

Nominations Committee speech — General Assembly 2022

Rev Julie Rennick

Moderator,

It gives me great pleasure to bring you the report of the Nominations Committee for this year.

As I reflect on the work of the Nominations Committee in this past year, there are some points I particularly would bring to your attention. In this, (almost) post-pandemic season; when we are all, in each of our areas working on Mission Plans, and how to best serve the area where we are called and where we call home, we are also mindful of the needs of the wider church. This is a challenging time – for sure.

But it is also a time to grasp opportunities and to know we can be the change for good. For with God, we know, all things will be made new.

At last year's assembly I encouraged commissioners to ask questions and make suggestions – which they did! Prompted by that, we tried a new approach.

Building on last year's brief video clip, this year, aided by the Rev Bryan Kerr, a member of the committee, we recorded some short video clips of interviews with committee members past and present, conveners of standing committees and the Chief Officer, in order to promote the range of opportunities to serve. We also delivered a webinar, during which we introduced the process for this year and answered questions. This was fairly well attended and did generate a couple of new nominees.

Every year we review our processes; as a result, for the 2021 round of nominations we updated the forms and adjusted the timing of seeking nominations.

Thus, our nomination forms this year were held entirely online, this challenged some, but by and large people were able to navigate and submit the forms.

Even though the video clips and webinar were well received, ultimately, this did not turn into nominations, and once again we experienced great difficulty in filling vacancies – in fact, the number of vacancies was greater than the number of nominees, and, with some recent resignations, this means that for the year ahead 8 of our standing committees will be

running at below the recommended membership – most just one short, but a few will run with several vacancies.

We have notified the relevant conveners who have been invited to consider any further appointments which may be made mid-term under powers.

We invite anyone who is interested in finding out more about serving as a General Assembly appointed member on the Standing Committees, to watch our video clips, and to review the information provided on the [Nomination Committee](#) webpages.

Please get in touch if you have any questions by emailing the dedicated mailbox: nominations@churchofscotland.org.uk.

By far the greatest challenge was populating the Committee to Nominate the Moderator for 2023-24 where no qualified nominations were received. Creative solutions were required!

Firstly it meant we started from scratch and used the knowledge of the committee, with careful reading of the nomination forms for the other standing committees. We used our own knowledge of individuals, considered past conveners of committees and some members of our own committee were nominated in order to create a suitable list of the requisite number of ministers and elders, while also bearing in mind age, gender, geographic spread and a good knowledge of the role of the moderator.

We asked some of this year's nominees to serve on two committees. In doing so, the General Assembly is asked to permit some specific exceptions as set out in the report. The final list of nominees for the Committee to Nominate the Moderator this year is an even split of 7 ministers and deacons, and 7 elders.

We also ask to suspend standing orders 122 and 118, in order to permit reappointments to Legal bodies and to the Theological forum.

In order to continue the work of the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group (PMPIG) we were approached by the Faith Nurture Forum to allow an exception to standing order 113, to approve the appointment of Rev Dr Karen Campbell as member of the forum, and convener of PMPIG until GA 2023.

We have continued to work in consultation with the Assembly Trustees in relation to the nomination process for new Trustees as well as offering assistance in identifying new members for the Assembly Trustees' Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group.

We also worked with the Social Care Council's Crossreach Board and we are able to make a nomination. There is, however, a new mid-term vacancy due to the resignation of one of the current members. The particular knowledge and skills sought at this time are for digital and website design and usage.

All through this week we have been made aware that change is not just coming, it is here. The church is grateful for those who are prepared to add to their already busy schedules by allowing their nomination to serve the wider church. Within our deliverances there is encouragement for each presbytery to make nominations - and in order to inspire, to ask those who are serving, or who have recently served to take a few minutes at your autumn meeting, to share those experiences with others.

We need you – each and everyone who is listening to me today – if you have served – tell others how it broadened your view; share the highs and lows of working on our standing committees.

If you haven't taken that step yet – please, consider it.

Ask others about the work they have done – I promise it's actually not only a privilege – it's often really enjoyable too!

Moderator, before I close, I would like to record my gratitude to my vice convener, Bill Wishart, as his term comes to an end. Bill has been a great encouragement and support to me and our committee. And I wish him well as he finishes his time with the Nominations Committee.

Moderator, I present the report, and as I am not a commissioner, ask the principal clerk to move the deliverances

Answer to question re: numbers

Only one of the nominees marked themselves as being in one of the age brackets under 35 years old on their nomination form - that person is nominated to serve (they were 30-34 years old so may not be under 35 for much longer).

There were some nominees who did not submit a form (those for the legal bodies and some who were approached to serve on the Committee to Nominate the Moderator) so I am unsure if there might be someone else under 35 years old, but possibly not?

There were a little over 100 vacancies this year across the Standing Committees and legal bodies (which of course excludes membership of the various trustee bodies of the Church). If the Nomination Committee was able to fill all of these vacancies, that would mean around 20 nominees would need to be under 35 years old.

Or, to put it another way: from the nomination forms submitted in this cycle, 16% were under 45 years old (20% under 50).

I wonder if this target should be removed from Standing Orders or whether the figure might be changed to 45? This would still be a challenge but maybe with a chance of coming close to achieving it.

A few Commissioners have mentioned that they would hope there would be more involvement from younger people.