

FAITH NURTURE FORUM MAY 2021**Proposed Deliverance****The General Assembly:**

1. Receive the Report.
2. Note the work done on discipleship and urge Kirk Sessions to utilise the resources provided in order to respond to the clear call to refocus and reshape around the two-part call of discipleship, to follow Christ and to enable others to follow Christ. *(Section 2)*
3. Instruct the Forum to develop the first modules of a lay training programme, with a view to launching an entry level course in January 2022. *(Section 3)*
4. Instruct the Forum to review the training expectations for Ordained Local Ministers. *(Section 5.6)*
5. Note the current mix of unrestricted and reviewable charges and instruct the Forum to keep questions around call and tenure under review. *(Section 9)*
6. Note the work which has taken place to date on developing a Capability Procedure for Ministers and instruct the Forum to bring detailed proposals for such a procedure to the General Assembly of 2022. *(Section 10)*
7. Instruct the Forum to bring a revised Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of 2022. *(Section 10.5)*
8.
 - (a) Affirm the commitment of the Church to place priority for the poorest at the heart of all that it does, recognising the mission of Priority Area congregations in this. *(Section 11)*
 - (b) Instruct the Forum to continue to develop and deliver this key priority – implementing the whole Church strategy of prioritising support for those living in poverty and at the margins – within the Faith Action Plan, through the Priority Areas Implementation Group and Priority Areas Team. *(Section 11)*
9. Note the research project on Pioneer Ministry, and instruct Presbyteries to consider the findings as they engage in planning new ways of being church. *(Section 12.1.6)*
10. Note the work being done on developing intergenerational church life and instruct all Presbyteries to consider this in their planning. *(Section 14)*
11.
 - a) Note that Heart and Soul will no longer be part of future General Assemblies and give thanks for all who have contributed to it over the years and for all whose experience of the Church and its life have been enriched by their involvement. *(Section 18.2)*
 - b) Instruct the Faith Nurture Forum to report to a future General Assembly on how stories can be shared and lessons learned, having consulted with the Faith Impact Forum and the Assembly Trustees. *(Section 18.3)*
12. Instruct the Forum to work with the Diaconate Council, the Legal Questions Committee, and other stakeholders, to review the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010) and to bring to the General Assembly of 2022 a revised or, if appropriate, a new Act on Diaconal Ministry within the Church of Scotland. *(Section 20 and Appendix 2)*
13. Pass an Act amending the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010, in terms of Appendix 2. *(Section 20 and Appendix 2)*
14. Pass a Regulation amending the Manse Adjudication Committee Regulations (Regulations III 2013) and Schedule, as set out in Appendix 3. *(Section 21 and Appendix 3)*

Report

1. INTRODUCTION

The key role of the Faith Nurture Forum is to support local congregations, either directly or through our Presbyteries. Over the past year, with all of its pandemic challenges, our staff and Forum members have proved themselves to be adaptable, creative and committed in providing this support. We are grateful to those in our Presbyteries and congregations who have assisted us in so many different ways to fulfil our varied programme of work.

1.1 At a national level the Forum does not work in a bubble or a silo, in isolation, but alongside many others – the Assembly Trustees, the General Trustees, the Legal Questions Committee, and the Faith Impact Forum to name but a few. We have to make decisions about our priorities alongside these colleagues, against a backdrop of financial cuts and staffing constraints, and in the ever-changing landscape of Presbytery reform and congregational adjustment. We work in a continual state of flux which brings its trials and frustrations. Since its inception in January 2020, the Faith Nurture Forum, along with Faith Impact and other parts of the Church, has had to wrestle with the changing background of furlough; of staff moving on; and of internal moves.

1.2 ‘We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.’ These words of Maya Angelou have been our inspiration from the first days of the Forum. We are still in the cocoon, but there are glimpses of the beauty of the butterfly beginning to emerge.

1.3 The history of the Faith Nurture Forum is rooted in the work of its predecessor bodies, and the Forum as it continues to evolve, is committed to supporting the local and regional Church. The shape of this report will reflect how the Forum does this through:

- resourcing for ministries;
- partnerships and development;
- our work in Priority Areas;
- resourcing the local and regional church, and;
- in working with our partners – our partners in Diaconate Council, and our funded partner agencies.

1.4 The final section of our report will cover legislative changes to Regulation III, 2013, governing the Manse Adjudication Committee and will also reference work with the General Trustees on the Consolidated Stipend Fund.

1.5 A list of Implementation Groups within the Forum, and their memberships, can be found at Appendix 1.

2. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – DISCIPLESHIP

2.1 Different reports to the General Assembly have affirmed that the ministry of the whole people of God, and its expression in the recognised ministries of the Church, are rooted in the ministry of Jesus Christ. The Forum wishes to reaffirm this, and to recognise the golden thread of church life, which is a combination of how we grow as disciples, and how we disciple one another, whether we are new to faith or responsible for leading in a particular area of ministry.

2.2 The Forum has recently resumed its development of a suite of resources for congregations to create and deepen a discipleship culture, that received the support of the General Assemblies of 2018 and 2019. The suite has been devised through a good deal of research and engagement with a variety of discipleship initiatives in our denomination and others. This will be a crucial part of the continuum of education and training provision available.

2.3 We have already made available one resource to congregations, to support them to stimulate a fresh focus on

discipleship, namely the conversation starter ‘Conversations in Discipleship’.

2.4 A further two forms of provision have yet to reach congregations, which we aim to launch in the second half of 2021:

2.4.1 ‘Exploring discipleship’ is a study resource that introduces and lightly explores the six characteristics of discipleship previously brought to the General Assembly. This resource casts a vision for a culture we can all share and mould. We aim to launch Exploring Discipleship in the first half of 2022.

2.4.2 ‘Encourager training’ is a face-to-face training provision that we will deliver to those inspired to take a lead in the development of a discipleship culture in their own congregational context. For there to be meaningful, sustainable culture change across our membership, accountable and enabling relationships need to form and it is our firm belief that we need to equip individuals in congregations to lead this culture change. Encourager Training has several sessions which could be conducted weekly, monthly, as two two-day weekends or four single days. The first half of every session is about a small group of people being disciples together e.g. sharing faith, developing emotional wellbeing, building an accountable spiritual community through learning about and experiencing together the characteristics of discipleship. In the second half of each session, we examine the tools of group facilitation and reflect together on how we create spaces of safety where we can explore and learn together.

3. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – LAY TRAINING PROGRAMME

3.1 Work on the lay training programme was paused during the first lockdown but has been able to restart during the autumn of 2020.

3.2 The vision for the programme has been clarified as:

- Catalysing and Equipping Inspirational Leadership for every part of our Church, for Worship, Witness, Nurture and Service.

3.3 Aims are identified as:

- Enabling those who wish to deepen their spiritual life, add to their faith knowledge, character and competence to access a menu of opportunities within their local context, through national events and online opportunities.
- Creating pathways between different layers of formation, making it easier for people to understand their vocation and where appropriate begin training for recognised ministries.
- Creating a culture across the church of investing in our faith.

3.4 With objectives of:

- Enabling growth in understanding of the Good News, encounter with the living Christ and the deepening of relationship with God.
- Laying a firm foundation of Christian faith and discipleship.
- Developing a sense of purpose, gifting and call for all who are on the journey of faith.
- Facilitating transformation of life and character.
- Encouraging ‘leadership’, enabling each person to use their God-given influence wherever they are.
- Building confidence in leading worship, and handling scripture and clarity of core beliefs.
- Equipping people for discipleship, enabling them to feed their own faith and help others to do the same.

- Equipping people for mission, enabling them to explain their faith and take the Good News to local communities.
- Equipping people for pastoral care, enabling them to play their part in the community of faith and enabling them to handle a variety of needs.
- Informing and educating for specific areas of responsibility and leadership within the church.

3.5 Our desired outcomes are people who belong to the community of faith and who are...

- confident in their faith, engaged in spiritual reflection and able to articulate how they are growing.
- connected to church community, able to help others grow and investing in discipleship.
- connected to their local communities, being effective witnesses in that place.
- worshippers.
- able to lead, and encouraging of leadership around them.
- stepping into whatever God calls them to, some of those to recognised ministries.

3.6 During the autumn of 2020 a large number of people were involved in shaping a curriculum. The curriculum begins with being for those from local congregations who express a desire to engage with more faith-shaped training, moves through to recognised ministry training and then onto Continuing Professional Development for people experienced in our recognised ministries. It covers a wide variety of subject areas.

3.7 The three layers of formation from the Formation Framework will set the philosophy for the whole curriculum:

- Who We Are
- Theory, Tradition & Knowledge
- Skills, Practice, Abilities & Qualities

3.8 The eight dimensions of Formation from the Formation Framework will bring shape to the curriculum...

- Faith, Vocation & Spirituality
- Character, Ethics and Development
- Leadership & Relationships
- Worship, Sacraments and Preaching
- Pastoral Care
- Mission
- Discipleship
- Church Management

3.9 The whole concept of training has continued to evolve during 2020 with many developing skills of presenting online and recording. There is much more of an appetite to learn from home. It is anticipated that the recording of modules for the lay training programme will be a simpler endeavour than anticipated at a previous stage. Modules will capture the best of existing training already available online or provided by other organisations, alongside specially recorded input which offers a distinctive context for Scotland and the Church of Scotland.

3.10 The building of the first modules will begin in spring 2021, will be advertised in Autumn 2021 and the first cohort will begin in January 2022.

4. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – DISCERNMENT AND RECRUITMENT

4.1 Against the backdrop of Covid-19 it is heartening to report that recruitment to the recognised ministries has continued as a priority.

4.2 National Assessment Conferences were held in May and June 2020 to allow academic entry timetables to be met, with a suitably adapted and robust online Assessment. Similarly, Admissions Conferences were also held online in order to allow those who would have attended an Admissions Conference in 2020 to be assessed. The skills and dedication of Directors, Assessors and staff, and the flexibility of applicants in these circumstances deserve note, and the Faith Nurture Forum is grateful to all who give of their time and energy to the Discernment and Assessment process on an ongoing basis.

4.3 Even in challenging times, many have continued to explore their call to Christian service and enter Discernment for the recognised ministries. Discernment placements needed to be adapted to the local context and associated Covid-19 restrictions, but extra guidance was provided and encouragement gained through a series of Discernment Webinars. The Webinars brought those in Discernment together and also sought to encourage others in embarking on that journey.

4.4 The tables below provide an overview of the statistics relating to applicants at different stages in the Discernment and Assessment processes. [The General Assembly in 2019 agreed to introduce Discernment Conversations as a replacement for Vocations Information Days. In the first part of the table we have provided statistics to reflect this change of process, and will continue to report in this way in future years.]

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	Jan-Dec 2020
Enquirers				170	124
Discernment Conversations				93	65
Applicants for Ministry (all types)	59	78	49	74	50
Entered Local Assessment	53	58	43	62	52
Chose to Withdraw (locally)	6	14	6	5	3
Readership (Applicants)	11	8	4	2	1
Readership Accepted	9	8	3	2	0

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Completed Local Assessment	47	44	37	29	37
Attended Assessment Conference	37	29	37	29	36
Full-time Ministry (Applicants)	25	20	21	17	25
Full-time Ministry Accepted	15	13	16	15	17
Ordained Local Ministry (Applicants)	12	8	14	11	9
Ordained Local Ministry Accepted	8	5	10	8	7
Deacons (Applicants)	0	1	2	1	2
Deacons Accepted	0	1	1	0	1
First Time Applicants	48	24	31	25	30
Accepted	23	17	21	19	21
Returning Applicants	5	5	6	4	6
Accepted	0	2	6	4	4

Additionally, we continue to have a significant number of Admissions Applicants [Ministers of other denominations applying on a full, temporary or re-admission basis] to serve in the Church of Scotland. Not all initial applications proceed to an Admissions Conference as there are a number of criteria that must be satisfied first, but attendance at Admissions Conferences in 2017-2020 is as below:

Conferences	Attended	Accepted	Not Accepted
2017	16	9	7
2018	24	17	7
2019	23	13	10
2020	27	15	12

4.4.1 Those accepted at Admissions Conference are then invited to begin their Familiarisation Period in the Church of Scotland [within a period of 3 years] and on successful completion are granted a Certificate of Eligibility. 24 individuals have gained Certificates since the General Assembly of 2019.

4.4.2 It should be noted that it is the Certificate of Eligibility that allows an individual to apply for a vacant charge. Faith Nurture are often contacted by Nominating Committees who receive direct interest and enquiries re their vacancy from Ministers of other churches and denominations. No application can be considered in a vacancy unless a Certificate of Eligibility is held, or the minister is already a Church of Scotland minister. Individuals who are not Ministers in the Church of Scotland should be re-directed to Faith Nurture if they are interested in applying for Admission.

4.4.3 At the time of reporting, Faith Nurture will continue to respond and adapt to the Covid-19 challenges that remain in 2021 by continuing to provide online assessment. While this is not our preferred mode of assessment, we will continue to actively recruit for the ministries of the Church.

4.5 Talking Ministry

4.5.1 In order to support discernment in ministry in the widest sense, throughout 2021 a Talking Ministry series has been offered in collaboration with the Communications Department. Monthly news stories will explore examples of ministry from across the Church, along with the encouragement to talk about ministry and consider our own stories.

4.5.2 Examples of those who serve in the recognised ministries will be included alongside those who serve in a variety of different ways. Ministry is not just about the recognised ministries, but about how each Christian responds to the call of God upon their lives. It is hoped the stories will provide personal inspiration, and that an accompanying monthly Discernment Resource will encourage thinking and talking about ministry as a normal part of our Christian experience.

5. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5.1 This has been an extremely challenging year for those in training for the recognised ministries. Placement opportunities have been significantly limited, with the opportunities to shadow a supervisor being almost entirely online; academic study moving online at short notice alongside uncertainty over exams; with many needing to home-school and obviously the 'ordinary' challenges of Covid-19 times. Candidates and probationers alike have met these challenges with creativity and adaptability.

5.2 We are incredibly grateful to supervisors who have continued to offer themselves and their congregations as placement opportunities in these challenging times.

5.3 It is likely that additional support and training opportunities will be required for this cohort of candidates as they begin serving in recognised ministries.

5.4 Conferences

5.4.1 All regular training conferences have been held online over the last year.

5.4.2 We had hoped that the August Candidates' Gathering could have happened in person, but at short notice, online, on MS Teams, became the requirement. Readers-in-training attended for the first time, bringing the whole recognised ministry 'family' together. The curriculum for the event focussed largely on adapting to, and growing skills for, these particular times.

5.4.3 At the heart of our probationer training programme is a series of conferences focussed around four key areas: prayer & worship; leadership; church law & pastoral care; and mission & discipleship. These conferences allow for in-depth work with the Formation Framework, to support the development of those approaching ordination to a first charge. Closer friendships form during this season and this has still been possible online.

5.4.4 In place of the normal First Five Years residential conference, over fifty recently ordained Full Time Ministers of Word and Sacrament (FTWS) and Ordained Local Ministers (OLM) participated in four morning sessions in January and February 2021, offering a retreat, strengthening resilience, exploring discernment and examining ways of serving in Presbyteries.

5.5 Annual Candidate Appraisal

5.5.1 The extremely uncertain picture of Spring 2020 led to all annual candidate appraisals being conducted in the first instance as a 'paper review', with the training team and the presbytery assessors reading all relevant reports and making their comments in writing. Where additional support was required, a number of candidates were then offered 'in person' reviews.

5.5.2 Our hope is that all 2021 annual candidate appraisals will be conducted according to the process agreed at last year's General Assembly, though most will take place online.

5.5.3 Formation supervisor training will take place in summer 2021 and the pilot will begin in the autumn. The formation supervisor will be an individual from the same Presbytery as the candidate, and will accompany them throughout training and complement the role of the placement supervisor. The formation supervisor will focus on ministerial formation while the placement supervisor will focus on the tasks and skills of ministry.

5.6 Reviewing OLM training expectations

5.6.1 Considerable challenges are being faced by individuals who are in training for OLM whilst in full-time employment. As we re-think training for the different recognised ministries it is essential that we learn from the experiences of those in training and respond to the perception that OLM is only for those who are retired.

5.6.2 Training for OLM is designed to take less than 3 years and includes:

Certificate in Christian Studies	2 years part-time
Term-time placements	2 x 25 weeks (3hrs plus Sunday per week)
Probation	12 months (10hrs plus Sunday per week)

5.6.3 In the current system, an individual in full-time employment is being asked to work and train for approximately 75 hrs per week during term-time. The following table, based on a candidate studying via Aberdeen University, shows how the hours are broken down (candidates studying at Aberdeen take 8 modules worth 15 credits each and those studying at Highland Theological College take 6 modules worth 20 credits each across the two years):

Component	Total hours per week
Employment	40
Placement	10
Studies (2 modules)	25
TOTAL	75

5.6.4 During probation the expectation reduces to 57 hours per week.

Component	Total hours per week
Employment	40
Placement	17
Total	57

5.6.5 OLM candidates in full-time employment are reporting numerous challenges and going to extremes to try and fit their training into their lives. These candidates are highly qualified, talented and faithful individuals called by God and affirmed by the Church of Scotland. There is a serious risk that the unrealistic expectations of the training programme will result in individuals not applying for this ministry and a number of those who are accepted not completing their training.

The Faith Nurture Forum intends to address this area during 2021.

5.7 Candidates & Probationers

<i>Candidates who started training in August 2020</i>	
FTWS	17
OLM	6
Diaconal	1
<i>Total across categories</i>	24
<i>Candidates accepted for entry for August 2020 but deferred entry</i>	
FTWS	3
OLM	2
<i>Deferred training total</i>	5
<i>Candidates across all years prior to probation as at August 2020 including those who have deferred</i>	
FTWS	53
OLM	18
Diaconal	2
<i>Total across all categories</i>	73
<i>FTWS candidates studying at recognised providers 2020-21</i>	
Aberdeen campus based	1
Aberdeen distance learning	1
Glasgow campus based	11
Edinburgh campus based	11
Highland Theological College campus based	4
Highland Theological College distance learning	17
St Andrews campus based	1
<i>OLM candidates studying at recognised providers 2020-21</i>	
Aberdeen distance learning	7
Highland Theological College distance learning	9
<i>Diaconal candidates studying at recognised providers 2020-21</i>	
Aberdeen campus based	1
Edinburgh campus based	1
<i>Number of probationers completing training in 2020</i>	
FTWS	20
OLM	5
Diaconal	0
<i>Total</i>	25
<i>Probationers beginning summer 2020</i>	
FTWS	7
OLM	7
<i>Total</i>	14
<i>Readers</i>	
Readers in training in 2020	9
Readers set apart in 2020	1

6. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1.1 Support for those who serve in the ministries of the Church remains a core priority of Faith Nurture. Knowing the variety of support that is offered in different local contexts and through Presbyteries, the central Support Team has a distinct role to contribute.

6.1.2 Recognising the challenges of all the changes that have impacted on ministry in this year, the Support Team have acted to support many through the core provisions of Ascend – Pastoral Supervision, Coaching, Counselling – as well as offering direct support and online Webinar provisions, and advising throughout the year in terms of Covid-19 advice relevant to health and wellbeing at work.

6.1.3 The approach of the Support Team is person centred, and we will seek to access the most relevant support for any individual at any given time. Funded provisions include Pastoral Supervision for full-time Ministers up to £240 per calendar year, and counselling through external providers.

6.1.4 Those who serve as Office Holders in ministry have support provisions similar to employees. The Support Team can provide individualised support and guidance for the variety of different situations and circumstances that can arise in the exercise of ministry. The Ministers' Handbook, updated and provided annually, offers a wealth of helpful information primarily intended for those in full-time ministry.

6.1.5 Advice and support provisions are however available across the different recognised ministries, and information is provided for all on the Ascend website. [Ministries Development Staff (MDS) and other employed post holders should first access support through their line manager or the HR department.] <https://ascend.churchofscotland.org.uk/support/>

6.1.6 The Support Team also has responsibilities regarding absence from work due to ill health for those in full-time ministry. Office Holders are required to submit GP "fit notes" to Faith Nurture for any absence that extends beyond one week [self-certification should be provided for the first week], and this is important for the insurance provisions relevant for those serving in ministry, including Income Protection and Death in Service benefit. Providing "fit notes" also allows the Support Team to engage individually with those who are experiencing ill health, and to facilitate phased returns to work, liaising with Presbyteries as appropriate.

6.1.7 The Support Team can be contacted, confidentially, at pastoralsupport@churchofscotland.org.uk. This email address is only accessed by Support personnel within Faith Nurture, and can be used in confidence.

6.2 Ascend

6.2.1 Ascend is the main source of resourcing and information for development for those in our recognised ministries. Monthly eNews and an extensive website ensure that a flow of opportunities and relevant experience supports and encourages those in ministry.

6.2.2 Website users climbed to 10,457 in 2020, a 56.1% increase on 2019. Return or repeat users of the site saw a 697.5% increase on 2019. Total page views were 62,492 which is an increase of 96.4% on 2019. The most popular pages were Resources, For These Days and Events.

6.2.3 Online conferences and webinars are plentiful at the moment and we encourage everyone to set aside time to invest in their own discipleship, leadership and / or ministry. Ascend has offered a very well-received 'Wellbeing and Resilience' course and stimulated much reflection and future-thinking through a 'Conversations' series.

6.3 Ministerial Development Conversations (MDCs)

6.3.1 Ministerial Development Conversations continue to offer an annual opportunity for a safe space for processing, refreshing and resetting priorities. Booking an MDC is a wise investment of time as we continue to navigate our way through these uncertain days. These can now be arranged directly with a facilitator. All facilitators are working online.

6.4 Study Leave

6.4.1 Study leave was closed for part of 2020 but is once more available for FTWS, with £275 and 14 days made available for each year of service (capped after seven years at £1,925 and fourteen weeks). Applications can be made through the Ascend website.

7. RESOURCING FOR MINISTRIES – MANSES

7.1 The General Assembly of 2019 instructed the Ministries Council in the following terms:

Instruct the Council to bring an outline timetable to the General Assembly of 2020 in respect of providing a detailed report on the issue of manse occupation, such a report to include but not be limited to:

- the sustainability of current practice;
- a serious exploration of a 'mixed economy' allowing the possibility of Ministers living in their own homes;
- the provision of manses to Associate Ministers, Deacons and Ministries Development Staff where appropriate; and
- consultation with HMRC, General Trustees, other denominations and other relevant parties.

7.2 The General Assembly of October 2020 dealt with essential business only. The Faith Nurture Forum will therefore bring a detailed report to the General Assembly of 2022 on this matter. Conversations have already taken place with other denominations and an opinion has been offered by the professional advisers used by the Church for advice on taxation matters. In addition, previous work on this topic will be revisited as a basis for further consultation with relevant parties.

8. SUPPORTING THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND DEVELOPMENT

8.1 A New Approach to Presbytery Planning – Ministries Numbers

8.1.1 At the General Assembly of 2020, there was a clearly expressed wish that Presbyteries be equipped with a revised set of ministries numbers, against the background of a realisation that the 2011 numbers, and the advisory numbers issued in 2018, were unsatisfactory. The number of candidates coming forward; the demographic profile of our Ministers; and the financial realities facing the Church have resulted in vacancies becoming ever longer, and the burden on Interim Moderators heavier. Accordingly, work has been done to produce an allocation of ministries which is financially affordable, and this figure of 600 ministries is reported in the Assembly Trustees' Report to this General Assembly.

This challenge can only be met by a commitment to a new kind of mission planning which as has been said over and over again will include, "contracting and expanding, cutting and investing and pruning and planting" all at the same time.

8.1.2 Those figures – 600 ministries, a mix of ministries of Word and Sacrament, and MDS roles, by the end of 2025 – presented in the Assembly Trustees Report draw substantially on the weightings applied first of all in 2004/2005, and then in 2010/2011, which offered what was felt then to be an appropriate and weighted balance of ministries to remote and rural areas, as well as emphasising

a double weighting on population, focussed on Priority Areas. It is clear however that as the Church continues to reconfigure the shape of its Presbyteries, these principles will need to be revisited. The Forum will bring a further report on the allocation of ministries, and weightings, in a Supplementary Report, to this General Assembly.

8.2 A New Approach to Presbytery Planning – A Presbytery Mission Plan Act

8.2.1 For a number of years there has been widespread dissatisfaction with the current Appraisal and Adjustment Procedure Act (Act 7 2003). This has found a voice in various settings, particularly in the conversations between those responsible in Presbyteries for delivering Plans and the staff of what is now Faith Nurture Forum and the Clerks of the General Assembly, as well as in feedback from Presbytery Clerks.

8.2.2 The 2003 Act envisages as the main building blocks the allocation of a Minister to a charge and therefore does not offer the range of alternative forms of ministry, leadership, and human resourcing which the Church continuously demands as it seeks to respond to an ever-changing national and local scene.

8.2.3 There is currently no mention of a limit on Ministry Post numbers and therefore there is no reference to adherence to targets set by the General Assembly.

8.2.4 The requirement in the Act that, Presbytery produces a ten-year Plan, when such a time frame is beyond our shared ability to predict what Church and world will be like, is no longer realistic.

8.2.5 The Act makes no provision for what happens in the latter years of the ten-year Plan apart from an annual review of its provisions.

8.2.6 The section on the future of buildings has given too much leeway, and in some instances has allowed for the avoidance of robust planning decisions.

8.2.7 The Act deals with challenges to Plan decisions through the Appeals Act process which means that there are lengthy delays in achieving clarity for local church work, particularly in situations where appeals are only heard when the Presbytery chooses to deal with them, often at the point of demission or translation which can be well into the future, and often beyond the ten-year time span foreseen by the current Act.

8.2.8 There is a realisation that this Act is no longer fit for purpose, and accordingly the Forum will bring a proposal for a Presbytery Mission Plan Act in a Supplementary Report. Such an Act should:

- Name Mission as the prime driver for Planning
- Align the description of Mission with that being used in the Faith Action Plan (which has now been endorsed by the General Assembly as successor to the Radical Action Plan).
- Commit to a territorial ministry as in the Constitution but also set the scene for ecumenical cooperation in its delivery.
- Bring Ministry Post numbers into the legislation and facilitate Presbyters achieving conformity to their allocation by 2025.
- Set a framework for a five-year rolling plan (as opposed to a fixed ten years in Act VII 2003) and require the Faith Nurture Forum to provide a five-year rolling projection of Ministry Post numbers.
- Simplify the strategic decisions about buildings and draw on the support and guidance provided by the General Trustees [or give the General Trustees the responsibility for approving the buildings section of any proposed Plan].

- Simplify and speed up the process whereby the process of arriving at Plan Decisions and other Planning matters can be challenged by Kirk Sessions and Presbyters through the provision of a bespoke review process. Outstanding appeals will fall if the new Presbytery Mission Plan Act is agreed by the General Assembly.

- Maintain a tight control on budgets by insisting that shortfalls be dealt with and appointments are properly set up with secure funding and good HR practice.

- Offer Presbyteries a wider range of options as they seek to reshape church life and use the Ministry Posts which they have been allocated in particular to add provision for – Team Ministry, “light touch” local church (perhaps called Local Mission Church), online church, new expressions of church.

- Provide a clearer framework for implementing Plans through its description of adjustment processes.

8.2.9 The Forum will report further in its Supplementary Report on implementation of this new Presbytery Mission Plan Act. It is envisaged that Presbyteries continue the process of Planning, and will complete the process of developing and approving revised Presbytery Plans by 31 December 2022, submitting them to the Faith Nurture Forum for agreement by that date.

8.2.10 It would also be the intention of the Forum to publish and maintain guidance resources which would assist Presbyteries in this important and on-going piece of work.

8.3 Ministries Development Staff (MDS)

8.3.1 The General Assembly 2019 called for a moratorium on recruitment to MDS posts and instructed the Ministries Council to put in place a process to ensure the total number of MDS posts did not exceed 120 FTE. This was achieved in November 2019. Three MDS Staffing Approval Panels ran from then until February 2020, when Covid-19 and lockdown prevented active recruitment, and a further panel took place in November 2020. The process sought to ensure MDS job descriptions were robustly drafted and the posts appropriately supported with clear line management. All posts were required to demonstrate evidence of The Planning Principles, (Appraisal and Adjustment Act, 2003) and show innovation.

8.3.2 Recruitment has never exceeded 120 FTE and where applications were not successful, they were all given constructive and supportive feedback. Presbyteries were informed in late February that the Approval Panel was now inviting applications and that recruitment had restarted, still in line with the cap of 120 posts. The number of MDS employed at the end of December 2020 was 100, four less than the forecast figure.

8.3.3 In addition, where posts fall vacant, whether through retirement or resignation, they will not be replaced. This policy will be revised on a regular basis.

8.4 Hub Style Ministry

8.4.1 The concept of hub style ministry was first suggested at the General Assembly of 2016 and has been evolving ever since, in terms of understanding of the term and its application as a model for ministry. In 2018 a Coordinator for New and Emerging Ministries was appointed, to lead on what this ministry might mean, and more specifically, what it might mean in context. Those areas which participated were Argyll, West Angus, Dundee, Aberdeen South, and Leith. Each of these drafted models of team ministry using existing legislation to meet their local needs, with varying degrees of success. The Hub project offered up some models for ministry, influenced wider discussions and decisions in presbytery planning, and contributed to developing legislation on the shape of ministry for the future. It pointed towards the need for changes in legislation and to make provision for new forms of team ministry that cut across traditional parish boundaries and, in some cases, Presbytery boundaries. Hubs

offered an open experiment where pilots were encouraged to develop local solutions. It was a valuable learning experience and brought meaningful change to those involved. The Hub project ended in December 2019 and it now moves to a new phase. This new phase would drop the misleading and confusing term 'Hub' and replace it with something more understandable, e.g. 'New Models of Ministry for the Church'. In parallel with the work of the pilot Hub ministries, two consultation events took place to discuss the merits and risks of introducing new legislation that permitted multiple charges in a single charge. The new phase has evolved from these consultations and numerous conversations with Presbyteries, Kirk Sessions, Ministers and a variety of others involved in our Church.

8.5 Dissolution

8.5.1 Dissolution in the interest of adjustment will be further explored, alongside work on this subject which the General Trustees are carrying out.

9. REVIEWABLE CHARGES

9.1 The General Assembly of 2019 instructed the Ministries Council in the following terms:

When framing the new Vacancy Procedures Act and reviewing the Appraisal and Adjustment Act, to consider incorporating the following principle: that no charge should, in future, be granted leave to call a minister on an unrestricted basis, but that tenure should instead be granted on a reviewable basis of no more than 7 years and to report to the General Assembly of 2021.

9.2 The General Assembly had considered this in the past, and in 2011, recognising that this question needed particular attention, agreed to the establishment of a Special Commission to look at tenure. This Special Commission General Assembly gave its final Report to the General Assembly of 2014, and it can be found in section 23 of the Volume of Reports to that General Assembly (**here**).

9.3 Prior to this, there had also been conversations on Area Team Ministry, and Flexible Tenure, where a minister might be inducted to a Presbytery rather than a charge, although little came from discussions on Flexible Tenure.

9.4 At that same General Assembly, the idea of Reviewable Tenure was replaced with the concept of Reviewable Charge, which reflected more appropriately the wider questions of ministry and tenure in context explored in the Report of the Special Commission. The current situation is that there are 119 out of 987 charges with a basis of Reviewable Charge, 70 of which currently have a sitting minister.

9.5 A straw poll of Presbytery Clerks indicates that of 28 responses from 40 (as at 4th February 2021) only 5 had exercised the right to recall a Reviewable Charge in the last ten years. The data on how many charges are reflected in this statistic is not readily available, and on the surface, the provision does not seem to lend itself to resolving some of the issues which a move to make every charge a Reviewable Charge might seek to address. In addition, the convention in the law of the Church that legislation be not retrospective would mean that the question of overall flexibility is not one which could be addressed by such a move in the short to medium term. It would appear from these statistics that in most instances a Basis of Reviewable Charge is simply renewed at the end of the period allowed, whereas flexibility, and the ability to review congregational life, is something which should be taking place on a continuous basis, irrespective of whether a minister is inducted on an unrestricted or reviewable call.

9.6 One response offered from one Presbytery was to ask the question whether the recall of a Basis of Reviewable Charge would be initiated because of the effectiveness of a particular minister, or on grounds of readjustment. Allowing such an issue only to be raised towards the end of a period of

reviewable charge equally does not give the flexibility needed.

9.7 A similar question was asked at the General Assembly of 2020, about allowing for the exploration in review of Act 7 2003 of whether, where appropriate and after careful consideration, a Presbytery should be enabled to dissolve the pastoral tie so that adjustments can be made. The repealed Act 6 of 1984 on Congregations in Changed Circumstances, allowed for just such a decision, where Presbyteries had the facility to make an enquiry when it judged that a congregation had been affected by adverse circumstances which:

- are peculiar to the charge or its minister; and
- are not attributable to the fault of the minister or of any member or office-bearer; and
- have occurred after the induction of the minister: and
- are wholly or mainly outwith the control of the Church; and
- are unlikely to change for the better.

That Act was also sent down under the Barrier Act.

9.8 The 1984 Act made it possible, following due process, to dissolve the pastoral tie, with some protection for a minister who was affected by such a decision. The process could still be applied, but needs further work and consultation.

9.9 The Special Commission on Tenure and Leadership in the Local Church indicated that to adequately explore questions of mission and tenure in context, different elements needed to be in place to support such a process, including the following:

- Local Church Review;
- Ministerial Development Review;
- Continuing Ministerial Development;
- A Capability Process; and
- Effective Regional and National Structures.

9.10 With the programme of Presbytery Reform underway, local church review will have greater consistency in these new regional structures, and with the work of Ascend; Study Leave provisions; work on Discipleship and Lay Training Modules; and Ministerial Development Conversations, there are more tools available now to help the local church determine its mission. In addition, the Forum is continuing its work on a Capability Process which will be an integral part of exploring and discerning mission at congregational level, and the Forum reports elsewhere in this Report on this work.

9.11 In this time of the pandemic, with the programme of Presbytery Reform due to conclude its current phase in 2023 and with further changes in the shape of a Presbytery Mission Plan Act, the Forum believes that now is not the time to agree that no charge should, in future, be granted leave to call a minister on an unrestricted basis.

9.12 Accordingly, the Faith Nurture Forum would ask the General Assembly to note the above, to note the current mix of unrestricted and reviewable charges, and to keep the question under review.

9.13 Within the space of a Report to the General Assembly, there is not scope to address the not insignificant issue of the impact on Manse Families or the stability of congregational life. Finally, the question has to be asked how does the Church care for a minister who finds that the Basis of Reviewable Charge has been recalled, and he or she has not been able to find a new call at the end of the six months' notice period.

9.14 Ultimately this is a question for the General Assembly; if the General Assembly were to agree to move to

apply a Basis of Reviewable Charge for every call, the Forum would seek advice from the Principal Clerk about this being a matter which would require Barrier Act procedure given its far reaching implications.

10. CAPABILITY PROCEDURE

10.1 In its Report to the 2020 General Assembly, the Forum referred to previous work on a Capability Procedure, and now offers interim reflections on how such a procedure might operate. The Special Commission of 2014 on Tenure and Leadership in the Local Church affirmed that a Capability Procedure should be the responsibility of the Presbytery (or group of Presbyteries) and it also stressed the need for a consistent and fair process across the Church nationally. The Forum agrees with the Special Commission that the main goal of a Capability Procedure is always improvement in what a Minister does and how he or she does it, with a view to helping the congregation to discern its mission in context, and be faithful in fulfilling that mission. Both the Church of England and the United Reformed Church have an informal process and a formal process, as well as an appeal process where appropriate.

10.2 The Minister as office-holder has a significant freedom in determining the content of the role and this is something which the General Assembly has affirmed frequently. This is always set against the context of the place of the local church, and its part within the local Presbytery. With changes to local church review; with the advent of the new Presbytery structure; and with a greater focus on mission, and on inspiring leadership, along with Ministerial Development Conversations, there is scope for greater awareness and clarity on expectations around the ministry of a local congregation. This is also to be seen against the Code of Ministerial Conduct, which has been helpful, although it requires updating. This can be found in the current edition of the Ministers' Handbook on Ascend - <https://bit.ly/3qJMffY>.

10.3 It is important to stress that such a Capability Procedure would sit independently of ill health processes or discipline. Equally, in engaging in conversations around Capability Procedure, it can enable an individual minister to discern that their gifts are not suited to the context in which they find themselves, but might better serve the mission of the Church in a different charge or sphere of activity.

10.4 Any Capability Procedure should be easy to understand, and should consider questions such as funding for training to improve performance. Who would measure improvement, and how, and where ultimate decisions would lie, will be addressed in any procedure.

10.5 The Forum asks the Church to note the work which has taken place to date, and seeks the instruction of the General Assembly to revise the Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland, bringing reports on the Capability Procedure and the revised Code of Professional Practice and Good Conduct for the Ministries of the Church of Scotland to the General Assembly of 2022.

11. PRIORITY AREAS

11.1 Successive General Assemblies have affirmed the work of Priority Areas and restated the Church of Scotland's commitment to being with its poorest communities across the nation and resourcing this missional work. The Church's position to prioritise some of its resources to living this Gospel message is a direct response to that call:

11.2 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' 'Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see

you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 'The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Matthew 25: 35-40, NIV

11.3 This work is supported through the Priority Areas Implementation Group, more details of which can be found in the list of Implementation Groups at Appendix 1.

11.4 Priority Areas responding in the Pandemic

11.5 Going Online – the Wee Conversations

11.5.1 We began a series of online Wee Conversations in the first lockdown in March 2020 and this has continued to the present time. It has become a highly valued space for people to gather together.

11.5.2 There has been a mix of both open conversation and more structured discussions. Discussions have included reflecting on reduced funding and closure for Citizens Advice Bureaux and community legal centres; issues with Universal Credit, the Church's response to the pandemic, the role and response of the Assembly Trustees, and financial crises faced by Priority Area congregations.

11.5.3 For our report on the Wee Friday Conversations, capturing the breadth of work and views, email the team - priorityareas@churchofscotland.org.uk

11.5.4 Going Online – "Extra" Wee Conversations

- Sometimes a topic arises that is too current and too large simply to host in the regular Wee Conversation slot. In January 2021, we were invited by the Ministries and Mission Working Group (MMWG) to run a session with them as their first consultation on the new scheme proposals they were developing for M&M contributions.
- Priority Areas in attendance voiced their concerns that for congregations in the poorest areas, struggling at church level to raise an income, the proposals in this first draft seemed to weight the burden even further on these congregations, whilst capping the contributions of churches that had the highest income. To use a tax analogy, this seemed like a regressive move.
- Priority Areas welcomed the invitation from the MMWG to continue dialogue, and offer thinking and assistance in shaping the proposals, and we have revisited this in our Wee Conversations.

11.6 Going Online – The Big Conversation

11.6.1 We came together, in November 2020, with the Presbyterian Church in the USA to run our Big Conversation – Bringing It Home, using their Matthew 25 Initiative, to explore relevance and context for our work.

11.6.2 We already run a partnership programme with PCUSA – the Young Adult Volunteer Programme, focussed on bringing young Americans to work on placement with some of our Priority Areas. Through that (virtual) partnership, we became aware of their Matthew 25 work.

11.6.3 Our keynote speakers included Rev. Dr Diane Moffett, President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. In conversation with our own Priority Areas and visiting congregations from PCUSA, we explored the three strands of the Matthew 25 Initiative:

- Building Congregational Vitality
- Eradicating Systemic Poverty
- Dismantling Structural Racism

11.6.4 This work stands us in good stead for our contribution to the Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Group established by the Assembly Trustees, and will feed into that process.

11.7 Going Online – Worship Development

11.7.1 We spent a lot of the year supporting congregations with their transition to online worship, including advice on copyright and licensing, technical support for streaming, and providing musical resources. Challenge Poverty Week also shifted to have a particular focus on the impact of the pandemic on Priority Areas. In order to help congregations to think about their future plans we developed the "Conversations in Worship" online events and Facebook group alongside other teams in Faith Nurture. One of the key areas of work looking forward is developing training to help congregations build local worship teams.

11.8 Going Online – Learning Programme

We continued to develop our programme of support for Priority Areas and shift as much as possible to online provision. We worked in partnership with Cairn to carry on with our programme of developing learning communities in missional work. We also continued to work with Nurture Development to develop our other flagship programme on Asset-Based Community Development.

11.9 Chance to Thrive legacy

11.9.1 Chance to Thrive has been our partnership project between Priority Areas (now within Faith Nurture) and the General Trustees. Originally the project worked directly with six congregations to help them to identify what "thriving" would look like in their local context, then consider how their church buildings might be made fit for purpose, resourced for worship and mission; working with Presbytery and General Trustees. The second phase worked with an additional eight congregations to take them through this model.

11.9.2 The third phase of the work began in June 2018, focussing on:

- Disseminating the model to the whole Church: we have developed two resources under a series entitled Towards Thriving: Developing an Initial Project Proposal; Business Planning for Mission.
- Completing with the Congregations: we continued to work with the existing eight Priority Area congregations on the programme and have been supporting them to complete the process.
- Collaboration with Presbyteries: Presbyteries are crucial partners and we have undertaken to develop strong relationships with six Presbyteries through meetings and/or attendance at strategic subgroups building collaborative practice.
- Joining up with regeneration strategies: we built good links with local authority regeneration managers in South Lanarkshire, Aberdeen and Stirling.

Additionally, we worked with congregations to apply for the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

- Working closely with General Trustees: we partnered in additional ways; by contributing to the recently updated publications, Making It Happen and Buildings Flowchart, by holding regular joint project meetings and by attendance at the Fabric Committee.
- Widening the scope of the work: The project coordinator has worked with congregations outside of Priority Areas; embedding the practices of Chance to Thrive. He has supported the development of 12 additional congregations which the General Trustees thought would benefit.

11.9.3 The programme co-ordinator's post was a fixed term appointment until December 2020. We can see clear links between the practice developed in Chance to Thrive and what the General Trustees are trying to achieve with Well Equipped Spaces and we are actively looking for ways we can support this.

11.10 Updating the Priority Areas List

11.10.1 We have followed the direction of General Assemblies over the past 20 years to commit the resources of the Kirk to giving priority to its poorest communities and congregations, following the Gospel imperative to which we are called.

11.10.2 Historically, one of the ways we have done this is to draw up a list of congregations which are ranked by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) as the most deprived in Scotland. Accordingly, in 2014, the last time the list was amended, 64 congregations were designated as a Priority Area. Around half of these are within the Presbytery of Glasgow and the remaining fall in clusters within the following Presbyteries: Edinburgh, Ayr, Kilmarnock, Ardrossan, Clyde, Hamilton, Argyll, Stirling, Fife, Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness.

11.10.3 From 2017 to 2019, the Priority Areas Committee took time to deliberate how the next updated list would be drawn up. Assisted by the Church's statistician, they considered all aspects of SIMD - looking closely at the weighting for each of the 7 Indicators of deprivation: income, education, employment, health, crime, housing and access to amenities. Their conclusion was that using SIMD was the most accurate tool in supporting the designation of Priority Areas.

11.10.4 It is right that the list of Priority Area congregations does not remain static. We want to ensure that our commitment is to continue to support the most deprived areas in Scotland; continuing our mandate to do this work and utilising the most up-to-date information to target resources.

11.10.5 Equally we want to ensure that this work is carried out in partnership and synergy with the process of presbytery planning and reform. To this end the PAIG and Presbytery Planning Task Group are working collaboratively; the PPTG is currently analysing and revising new figures for numbers in ministry and MDS.

Working together in this way we hope to establish within Presbyteries, greater understanding of deprivation, the need to plan accordingly and the resources available.

11.10.6 The Church currently supports Priority Areas through:

11.10.7 Presbytery Planning

11.10.7.1 In line with the guidance issued on Presbytery Planning and agreed by General Assemblies, Priority Areas have historically been accorded double weighting within a Presbytery's plan, allowing for additional staffing (usually an MDS post) to be deployed to each Priority Area to develop work with the congregation and community. For clarity, double weighting does not mean two posts for every Priority Area. It is the population count for the parish which is double weighted – in effect counted twice to allow for additional staff to be placed where deprivation is at its worst.

11.10.8 Principles and structure of an updated list:

11.10.8.1 The approach we have taken in drawing up this list fits with the direction of travel of our work over the past four years. This has been to widen out the reach and understanding of Priority Areas support to those congregations in the church who are intentional about working with the poorest communities.

11.10.9 First Tier Support

11.10.9.1 In our first analysis we identify a list of the top 64 congregations (with presbyteries) which are ranked within SIMD as the 5% most deprived. These are below, and those in italics are new to the list.

1. Edinburgh

Edinburgh: Holy Trinity
Edinburgh: Richmond Craigmillar

6. Jedburgh

Hawick: Burnfoot

10. Ayr

Ayr: Newton Wallacetown
Ayr: St Quivox
Dalmellington
Muirkirk
Patna Waterside

11. Kilmarnock

Irvine: Fullarton
Irvine: St Andrew's
Kilmarnock: South

12. Ardrossan

Ardrossan & Saltcoats Kirkgate
Stevenston: Ardeer

13. Lanark

Douglas Valley

14. Clyde

Clydebank: Kilbowie St Andrew's
Dumbarton: West Kirk
Greenock: East End
Greenock: St Margaret's
Greenock: Wellpark Mid Kirk
Greenock: Westburn
Paisley: St Ninian's Ferguslie
Port Glasgow: New
Renton: Trinity

16. Glasgow

Fernhill and Cathkin
Glasgow: Barlanark Greyfriars
Glasgow: Bridgeton St Francis in the East
Glasgow: Calton Parkhead
Glasgow: Carnyntyne
Glasgow: Carnwadric
Glasgow: Castlemilk
Glasgow: Colston Milton
Glasgow: Colston Wellpark
Glasgow: Cranhill
Glasgow: Drumchapel St Andrew'
Glasgow: Drumchapel St Mark's
Glasgow: Easterhouse
Glasgow: Gairbraid
Glasgow: Garthamlock & Craigend
Glasgow: Gorbals
Glasgow: Govan and Linthouse
Glasgow: Pollokshaws
Glasgow: Possilpark
Glasgow: Ruchazie
Glasgow: Shettleston New Springburn
Glasgow: St James' (Pollok)
Glasgow: St Paul's
Glasgow: Toryglen
Glasgow: Trinity Possil and Henry Drummond
Glasgow: Tron St Mary's
Glasgow: Wallacewell

17. Hamilton

Airdrie: St Columba's
Larkhall: Chalmers
Motherwell: Crosshill
Wishaw: Craigneuk and Belhaven

19. Argyll

Dunoon: St John's

23. Stirling

Stirling St Mark's

24. Fife

Methil: Wellesley
Methilhill and Denbeath

29. Dundee

Dundee: Camperdown
Dundee: Coldside
Dundee: Douglas and Mid Craigie
Dundee: Lochee

37. Inverness

Inverness: Trinity

11.10.9.2 The intention would be that the parishes in this tier would be supported through:

- double weighting within a presbytery plan; in line with Presbytery Planning Guidance; it is recognised that further recommendations on weighting, which may be different, will feature in a Supplementary Report;
- Priority Areas Team support;
- contracts with external partners: and
- General Trustees continuation of grant funding

11.11 Second Tier Support

11.11.1 There are 13 current Priority Areas which are outwith the 5% most deprived ranking in SIMD 2020:

1. Edinburgh

Edinburgh: Bristo Memorial
Edinburgh: Old Kirk and Muirhouse

11. Kilmarnock

Kilmarnock: New Laigh

12. Ardrossan

Stevenston: High

14. Clyde

Clydebank: Faifley
Johnstone: St Paul's

16. Glasgow

Glasgow: Gallowgate
Glasgow: Queen's Park Govanhill
Glasgow: St Andrew's East Rutherglen West and Wardlawhill

17. Hamilton

Hamilton: Gilmour and Whitehill

29. Dundee

Dundee: Fintry

31. Aberdeen and Shetland

Aberdeen: St George's Tillydrone

11.11.1.1 Transitioning Out – we would offer a two-year transition period whereby a congregation worked with its Presbytery to look at how its staffing needs could be adjusted.

11.11.1.2 We would continue to support all 13 congregations via our Priority Areas programmes. So, they would have access to:

- Staff advice/consultancy
- Priority Area Learning Programme
- Membership of the network; offering mutual support and sharing of ideas and experience
- Invitation to the Big Conversation
- E-communications/social media/web/resources

11.12 Third Tier Support

11.12.1 There are an additional 124 congregations who are not currently a Priority Area but who have a population with one of the 5% data zones within SIMD. Our intention is to offer support through the continued opening up of our

programmes and through the extension of our network to encompass these congregations. They could access:

- Staff advice/consultancy
- Priority Area Learning Programme
- Membership of the network; offering mutual support and sharing of ideas and experience
- Invitation to the Big Conversation
- E-communications/social media/web/resources

11.13 A Holistic Approach

11.13.1 We are intentional about joining up this work with a number of initiatives and agencies: Presbytery Reform, Presbytery Planning Task Group, MDS approval panel, workforce planning through the proposed MDS review body.

11.13.2 One of the key resources that has supported this work, is the deployment of additional MDS staff through presbytery planning. We are concerned that the current moratorium (as at January 21) on recruiting MDS will have the gravest impact on Priority Area congregations.

11.13.3 As Presbytery reform is underway and the aim is for fewer and larger Presbyteries, we would be looking to offer Presbyteries the ways and means of supporting them to make meaningful decisions at the local level based on what needs there are in their communities. One of our key principles is that local people know their own situation and are experts in their own lives. Our **Deprivation Statistics**, <http://bit.ly/38yE4pU> at the Church Finder pages of the Church of Scotland website, developed with the Church statistician, are an obvious tool for this.

11.13.4 We recognise that a lot of different initiatives are happening within Faith Nurture and presbyteries to establish new ways of being Church. This may be new ecclesial models, team ministry, Presbytery Mission Initiatives or work within the General Trustees Well Equipped spaces initiative or simply linkages and unions. As priority for the poorest means just that, Faith Nurture Forum has a key role in ensuring that the needs of Priority Areas are taken account of in any such initiative.

12. SUPPORTING THE LOCAL THROUGH WIDER RESOURCING

12.1 New Ways of Being Church

12.1.1 The report of the Assembly Trustees to the General Assembly in 2020 gave shape to how we might explore New Ways of Being Church:

- Enhance engagement with children, young people and young adults both within and beyond the worshipping life of the Church.
- Identify needs for planting and growing of new contextually relevant worshipping communities.
- Work with other Agencies to develop fresh expressions of Church.
- Consider the learnings from Path of Renewal
- Consider what changes can enhance the effectiveness of the Priority Areas project.
- Review the Pilot Pioneer Project.

12.1.2 How we explore New ways of Being Church will require more than a series of projects or initiatives. It will require a reimagining of how we can be church faithfully and relevantly both today, and in the years to come, and will impact every part of the Church. It is about the renewal of our existing churches, the formation of new congregations, and the creation of structures which provide easy pathways for both. This is a journey that the Church is already on, and one of the highlights of this past year, has been the opportunity to have conversations together, to be curious, to

listen and to dig a little deeper into what is important and meaningful to us.

12.1.3 Part of our contribution to the wider conversations in the church is *Rewilding the Church*. Written by Mission Development Worker, Steve Aisthorpe, this book was published at the end of July 2020 and reprinted in January 2021. Informed by research and extensive work with local congregations, it has provided a timely and provocative call for a 'refounding' of the Church around Jesus' invitation 'follow me'. It has prompted numerous online conversations within the Kirk and in other denominations and networks. Steve was invited to speak with the Assembly Trustees in November 2020.

12.1.4 New Worshipping Communities

12.1.4.1 Despite the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, new pioneering initiatives have started, more people have begun to explore pioneering opportunities for the first time, and existing projects have been developing and adapting to the new situation. There have also been projects which have been paused, or have come to an end, and it is right to acknowledge that there are individuals and teams who have struggled through 2020.

12.1.4.2 In these times, the Forum's staff have been developing opportunities for mutual encouragement and learning amongst individuals, teams and networks involved in pioneering new ways of being church. While staff are working in a primarily relational, rather than programmatic way, resources and training are being shared across the Kirk and with other denominations. Coaching is being provided to people exploring ideas for pioneering or facing particular challenges on the Fresh Expressions journey.

12.1.4.3 In order to better support initiatives, and to enable the wider church to learn from them, staff across a variety of teams have been working together to develop an evaluation framework. This is an emerging area of work, which means that best practice has yet to be established. A new worshipping community (NWC) is considered to be a recognisable community which meets, or has the potential and intention to meet, the three marks of church; preaching of the word, administration of the sacraments, and exercise of discipline.

12.1.4.4 The following principles have emerged, that any NWC evaluation should:

- provide accountability;
- focus on the nature and quality of relationships;
- be simple and flexible;
- not be burdened with a weight of expectation that is not applied to existing parish churches;
- be developmental;
- provide data gathered compatible with the data gathered on existing congregations in order to give a more comprehensive picture of our denomination; and
- provide information which would satisfy funding bodies within the church, and be useful for learning, within the Church of Scotland and beyond.

12.1.4.5 The specific processes of evaluation will evolve as indicators of good practice are identified.

12.1.5 Path of Renewal

12.1.5.1 In the 6 years since the inception of Path of Renewal, more than 80 congregations have embarked on a journey of renewal, communally discerning God's purpose in each of their contexts and seeking to be involved in the mission of God.

12.1.5.2 This has been an iterative process. In 2015, many congregations were still waking up to the changed landscape in which they served. As that became more widely recognised, congregations more readily accepted the need

for change and were readier to be accompanied through the pain of transition.

12.1.5.3 Throughout this year of pandemic, Ministers have found the skills learned, the reflection fostered and the collegiality developed to be assets in these times:

“the mind-set – priorities, permissions, skills and experience – which we have gained through Path of Renewal have enabled me to cope with the immediate and see beyond the present.”

“Already being on a path of renewal where my congregation were already in a place of transition and change and were comfortable with experimentation and trying new things has meant that this (Covid-19 Lockdown) was just another transition...”

12.1.5.4 Another 20 congregations embarked on Path of Renewal at the beginning of 2020. The furlough of the National Coordinator before the planned supportive Learning Communities were underway meant that the impetus from the first in-person conference in January was diminished. However, some of that has now been recovered as congregational leaders are now meeting regularly online to reflect together and support and encourage one another.

12.1.5.5 The research conducted over the first three years of the project cited the most important elements in Path of Renewal as being:

- creating space for discernment;
- recruiting and developing local leadership;
- intentional investment in a small number of people;
- collegiality, support, accountability; and
- innovation, experimentation, trust.

These insights have been reinforced by the pandemic and will continue to inform how leaders and congregations navigate transition into a new normal.

12.1.6 Pilot Pioneer Project

12.1.6.1 The Pilot Pioneer Project, now in its final year, continues to provide a resource for the whole church as the Pioneers develop relationships, provide support and live out the gospel in their differing contexts.

12.1.6.2 A comprehensive evaluation of the pilot project was commissioned from the Church Army Research Unit and has provided valuable insight into Pioneering in Scotland, highlighting lessons learned and recommendations for future Pioneer posts. The report may be found here (<https://bit.ly/3takGHy>) and a shorter summary here (<https://bit.ly/3coaFzV>)

12.1.6.3 It is good to look at the positives which have come out of this particular pilot, and to recognise the heightened awareness of Pioneer Ministry which these pilots have contributed to. A whole range of contacts and conversations have taken place which would not otherwise have happened, with some very innovative activities, and others which were so obvious that it was surprising that they had not happened before.

12.1.6.4 Lessons have also been learned; that this is only one approach among others; that expectations from the different stakeholders were not clarified and teased through at the different stages of the project; and that overall there is a clear need to build on and integrate the recommendations from the Joint Emerging Church Group Report to the General Assembly of 2019.

12.1.7 Strengthening the Foundations

12.1.7.1 Underpinning all this is the need to learn and adapt, as some of our old ways of working are no longer as effective as they once were. This has been highlighted and accelerated by this time of pandemic. Faith Nurture staff have sought to resource congregations and presbyteries with a range of skills which will be of benefit.

12.1.7.2 On-line presenting skills

As presbyteries, congregations and numerous groups have moved their meetings and conferences online, new ways of connecting and communicating are needed. In addition to developing technical ability, presentation skills need to be updated for the new context, some new techniques learned, and others recognised as being inapplicable in a virtual setting.

Two short training videos are available to help foster good practice. One demonstrates how we can best present ourselves on screen, whilst the other features how to use our voice to suit the new environment. Each is accompanied by a downloadable help-sheet <https://bit.ly/3uUytCX>.

12.1.7.3 Many people are now producing their own video material, using smartphones, iPads and such like. Again, there are some basic skills required that can help improve the effectiveness of recordings in terms of quality, content and creating. A short, demonstration video has been produced and again, a downloadable help-sheet is also available.

12.1.8 Culture of Invitation

12.1.8.1 Being an inviting church is as important as being a welcoming, or hospitable one, and is equally applicable in a New Worshipping Community as in any of our existing congregations. While in lockdown, it may have seemed impossible to put invitation into practice. Working with Michael Harvey, the team has been working with congregations to respond to God’s call to connect with others, even in this time of restriction. Michael delivered a webinar on God’s Call in a Time of Covid-19 in September 2020, and this is available on YouTube. (<https://bit.ly/38xwX0J>)

12.1.8.2 Since then over a dozen ACORN groups have been established where members support one another to ask God to prompt them to connect with someone, to follow through on that and to share with one another the outcome, and Michael has continued to work with groups within the Church of Scotland over the winter. ACORN stands for the following:

- ASK God to nudge us;
- CALL think of people and put names or initials on post-it notes;
- OBEY by sharing with neighbours and/or sticking names on a cross/heart;
- REPORT back on what happened, share inviter stories; and
- NUMINOUS activity of God – Did you hear the call of God, or feel the presence of God?

12.1.8.3 A working group under Michael Harvey’s leadership suggests a useful working definition of ACORN could be: ‘ACORN is a movement that seeks to connect Christians with the work God is doing in others through caring conversation.’

12.1.9 Soft Skills for Envisioning and Planning

12.1.9.1 Recent years have seen an increased burden on Presbyteries to engage in vision casting and strategic planning. This is unlikely to abate, given the rapid pace of change in our church and nation, and there is a need to develop a regular practice of reflection, discernment and planning at all levels of the church.

12.1.9.2 Training is now being devised to help provide Presbyteries with the soft skills necessary for the process of considerable change required within their respective areas. Examples of such skills include good facilitation, coaching, listening and conflict-resolution. Those undertaking the training will be better equipped to conduct meetings and conversations that may be quite challenging and more confident in doing so.

12.1.9.3 We are working with our colleagues in other teams in Faith Nurture and also with Place for Hope in offering a suite of resources to enable Presbyteries in what can be difficult conversations.

13. RESOURCING WORSHIP

13.1 The Worship Development Worker, Phill Mellstrom, continues to take forward work relating to producing an online supplement for the Fourth Edition of the Church Hymnary, CH4. CH4 first appeared in 2004, and, some seventeen years later, the world looks very different. CH4 continues as a valuable resource for the Church, and a supplement will augment the content as well as reflecting the very different context of these times. He also works closely with Iain McLarty, Worship Development Worker in Priority Areas. Hymns Ancient and Modern, who also have responsibility for St Andrew Press, is interested in exploring a possible print version.

13.2 Weekly Worship (<http://bit.ly/3vhdHyh>) continues to provide a resource not just for the Church of Scotland but for the wider Church. The Forum continues to explore how this can be further developed to be even more useful. At the time of writing, Scotland is still in lockdown, and these words from the National Worship Team continue to be relevant:

13.3 "We may not all be gathered in the same building, but at this time, when we need each other so much, we are invited to worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all and can blend even distant voices into one song of worship."

14. SUPPORTING CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Supporting Children, Youth and Family Ministry

14.1 Since Congregational Learning staff returned from furlough in July, we have offered regular opportunities to those employed by the Church of Scotland as children, youth and family workers, to gather together online. This community of practice has gone from strength to strength as participants share their struggles, challenges, questions, ideas, resources and joys. Participants have reported that these conversations have been a lifeline for them during the pandemic, enabling them to feel connected through such challenging times.

14.2 These conversations have been supplemented by a monthly book club designed to encourage critical theological thinking and contextualisation. A list of books explored is available on request.

14.3 Recognising the need for leaders to take regular time to retreat, our annual Community of Faith Conference for Paid Workers will, in March 2021, be an online retreat focussed on engaging in spiritual practices.

14.4 Throughout the pandemic, we also recognised and sought to meet the needs of volunteers through regular newsletters, wider engagement and support at regional level through 'Children, Youth and Family Ministry – Now Where?' conversations, and the sharing of ideas and resources through our 'Now You're Talking' Facebook group. These have been supplemented by our involvement in the two events hosted by Lanark Presbytery focussed on what children and youth ministry could be like while subject to the various Covid-19 restrictions. 463 took part in the first event in August, and 210 in the second one in November 2020.

14.5 An exciting development has been our series of webinars on Intergenerational Church. Nearly 200 people from all across the world registered for the first one in December 2020, where Darren Philip shared insights from the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer about how we can become an intergenerational church community. Recordings of the three talks by Darren are on the Church of Scotland YouTube page. (<http://bit.ly/2OoPnO>) These can also be found on

the Faith Nurture Vimeo account for downloading, in order to share more widely, here (<http://bit.ly/3r1Bwb>). We encourage everyone to take time to watch them and consider what it can mean for your own local context.

14.6 A follow up webinar 'Stories of Change', focussing on hearing stories of those congregations who have begun the journey to becoming an intergenerational church, is scheduled for March 2021. In the future it is planned to build on this success with webinars on other topics, such as family ministry. Ongoing work continues to explore other digital media such as podcasting, seeking to discern a platform which is cost effective and GDPR compliant.

14.7 The exciting content of these webinars also leads the Forum to the conviction that intentionally planning for all our work to be intergenerational is a priority. The scope for drawing on work being done within Priority Areas; across the MDS network; and learning from the annual Community of Faith gathering for paid workers involved in children and families' work could yield a rich harvest in terms of lessons learned for the whole Church.

14.8 Young People and Young Adults

14.9 Following an instruction from the 2019 General Assembly we initiated a youth attitudes survey to try to understand better what the needs and views are of young people in the Church of Scotland. The survey was open to all in the age range 11-30, and was carried out in August and September 2019. Various factors, including Covid-19, have meant that the findings were not disseminated in 2020 as initially envisaged. The aim has since been to provide, on the Church of Scotland website, a summary of the key points raised through the survey, which the whole Church can learn from. Consideration will then be given as to how to undertake a similar yet more robust survey in the future, within the context of a developing research function in the national offices.

14.10 The Covid-19 pandemic led to a pausing in the development of the activities for young people and young adults agreed by the 2019 General Assembly, as a result of staff being furloughed. Development for the residential events will begin again once the framework for exiting the pandemic has become clearer. In the meantime, work has begun on underlying aspects such as branding and communication. The Forum continues to work on how the needs of youth and young people in the Church of Scotland are integrated into the above, and on following up some of the other recommendations made to the 2019 General Assembly as part of a more integrated strategy in this area.

15. LIFE AND WORK

15.1 2020 was a year like no other for the world – and it was no different for Life and Work. On Wednesday March 18 2020, the whole team moved to a pattern of remote working. Without technology, this would have been impossible even five or ten years ago, but we were blessed to have the tools which enabled us to continue with the production of the 141-year-old magazine of our Church and so the decision to continue working when so much other work was on hold was an easy one.

15.2 We were in the middle of producing the May issue when the central office staff moved to remote working. As a result of the sudden change, a decision was made to offer this issue as a free downloadable pdf on our website, as alternative delivery arrangements had not been possible in some cases.

15.3 More than 5,000 people clicked on the page where the download was housed – and many more may have taken advantage but because of rising costs due to the unexpected demand, the promotion was phased out. Those figures (in a short space of time) demonstrated a clear appetite for the content offered by Life and Work.

15.4 The dramatic change meant editorial plans for the months ahead also had to be shelved, but the team were blessed with both new ideas and new material.

15.5 A sharp temporary drop in advertising and a furloughing of most of the team mean that the magazine was downsized for a short period to reflect reduced staffing, but at the beginning of the summer of 2020 when it was clear trading conditions were improving, the size of the magazine was increased.

15.6 The magazine has continued to appear in print and on a digital platform and its social media channels have been updated with new material on every single working day – despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. The Life and Work website can be accessed here - <http://bit.ly/3ctRx3c>.

15.7 Digital supplements were produced offering a snapshot of the business covered at the General Assemblies of May 2019 and October 2020, and at the height of the Covid-19 lockdown in April and May, small one-page digital weekly summaries of changes and key information also proved popular.

15.8 A new hybrid model of distribution was born as a result of the pandemic in 2020 and the challenges of this will continue into 2021 as systems are overhauled. Tough decisions were made in 2020 and also taken in relation to our budget for 2021 to ensure the magazine remained in a positive position and both finances and costs are carefully and closely monitored to ensure best value for the Church.

15.9 At the time of writing we are still homeworking and likely to be in this position for the first part of the year. Looking ahead we cannot yet predict what action needs to be taken, but will do what is required to meet the challenges likely to emerge in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic.

15.10 During 2020, the whole Life and Work team worked tirelessly and were committed above and beyond the call of duty to deliver the magazine every month. But the team owes a debt of gratitude to our loyal promoters, for their patience and willingness to adapt to change. In this we have been hugely blessed and offer our thanks to subscribers for their support through this difficult time.

15.11 The Life and Work Advisory Committee met on two occasions in 2020.

16. ST ANDREW PRESS

16.1 Saint Andrew Press' publishing year runs from October 1 to September 30, and in the year ending 30 September 2020, four new titles were published, a decrease of two from the previous year.

16.2 Titles published – Church of Scotland Yearbook 2019-20 (October 2019), the annual directory of key data; Let Everyone Find a Voice: Re-imagining the Psalms for worship and devotion (May 2020) by Lezley J. Stewart is a vibrant new resource; Rewilding the Church (July 2020) by Steve Aisthorpe, explores afresh the compelling invitation of Jesus to 'follow me' (now reprinting); Scottish Presbyterian Worship: Proposals for organic change 1843 to the present day, (Sep 2020), by Bryan Spinks, is a key book by one of the world's most distinguished liturgical scholars.

16.3 Though the pandemic has resulted in bookshop and event disruption and closures, Saint Andrew Press has improved its online offering in 2020 with regular promotions via its website, including free postage and packing for most of 2020, online launches and author talks and increased attention to ebooks.

16.4 Planned visits by the Publishing and Marketing Directors to the Church's national offices moved online and discussion continues in relation to the publishing programme for 2021 and beyond, including a new supplement for CH4, as reported elsewhere.

17. FUNDED PARTNERS

17.1 Over a long period of time, the Church has funded five key partners with significant grants, with responsibility up until now for these five partners being located across three different areas of what was the Ministries Council. Faith in Community Scotland; the GKExperience; and Wevolution sat under the oversight of the Priority Areas Committee, while Place for Hope and Work Place Chaplaincy Scotland worked with the Strategic Projects Manager, and Partnerships and Development respectively. The agreed grant schedule for 2021 amounts to a total sum of £445,750, a reduction of £105,250 on 2020. Given the Church's financial position, these grants will further reduce in subsequent years and be reviewed on an annual basis.

17.2 With the advent of the new Forums, and the appointment of a Grants Manager within the Office of the Assembly Trustees, the opportunities to work in a more integrated manner, and to engage on a more intentional basis with all five, have given the Forum deeper insights into the work carried out by our partners. Representatives of the Forum and the Assembly Trustees have met separately and individually with key stakeholders in our partners. Questions of sustainability, added value, and the contribution our partners offer to the mission of the Church have been very much to the fore in our conversations. A set of links to each of these organisations' websites can be found on the Reports section of the Church of Scotland website. The Forum will continue to engage constructively with each of these partners.

18. HEART AND SOUL

18.1 The Special Commission which reported to the General Assembly of 2019 recommended that the responsibility for Heart and Soul should lie with the Faith Nurture Forum. On the Sunday of what would have been the 2020 General Assembly, an online version of Heart and Soul took place which was well received.

18.2 In conversation with the Assembly Business Committee, and recognising uncertainties around what might be possible in 2021, and acknowledging that the General Assembly would not be a typical General Assembly, the Forum took the decision not to proceed with Heart and Soul in a physical or online form for the General Assembly of 2021. This is also a recognition of financial reality, with the event costing £50,000 not including staff time. The Forum proposes that Heart and Soul should no longer take place, and gives thanks for all who have contributed to it over the years and for all whose experience of the Church and its life have been enriched by taking part, either in Princes Street Gardens, or in the online versions of recent years.

18.3 The Forum recognises that the many rich lessons which the Church has taken from Heart and Soul can influence how the Church learns and shares its rich wealth of stories. Work was done through a Listening Project, and the deep insights from that research are valuable for the Church as we move forward. As well as that, we know of the stories from our work with children and families, in Priority Areas, in Path of Renewal, the work of Interim Ministry, workshops on inter-generational Church, and even case studies from Presbytery Planning are all part of what we can share and learn. The Faith Nurture Forum, together with the Faith Impact Forum and the Assembly Trustees will explore how these stories can be shared, what lessons can be learned, and will report back to a future General Assembly.

19. DEAF MINISTRY

19.1 The General Assembly in 2019 instructed the Ministries Council to review the terms and conditions of those who minister for the deaf in Scotland and the associated legislation relating to their appointment, deployment and duties and to report to the General

Assembly of 2020. This work has begun with the Presbytery Clerks of Glasgow, Aberdeen and Edinburgh, the Depute Principal Clerk and the Partnership & Development Secretary. However, it has not been possible to satisfactorily conclude the exercise and report to this General Assembly. It is therefore requested that this be carried forward to a future General Assembly.

20. DIACONATE COUNCIL

20.1 The General Assembly of 2018 was made aware of the work done by Diaconate Council in producing the document Deacons of Word and Service. It is helpful to restate that Deacons are called to witness to the ministry of the servant Christ through a ministry which is pastoral in nature, collaborative and prophetic in approach, supporting the Church in its obedient response to Christ's reconciling ministry, and building bridges between Church and society.

20.2 It is also helpful to be aware of other distinctive features of the Diaconate in the Church of Scotland. The role, function and ministry of the Diaconate are laid out in Act 8 (2010), accessible at <https://bit.ly/3t4T9HA>. This Act, and the Ordination Service, state that Deacons shall seek to;

- Assist God's people in worship and prayer
- Hold before the people of God the needs and concerns of the world
- Minister Christ's love and compassion
- Seek out the lost and the lonely
- Help those they are called to serve offer their lives to God.

20.3 The Diaconate Rule of Life

20.4 Deacons in the Church of Scotland also commit to a devotional life which shall be characterised by the following;

- To live prayerfully, remembering others involved in diaconal service
- To place worship with others at the heart of their lives
- To regularly reflect on their work, life and witness
- To make time once a year for retreat

20.5 Deacons through a ministry of word and service shall;

- Respond creatively to the needs around them
- Enable others to use their gifts and talents
- Be committed to diaconal gatherings at local, national and international levels
- Keep in contact with those who are retired and unable to attend gatherings
- Be good stewards of all that God has given – time, talents, money and possessions
- Remember their own physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing and the need for rest and leisure activity.

20.6 The Diaconate Council is aware of the far-reaching decisions made by the General Assemblies of 2019 and 2020 affecting the structures of the Church. Mindful of these changes, Diaconate Council considered its own structure.

20.7 The Diaconate Act incorporates provisions of other Acts and a significant number of amendments. Diaconate Council believes that Act 8 needs revising, as it no longer offers an appropriate framework to support the Diaconate as it seeks to serve the Church; neither does the Act reflect current thinking on the Diaconate's ministry of word and service, recognised at previous General Assemblies.

20.8 The Diaconate Council of 15 August 2020 instructed its Business Committee to carry out a review of the current structure of the Diaconate Council and Local Groups and to consult with members of the Diaconate on a proposed new

structure. This new structure was agreed at Diaconate Council in January 2021, and requires amendments to the existing Appendices to Act 8 2010. These proposed changes can be found at Appendix 2.

20.9 The key parts of these changes are as follows:

- 1 term of office for President and Vice-President; this now extended by one year, to serve for four years;
- replacement of the role of Secretary with that of a Minutes Secretary;
- replacement of the Business Committee with an Executive Committee of five;
- allow for Forum representatives to be corresponding members of Diaconate Council, rather than full members as at present; and
- revision of standing orders to allow for no more than two nominations for President and Vice-President, in place of currently allowing for up to four nominations for each post. In practice most elections have been limited to a choice between two candidates.

20.10 Recognising too that the Act itself needs a major revision, and following discussions with the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Principal Clerk, the Diaconate Business Council would also seek, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to bring to the General Assembly of 2022 a revised or, if appropriate, a new Act on Diaconal Ministry within the Church of Scotland.

21. MANSE ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE

21.1 Amendments to Regulation 3, 2013, Manse Adjudication Committee

With the arrival of a new Chief Executive in the General Trustees, and in the light of remote working experience over these last eleven months, the need to revise Regulation 3 of 2013 on the workings of the Manse Adjudication Committee became apparent.

21.2 The key areas of amendment are as follows:

21.2.1 to reduce the size of the Manse Adjudication Committee (MAC) to four, with two participants from the General Trustees, and two from the Faith Nurture Forum. This is in line with other proposals to reduce the administrative burden. In cases where the Manse is not vested in the General Trustees, the current regulations provide for six representatives from the Faith Nurture Forum to populate the MAC. With only fifteen members in the Faith Nurture Forum, this creates a challenge to find six members.

21.2.2 to allow for the possibility of virtual or online meetings, and, in straightforward cases, to allow for the process to take place by exchange of emails.

21.2.3 to update language to reflect the replacement of the Ministries Council with the Faith Nurture Forum and changes within the structure of the General Trustees; and

21.2.4 appeals against decisions by the MAC be directed to the Ministries Appeal Panel.

21.3 There are currently no cases which require the attention of the MAC, and no appeals waiting to be heard.

21.4 The proposed changes can be found at Appendix 3.

22. CONSOLIDATED STIPEND FUND

22.1 The Forum has engaged in very helpful conversations with the General Trustees about the use of the Consolidated Stipend Fund, and is exploring with them whether there is greater scope for using this Fund to support the work of Parish Ministry. In the meantime, the General Trustees have agreed, as is permitted, to release capital from the Consolidated Stipend Fund to augment investment income.

23. FINANCE AND ALLOWANCES

23.1 Stipends and Salaries

23.1.1 Given the challenging financial situation facing the church as a result of the global coronavirus pandemic, there is no increase to the stipend and salary scales for 2021.

Stipend Scale (including Associate Ministers) 2021

Point 1 £28,137

Point 2 £29,977

Point 3 £31,817

Point 4 £33,658

Point 5 £34,577

Ministries Development Staff Scales 2021

MDS General Scale

Point 1 £25,624

Point 2 £26,462

Point 3 £27,297

Point 4 £28,135

Point 5 £28,968

Team Leader Scale

Point 1 £31,197

Point 2 £31,893

Point 3 £32,589

Point 4 £33,286

Point 5 £33,982

Deacon Scale (Genuine Occupational Requirement)

Point 1 £27,297

Point 2 £28,135

Point 3 £28,968

Point 4 £29,804

Point 5 £30,639

23.2 Island Allowance

This allowance remains the same for 2021.

Outer Island Allowance: £1,798

Inner Island Allowance: £707

23.3 Travel Expenses 2020

The travel expenses payable remain, at HMRC rates:

Rates for those providing their own car:

Reimbursed to Ministers and MDS providing their own car for pastoral duties:

45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles

25p per mile for all additional mileage

Ministers also receive capital reimbursement of £80 per month.

Reimbursement of travel expenses for students, probationers, OLMs, auxiliary Ministers and locums:

45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles

25p per mile for all additional mileage

Reimbursed to Ministers and MDS providing their own motor bike for pastoral duties:

24p per mile travelled per annum

Reimbursed to Ministers and MDS providing their own pedal bike for pastoral duties:

20p per mile travelled per annum

23.4 Recommended Pulpit Supply Fee and Expenses

In Charges where there is only one diet of worship, the Pulpit Supply Fee shall be a Standard Fee of £60. In Charges where there are additional diets of worship on a Sunday, the person

fulfilling the Supply shall be paid £30 for each additional service.

In all cases, Travelling Expenses shall be paid. Where there is no convenient public conveyance, the use of a private car shall be paid for at the standard rate of 45p per mile.

23.5 Removal and Disturbance Allowance

When a Minister is called to a Charge, the congregation(s) to which the Minister is called shall meet the removal costs incurred in transporting the Minister's personal effects into the manse of the Charge. In addition, a manse disturbance allowance of up to £1,740 can be paid on production of appropriate receipts.

If a Charge has an average income base of less than £30,000, the Faith Nurture Forum will meet the full cost of the removal expenses and disturbance allowance. When a Charge's average income base is between £30,001 and £60,000 application may be made to the Faith Nurture Forum for assistance in meeting these costs. This assistance may take the form of a grant or loan or a combination of both.

When a Minister retires on account of age or infirmity, and in the case of a widow(er) of a Minister who dies in service, the Faith Nurture Forum will meet the cost of removal expenses.

23.6 Funerals

Where a congregation calls upon the services of a Minister not already in receipt of a stipend, or other suitably qualified person, to conduct a funeral, a fee of £60 may be paid by the congregation. On no account should such a fee be charged to the family of the deceased.

For the avoidance of doubt, no fee may be offered to or received by a serving Parish Minister for the conduct of a funeral service, whether in their own or another parish.

23.7 Vacancy Allowance

For 2020 the Vacancy Allowance remains at £933 per month and £1,082 for linked charges. This is sufficient to cover pulpit supply and two days per week pastoral cover at the rate of £315 per month for each day of pastoral cover per week should a vacant congregation choose to engage a locum. The Vacancy Allowance is deducted directly from each vacant charge's Ministries and Mission Allocation.

23.8 Guardianship Allowance

For 2020 the Guardianship Allowance also remains at £933 per month in line with the vacancy allowance.

In the name of the Forum

ROSEMARY FREW, *Convener*
KAREN K. CAMPBELL, *Vice-Convener*
ANGUS R MATHIESON, *Interim Head of Forum*

Addendum

Bill Hogg

The Reverend Bill Hogg was first appointed to serve on the Church's Committee on Art and Architecture in 2010, and became Convener in 2016. Having served as Presbytery Clerk in two Presbyteries, Bill brought this experience and his attention to detail into his service as Convener. His passion for the Church's built heritage, and a concern to respect the historical context of the Church's buildings, while still being open to innovation, were hallmarks of his leadership as was his commitment to sacramental worship and liturgical theology. The Church is grateful to him for his contribution which has now come to an end, with the integration of this work in the General Trustees. We wish him well in his retirement, although we note that he is regularly being called on to lead worship in the South West.

In the name of the Forum

ROSEMARY FREW, *Convener*
KAREN K. CAMPBELL, *Vice-Convener*
ANGUS R MATHIESON, *Interim Head of Forum*

Appendix 1

IMPLEMENTATION GROUPS AND MEMBERSHIP

1. Education and Integrated Training

- Ensuring the implementation of Faith Nurture strategy
- Offering expertise into the shaping of Education & Training programmes of work
- Offering critical thinking and reflection into developing new areas of work
- Assisting with the framing of policies and papers to go to FNF for decision
- Doing joined up work on cross cutting themes

Membership

Lesley-Anne Calvert (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Ruth Mackenzie (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Revd Eleanor McMahon (co-opted, background in Review of Initial Training)

Andrew Todd (co-opted, background in Review of Initial Training)

Kay Cathcart (Education & Training Secretary)

2. Life and Work

- Overseeing key business planning aspects of the magazine
- Advising on sales and marketing and long-term plans
- Monitoring advertising revenues and policy.

Membership

Murdo Macmillan (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Rev John Paterson (member of the Life and Work Advisory Committee)

Robert Archibald (Finance Supervisor)

Lynne McNeil (Editor, Life and Work)

Dianne Sanderson (Business Manager, Life and Work)

3. New Ways of being Church

- Supporting growth and renewal
- Ensuring that the formation of new worshipping communities becomes central
- Exploring Emerging Church
- Encouraging a broad spectrum of pioneering activity

Membership

Alan Hamilton (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Richard Lloyd (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Murdo Macmillan (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Andrew Morrice (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Lesley Hamilton-Messer (Team Leader Church without Walls)

4. Presbytery Planning Task Group

- Working with Presbyteries in developing a planning framework which supports and enables a locally-focussed missional approach
- Offering advice and guidance on appraisal and adjustment

Membership

Mike Goss (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Richard Lloyd (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Fraser Penny (co-opt PPAG Member)

Daran Golby (Partnerships & Development Secretary)

5. Priority Areas Implementation Group

- Ensuring the implementation of FNF strategy/Faith Action Plan in the delivery of Priority Areas' work
- Offering expertise into the shaping of Priority Areas' programmes of work

- Offer critical thinking and reflection into developing new areas of work
- Assist with the framing of policies and papers to go to FNF for decision
- Ensuring the voice and concerns of Priority Area congregations (and similar) can inform the thinking of Faith Nurture Forum and through them to the Assembly Trustees
- Working with Faith Impact and other Implementation Groups on cross cutting themes

Membership

Scott McCarthy (Faith Nurture Forum member)

Janice Grant (co-opt, New Laigh Kirk, Kilmarnock)

Jane Howitt (co-opt, St Rollox, Glasgow)

Barry Hughes (co-opt, St Mark's Stirling)

Shirley Grieve (Priority Areas Secretary)

6. Resourcing Worship

- helps to provide a focus for worship resources
- works with congregations to develop worship locally while helping to identify emerging patterns of spirituality and prayer for today.
- works to stimulate and support presbyteries and congregations to reflect critically on our practice and places of worship, and bring about creative change.

Membership

Sue Thompson (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Fraser MacNaughton (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Scott McCarthy (Faith Nurture Forum Member)

Phill Mellstrom, Development Worker, Resourcing Worship

Appendix 2

ACT AMENDING THE DEACONS ACT (ACT VIII 2010) (AS AMENDED)

Edinburgh, [] May 2021, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Deacons Act (Act VIII 2010), as amended, shall be further amended as follows:

1. *In the existing section 18(2) delete "Appendix" and substitute "Appendices A, B and C".*
2. *Delete the existing Appendices A, B & C and substitute the following:*

APPENDIX A

CONSTITUTION OF DIACONATE COUNCIL ("Council")

1. Functions

The Functions of Council hereinafter constituted shall be:

- To promote the call to, and ministry of, the Diaconate of the Church of Scotland
- To support the Diaconate Rule of Life
- To provide fellowship and support to those engaged in Diaconal Service
- To formulate and express the collective views of the Diaconate to the wider Church
- To provide opportunity for in-service training and personal development
- To engage with those in similar ministries at home and overseas
- To support the Church in the selection, training and development of Deacons

2. Constitution

Council shall consist of:

All Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **E** or **R** who shall be voting members of Council. In addition:

- Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category I and those engaged in Diaconal Service within other denominations may attend Council at their own expense as corresponding members.
- The Faith Nurture Forum of the Church ("the Forum") will be represented by 3 attendees who will be corresponding members.
- Designated Guests invited by the Executive Committee on behalf of Council may attend Council.
- Diaconal Students and those undertaking probationary periods may be invited to attend Council as designated guests.

3. Office – bearers

The Office bearers shall be:

- A President, who shall hold office for four years and will not be eligible to serve consecutive terms of office.
- A Vice President, who shall hold office for four years and will not be eligible to serve consecutive terms of office.

The President and the Vice President shall be elected by Council in a manner specified in the Standing Orders. Council shall approve the appointment of a Minute Secretary, who shall serve for two years and shall be eligible to serve consecutive terms of office.

4. Committees

4.1 Executive Committee

An Executive Committee of five shall be appointed by Council to attend to matters pertaining to the Diaconate and shall be constituted in a manner provided in Standing Orders.

The Executive Committee shall consist of the President and Vice-President, who shall be *ex-officio* and three members elected by Council in manner specified in Standing Orders.

The Executive Committee shall have the power to co-opt corresponding members or, where desirable, establish a Short Life Working Group to support the work of the Executive Committee.

Administrative support will be provided by the Forum.

4.2 Short Life Working Groups

Council shall have power to establish, if it so desires, Short Life Working Groups to facilitate its business, consider aspects of Diaconal Ministry and to promote the Diaconate Rule of Life. Any such Short Life Working Group shall be given an agreed remit.

A Short Life Working Group shall nominate one of their number as "Chairperson" who will report on behalf of the Group to the Executive Committee. The Short Life Working Group can, if required and with the permission of the Executive Committee, appoint additional members where appropriate.

5. Finance

Each year the Forum, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall set an operational budget for Council. The Executive Committee shall be accountable for any budget set by the Forum.

Any proposal involving finance amounting to more than the total budget shall, before action is taken, be referred to the Forum.

The Executive Committee shall administer all Discretionary Funds (both Restricted and Designated) held on behalf of Council. In addition, and for the avoidance of doubt, the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the administration and application of the annual "Holiday Grant".

The Executive Committee may use the Discretionary Fund to make grants to members of the Church of Scotland

Diaconate to support activities which are consistent with the Diaconate Rule of Life. In exceptional circumstances, the Executive Committee may consider an Emergency Hardship Grant, to help members of the Diaconate who are in financial need.

Applications for financial assistance should be made in writing to the President. All such applications and grants shall remain confidential.

6. Meetings

Council shall meet twice a year. Usually one of the meetings shall be residential in nature.

The Executive Committee will be responsible for setting the date of such Council meetings and shall make all necessary arrangements.

A draft calendar of meetings for the following twelve months shall be agreed and issued by the Executive Committee in October each year.

The Executive Committee, in agreement with the Forum, may in exceptional circumstances call an extraordinary meeting of Council.

Council shall meet in public or in private as the Executive Committee may decide or following a request under Standing Orders.

7. Procedure

- The Executive Committee shall be responsible for all arrangements pertaining to Council including setting the date and the agenda.
- Worship during Council shall be coordinated by the President.
- Council shall appoint a Minute Secretary who shall record the minutes of Council.
- The cost of Council, including the travelling expenses of full members of Council, and designated guests, shall be met from the Council Budget.

Other procedures shall be as set out in Standing Orders.

8. Regional Diaconate Groups

Council shall recognise and support the establishment of Regional Diaconate Groups. Regional Groups shall do all things necessary for, or incidental to, the functioning of Council, and shall be governed by the Constitution set out in Appendix C.

9. Alteration of Constitution

Any alteration to this Constitution may be made only by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership of Council, upon a motion of which fifteen days' notice has been given to all members thereof.

APPENDIX B

DIACONATE COUNCIL – STANDING ORDERS

1. Procedure at Meetings

1.1 The President, or in their absence the Vice-President, shall preside, whom failing Council shall appoint its own Chairperson *pro tempore*.

1.2 The President shall ensure that each session of Council be opened and closed with prayer.

2. Business Session

2.1 The Business Session of Council shall include:

- (1) Election of Office-bearers
- (2) Roll of Honour
- (3) Finance Report
- (4) Establishment of, and reports from, Short Life Working Groups

- (5) Where invited, appoint representatives to the Faith Nurture Forum of the Church or to other events
- (6) Reports from the General Assembly and the Standing Committees of the General Assembly
- (7) Initiation of discussion on any matters which concern the Diaconate, Diaconal Service and the wider interests of the Church
- (8) Recognition of, and reports from, Regional Groups annually
- (9) Welcome of guests from the Church at home, nationally and internationally
- (10) Welcome and presentation of Diaconal Students

2.2 Council shall normally meet in public, however where a matter is considered contentious, or relates to a sensitive issue, Council may meet in private. It shall be competent for the Executive Committee to move that such items be taken in private. The speaker on any item of business can also request that an item is taken in private, giving reasons briefly; the seconding shall be formal, and any vote necessary shall be taken without debate.

2.3 On a Point of Order being raised (it is necessary for a specific Standing Order to be specified) the President shall rule thereon and such ruling shall be accepted as the finding of Council.

3. Election of Office-bearers

3.1 Nominations for the election of the President and Vice- President shall be sent to the Executive Committee by Regional Groups. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

3.2 Each Regional Group shall send in a maximum of two nominations to the Executive Committee. Nominations will be selected from the membership of Council. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

3.3 The election of Office Bearers shall take place by Postal Vote. The Executive Committee shall notify voting members of Council of nominations and will take all necessary steps to facilitate election of the Office Bearers.

3.4 The Executive Committee shall bring to Council recommendations for the post of Minute Secretary.

4. Executive Committee

4.1 The President and Vice-President shall be *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee. The term of office shall run for 4 years from June 1st of the year elected.

4.2 Council will elect 3 members from their numbers to serve on the Executive Committee, one member to be elected annually.

4.3 Elected members shall serve for 3 years. Nominations to the Executive Committee can be made by Regional Groups or by individual members of Council. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

4.4 Election to the Executive Committee will take place by Postal Vote. The Executive Committee shall notify members of Council of all nominations and will take all necessary steps to facilitate election of the Office Bearers.

5. Short Life Working Groups

5.1 Any Short Life Working Group appointed by Council, by virtue of the power conferred on it in the Constitution, shall be given a special remit, and shall report to Council.

5.2 Members of Short Life Working Groups will be identified, and appointed, by the Executive Committee.

6. Minutes

6.1 The Minutes Secretary shall record the Minutes of Council which shall be approved at the opening session of the next Council.

6.2 Full Minutes of the proceedings of Council shall be circulated to all members at least 15 days prior to the start of Council.

7. Reports

7.1 Reports from Regional Groups shall be sent to the Executive Committee by the last day of February each year.

7.2 Reports from the Executive Committee and from Short Life Working Groups will be sent to Council Members along with the Agenda 15 days prior to the start of Council.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Regional Groups, individuals or Standing Committees of the General Assembly may request that an item be placed on the Agenda for Council, giving 15 days' notice to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall decide if such business is competent.

8.2 When less than 15 days' notice has been given, the mover shall briefly introduce the item and Council shall, without discussion, decide by simple majority whether to take up the item of business or to depart from the matter.

9. Suspension of Standing Orders

9.1 It shall be competent to suspend Standing Orders, or any one of them, in any particular case, but a motion to this effect shall not be carried unless it receives the support of at least two-thirds of the voting members present and voting on the question being put by the President.

10. Close of Council

10.1 When the business set down for the final day of the session of Council has been completed, Council shall approve the date and place of its next meeting.

11. Alterations of Standing Orders

11.1 Fifteen days' notice having been given, these Standing Orders may be altered by a two-thirds majority of voting members present at a meeting of Council.

APPENDIX C

REGIONAL GROUP OF THE DIACONATE - CONSTITUTION

1. The name shall be "Church of Scotland Diaconate Regional Group (area covered)"

2. Aim

- To promote the call to, and ministry of, the Diaconate of the Church of Scotland
- To support the Diaconate Rule of Life
- To provide fellowship and support to those engaged in Diaconal Service
- To support the training of Diaconal students and those serving a probationary period within their bounds
- To communicate with the Executive Committee on matters concerning Diaconal Ministry
- To provide an opportunity for Deacons to reflect on matters concerning Diaconal Ministry or public interest

3. The aim shall be reached by:

- Meeting at least twice each year
- Providing an opportunity for fellowship and the nurturing of devotional life as set out in the Diaconate Rule of Life
- Submitting an annual report to the Executive Committee in February each year for submission to Council
- Considering business sent to the Regional Group by the Executive Committee or Council

- Taking to Council matters concerning Diaconal Ministry

4. Membership

- All Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **E** or **R** shall be full members of the Regional Group.
- All Deacons registered on the Register of Ministry in Category **I** may be associated but without voting rights.
- Diaconate students or those serving a probationary period shall be associated but without voting rights.
- Deacons of other denominations may be invited to be associated with a Regional Group.

5. Chairperson

Each Regional Group shall appoint a Chairperson in accordance with a procedure agreed by the Regional Group in advance. The role of the Chairperson shall be:

- To act as a spokesperson for the Regional Group
- To ensure clear and timely communication between the Regional Group and Executive Committee
- To coordinate meetings of the Regional Group
- To coordinate communication between members of the Regional Group

6. Report for Council

A report from each Regional Group will submit a report to the Executive Committee by the end of February each year.

7. Council Business

Regional Groups or individuals may request an item of competent business to be placed on the Agenda of Council, giving 15 days' notice to the Executive Committee. Where shorter notice has been given, the mover shall briefly introduce the item and Council shall, without discussion, decide by simple majority whether or not to take up the item of business.

Any business brought forward by an individual Deacon, if rejected by the Regional Group, shall if desired by the Deacon, be forwarded by the Regional Group with full comments to the Executive Committee for consideration.

8. Election of President and Vice-President of Council

On the occasion of the election of a President or Vice-President of Council, Regional Groups shall send to the Executive Committee by the end of October not more than two nominations.

Nominations shall be selected from the voting membership of Council. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

Nominations to the Executive Committee shall be submitted to the Executive Committee by the Regional Group or by an individual. Nominations shall be sent to the Executive Committee by the end of October. Those nominated must have been ordained for at least three years, be a voting member of Council and agree to their nomination.

9. Change of Constitution

Any request to change the constitution can be proposed by the Executive Committee or a Regional Group. Where the proposal is made by a Regional Group the Group should notify the Executive Committee for discussion and agreement at Council. As each Regional Group is governed by the same Constitution, such changes shall only become effective when approved by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership of Council.

Appendix 3

REGULATIONS AMENDING THE MANSE ADJUDICATION COMMITTEE REGULATIONS (REGULATIONS III 2013)

Edinburgh, [] May 2021, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Manse Adjudication Committee Regulations (Regulations III 2013), shall be amended as follows:

3. *In section B, paragraph 2(a), delete the existing wording and substitute: "the MAC shall comprise two representatives of the General Trustees, one of whom shall be the Convener, and two representatives of the Faith Nurture Forum;"*
4. *In section B, paragraph 2(b) and 2(c), delete "the Secretary and Clerk to the General Trustees" and substitute "the Chief Executive of the General Trustees".*
5. *In section B, paragraphs 2(b), 3(b) and 3(c) delete "the Secretary of the Faith Nurture "Forum" and substitute "the Head of the Faith Nurture Forum".*
6. *In section B, paragraph 3(a), delete the existing wording and substitute "the MAC shall comprise four representatives of the Faith Nurture Forum, one of whom shall be appointed as Convener;"*
7. *In section E, delete "Appeals Committee of the Commission of the Assembly" and substitute "Ministries Appeal Panel" and delete references to the Appeals Act and substitute references to the Ministries Appeal Panel Act (Act VI 2007).*
8. *In section E, delete paragraph 3 and substitute "An appeal must be made on the basis of one of the following grounds of appeal: (a) that in the course of the MAC Hearing there were irregularities in the process, (b) that the final decision of the MAC Hearing was influenced by incorrect material fact, or (c) that the MAC Hearing acted contrary to the principles of natural justice."*
9. *In section E, paragraph 6(a), delete "Short Assured Tenancy" and substitute "Private Residential Tenancy".*
10. *In the Schedule Part 2 add a new paragraph 6 "The MAC Hearing may take place by audio and/or video conference call or other appropriate medium."*