

REGISTRATION OF MINISTRIES COMMITTEE MAY 2023

Proposed Deliverance**The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.

Report

1. The Registration of Ministries Committee's main function is to consider applications from Church of Scotland Parish Ministers, who are currently categorised as E or R, who wish to have the status of O, which entitles them to be inducted to a charge. In addition, where ministers are returning from suspension, and wish to transition out of category S (for those who've been suspended) the Committee will consider such applications. The Registration of Ministries Committee's responsibility is to assess an individual's readiness for parish ministry, and then to specify what steps need to be taken to address any gaps in knowledge, understanding and experience which come to light. Over and above this, the Committee also asks Presbyteries to review the names of those for whom it has pastoral responsibility once a year. Details of the Committee's operations can be found at this link <http://bit.ly/3J3Szg> on the main Church of Scotland website, and the Registration of Ministries Act is accessible at this link <http://bit.ly/3IRoMQ3>.

2. The Committee met on five occasions since the General Assembly of 2022, once online only, and on four occasions in hybrid format. Two applications for Category O registration were considered and were granted; three further applications considered prior to the General Assembly of 2022 were also granted, meaning five in total were considered.

3. Given that the Act has now been in operation since January 2018, some five years, the Committee met with Presbytery Clerks and others in Presbyteries responsible for administering the tasks associated with the Act. The Committee was keen to learn how Presbyteries maintain and review the Register of Ministries for those Deacons and Ministers within the bounds, whether they are full members of Presbytery or not. A series of roadshows took place in February 2023, with in person meetings in Dundee and in Glasgow, with an online meeting for others who were unable to take part in these earlier gatherings. This online meeting had originally been conceived as a hybrid event, to take place in Dingwall, and feedback from the initial invitation resulted in it becoming an online meeting. Fifteen of the twenty-one Presbyteries took part, although technical difficulties at the hosting end meant that the Clerk of one Presbytery was not able to participate.

4. These conversations were helpful and demonstrated the variety of approaches adopted by Presbyteries old and new, particularly around the task of annual review of the Register. Template letters and forms which some Presbyteries had been using were shared.

5. It was recognised that the greatest challenge lay in engaging with ministers seeking to retain Category R registration, whether or not as members of Presbyteries, especially when they move outwith the initial Presbytery where they are registered. The General Assembly of 2023 will consider changes to the Church Courts Act (Act III, 2000), and this may impact on the work of Registration of Ministries. The Committee will move to prepare further guidance to be placed on the website, and to be issued to Presbytery Clerks, relating to the annual review provided for at s. 21 of the Registration of Ministries Act, following the General Assembly. These meetings took place in Glasgow; Dundee; and Dingwall. The Committee expresses its thanks to the Presbytery of Glasgow; and to the Steeple Church, Dundee for hosting these meetings.

6. Dates for the Committee's cycle of meetings are published on the Church of Scotland website at the above link, along with an indication of a deadline for prior submission of papers.

In the name of the Committee

HAZEL HASTIE, *Convener*
HILARY MCDUGALL, *Vice-Convener*
ANGUS R. MATHIESON, *Registrar*