter the Guidance shall be updated by the Committee in the light of experience and changing circumstances, subject to approval by the Legal Questions Committee.