

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE MAY 2025

Proposed Deliverance

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report.
2. Approve the proposed Order of Business set out in the Order of Proceedings.
3. Appoint Mr David Stewart to prepare and index a summary log of the Assembly.
4. Invite Commissioners to submit to the Procedure Committee via email: pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk by Monday 19 May at 12pm, nominations for consideration to serve on the Selection Committee.
5. Note the expense levels for those attending at least 13 of the 17 General Assembly sessions in person.
6. Agree to move to a four-day General Assembly that would run from a Friday to a Monday, as further described in the Report, commencing in May 2026.
7. Commend the Scottish Bible Society's global outreach to the generosity of congregations and members and support the Society in its desire to work in partnership with congregations to encourage confidence in the Gospel and in sharing the Bible.

Report

1. RT REV DR SHAW PATERSON

1.1 When Dr Paterson took "Building Together" as his moderatorial theme, he merged his previous career in the building trade with his pastoral call to the Church, to work together for the good of local communities. His year has taken him across the country to meet with those younger and older, and witness how all are contributing to the life of the Church. There have been the monumental moments during a formal visit to Malawi, quieter times retiling in a CrossReach property, and many occasions of being inspired by ideas from congregations to utilise when he returns to his own Parish. Shaw has represented the Church with dignity and grace, and has been an encouragement to everyone he has met as our Moderator.

1.2 As he undertook his role, Shaw has been thoroughly supported by many, but particularly by his family, his chaplains and those in the Office of the General Assembly, without whom he would have been unable to conduct his duties. As he prepares to hand over, we wish Shaw every blessing and extend our thanks to him for serving as the Moderator of the General Assembly.

2. PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATION

2.1 The Presbytery returns show that there are in all 833 charges, whether vacant or not, and 155 other ministers (excluding retired ones) who are members of Presbyteries. Representation is calculated for each Presbytery in accordance with the Church Courts Act (Act VI 2023) and the total number of Commissioners is currently made up as follows: 208 ministers and 208 elders, with 13 Deacons being eligible for appointment along with the five most recent past Moderators.

3. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

3.1 Standing Orders are the rules and instructions regulating the procedure of the General Assembly. They are permanent until changed by the Court. They are fundamental to the orderly conduct of the business and debate of the Court and, as such, they inform the culture of debate and the quality of outcomes of any General Assembly, as well as the quality of experience for Commissioners to the General Assembly.

3.2 Standing Orders, being rules binding on all members of the General Assembly, should be clear and accessible to all participants. As the life of the Church develops, Standing Orders should be regularly reviewed and updated to meet the needs of the General Assembly over time. It is with all that in mind that the Assembly Business Committee presents, in Appendix B, an updated edition of Standing Orders for the General Assembly's consideration.

3.3 The Assembly Business Committee has reviewed the Standing Orders to remove those Orders the purpose of which has been superseded over time and to make provision for current practice, for example meeting in electronic format.

3.4 Specific attention is drawn to the following three matters:

- the time allowed for a Convener's speech has been reduced to 10 minutes (if this is approved it will apply for the duration of this General Assembly)
- the provisions regarding corresponding members and staff members in attendance at the General Assembly have been amended to clarify their respective roles and participation
- the rules regarding appointments to Standing Committees have been rewritten to clarify eligibility for appointment and the processes of the Nomination Committee.

3.5 The presentation of the Standing Orders within the document has been re-ordered. The Standing Orders document now begins with the provisions regarding the conduct of business and conduct of debate in order that Commissioners may readily find these Orders during the course of a debate without having to search the whole document.

3.6 The new version of the Standing Orders does, of course, require to be approved by this General Assembly, and the deliverance proposing the new Standing Orders is found in the Report of the Legal Question Committee.

4. GENERAL ASSEMBLY REFORM

4.1 Year on year, the Committee keeps under review how we do the General Assembly. The Committee has also been acutely conscious of how much the Assembly costs the Church, both in terms of direct and indirect costs, as was discussed at the General Assembly of 2024. A considerable amount of time has been spent looking again at all that happens during the week of the Assembly and how the supreme Court of the Church could operate more effectively and efficiently in terms of governance, without losing the heart of the Assembly in terms of the Church coming together for worship, fellowship, new encounters, sharing, visibility and profile, as well as what is positively gained from the contributions of our ecumenical and overseas guests.

4.2 The Committee is also very aware that the current six-day length of the Assembly is not conducive to encouraging elders of working age to attend, as this requires taking at least four days holiday from work. In addition, the Committee understands the pressure upon many Commissioners who have family commitments, both in terms of children and/or older relatives, which makes being away for nearly a week very difficult, if not impossible. While the new hybrid form of meeting is helpful, it does not provide all the answers. Despite efforts to seek a reduction in the number of sections of deliverance that come to the Assembly, the Committee is also very mindful of the burden placed upon Commissioners to read and digest the huge volume of reports which come to them in advance of the Assembly.

4.3 The Committee is, therefore, proposing that in 2026 the Assembly should run from Friday morning until Monday late afternoon. A shortened Opening Ceremony would take place on the Friday followed by business sessions in the morning, afternoon and evening, with breaks for meals. The Saturday would have business sessions all day, with the evening available for the traditional and much enjoyed Guild Big Sing to take place in the Hall. On the Sunday there would be the St Giles' service, with the Moderator's Reception over lunchtime at a venue near to St Giles'. In the afternoon there would be a conference session and in the evening the Beating Retreat and Holyrood Palace reception would take place. Monday morning and afternoon would be for business, including, amongst other things, the presentation of HM Forces Chaplains. The closing of the Assembly would be an Act of Worship that included the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the Report anent Deceased Ministers, Missionaries and Deacons (which the Committee believes is more pastorally appropriate to have within a time of worship), presentations, and the Lord High Commissioner's closing address. The Ceremony of the Keys and the First Time Commissioners event would both take place on the day before the opening of the Assembly, and where required Commissioners who need additional nights of accommodation because of the distance they have to travel would be entitled to that, as is the case currently.

4.4. The simple fact that time will be restricted is seen by the Committee as a positive move as this will mean that all who report to the Assembly will need to review fundamentally the way in which this is done. The publication this year of the remits for all reporting bodies has been done to assist Commissioners in being able to see first-hand the vast extent of the work of the National Church. This publication will also enable Commissioners to know more clearly to whom they should address their questions and comments. In a Church that has reduced in size in terms of both people and finances, a new focus is needed on what we do, how we do it and how we ensure that there is both good governance and accountability, as well as ensuring that the strategic direction of the Church is in the hands of the Assembly. To achieve this, we as the Church must work together in renewing relationships of trust, supported by transparency and clarity around why and how decisions that affect the Church as a whole and beyond are made.

4.5 By moving to a four-day Assembly there will also be cost savings to the Church, but it must be borne in mind that set up costs for arranging the General Assembly remain much the same regardless of the length of the Assembly. Extensive work has been conducted by the Stewardship and Finance Department and the Committee is grateful for their work. Moving to a four-day General Assembly in 2026 would result in an estimated:

- 16% reduction in Commissioner's expenses
- 29% decrease in the costs of overseas and ecumenical delegates attending the General Assembly
- potential 20% decrease in costs associated with staff time relating to the General Assembly
- 7% decrease in other general expenses (this includes items such as photography, First Aiders, Interpreters' fees, etc).

After increasing the 2024 budget for inflationary increases in 2025 and 2026, the savings in terms of both direct and indirect costs that could be made from moving to a four-day General Assembly in 2026 amount to at least £111,000.

4.6 As is demonstrated in this report with the extensive revisions to Standing Orders, the new Consent Agenda pilot process, the introduction of a Conference session and the opportunity for Commissioners to meet Conveners and Secretaries to discuss questions, comments and motions before that body formally reports, the Committee is committed to keep looking at new ways of how we do the business of the Assembly in the most effective, efficient, streamlined and accessible way possible.

5. PRESBYTERY DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Presbytery Clerks' Terms and Conditions

5.1.1 Further to the instruction from last year's General Assembly, work has continued with regards to the terms and conditions of Presbytery Clerks' employment, with the Clerks, the Principal Clerk and the HR department. There is agreement that there needs to be consistency of terms and conditions amongst the Presbyteries. The decision about Presbytery Clerks' specific terms and conditions rests with the Presbyteries, as they are employed separately by each Presbytery.

5.2 Moderator's Presbytery Visits

5.2.1 Since 2022, the Moderator has made a formal visit to two Presbyteries as part of their year in office which has meant that each Presbytery can expect a visit on a five-year rolling cycle, on the understanding that each Presbytery can choose whether the Moderator visits a part or the whole of the Presbytery area. The intention behind these visits

is to strengthen the life of the local church by bringing words of encouragement and creating occasions which draw attention to the Church's interest and engagement across community life. The next five-year cycle is noted as follows:

2025-2026

Clàir Eilean Ì

Perth

2026-2027

Edinburgh and West Lothian

Lothians and Borders

England and the Channel Islands (in this cycle then every second cycle so next in 2036-2037)

2027-2028

Clyde

Glasgow

2028-2029

Forth Valley and Clydesdale

Fife

2029-2030

South West

North East & Northern Isles

6. PROPERTY

6.1 Moderator's Residence

6.1.1 The Furlough Flat at Inverleith Row has proved to be suitable accommodation for the Moderator's needs. During the year the Committee investigated the option of buying another property, but preferred to continue with the current arrangement for the time being. The Committee is, however, very mindful that the Inverleith Row flat is not fully accessible for a person with mobility issues (which was also true of 2 Rothesay Terrace) and so will continue to keep this under review. The former residence at 2 Rothesay Terrace was put on the market during the Summer and finally sold in December. The proceeds of sale have gone into the General Fund. The direct savings on an annual basis of selling 2 Rothesay Terrace amount to £31,500; this does not include costs associated with ongoing repairs and upkeep of the property.

6.2 Assembly Hall

6.2.1 Last year the Committee reported the result of the General Trustees' survey of the Hall's condition and review of its maintenance liabilities. This confirmed that the building's external envelope was generally in good condition and that no major expenditure was anticipated within the next decade. Notwithstanding that, the Committee is wholly aware that the Hall has major issues concerning disability access and that to address this would require major refurbishment and upgrade of the whole building. This would incur a very significant capital investment.

6.2.2 Between 2014 and 2024 the total expenditure on the Assembly Hall amounted to £1.6 million, of which repairs and maintenance accounted for £736,000; insurance was another significant cost, rising from £36,000 in 2014 to £55,000 in 2024, a large premium for a building used by the Church for less than three weeks each year, at a net annual deficit of over £100,000. However, the Assembly Hall continues to require maintenance and upgrading, and as part of the minimum upgrading work required to the Hall, new carpeting, work to ventilation, renewal of corridor floor coverings, an overhaul of doors and water supply improvements is scheduled for 2026. The cost of this in 2026 is likely to be £160,000 higher than presented in the estimated costs for 2024, which represents an almost 185% increase in such expenditure.

6.2.3 Despite extensive efforts, the building is unable to generate enough income to offset more than a fraction of its annual running costs, let alone fund replacement of its plant and furnishings and invest in the facilities required of a modern conference venue. The latter would require substantial sums – without any guarantee that this would raise enough additional revenue in the highly competitive Edinburgh marketplace to result in a significant reduction in the annual deficit.

6.2.4 Income from lets did increase in 2024: the Hall was leased by Assembly Festival over the Christmas and New Year period and by the University of Edinburgh in the Autumn and Spring semesters to replace teaching accommodation being repaired following the discovery of RAAC in some of their buildings. This was only ever a temporary arrangement.

6.2.5 Last year the Committee also noted that in 2016 its predecessor reported that there was no apparent wish to move from the Assembly Hall, advising that without greatly reducing the numbers attending, the logistical challenges and cost of relocating could not be justified. Nine years later the Church is in a very different situation. At the local level, buildings are being closed and disposed of as the Church responds to the challenge of delivering the Five Marks of Mission with fewer resources; while the role of the General Assembly will evolve to take account of the creation of fewer, larger Presbyteries, the current layout of the Hall tends to dictate its culture and limit the scope for reform; there are also fewer Commissioners now than in 2016, and unless there is an increase in ministerial numbers and the funding required to support them, the number of Commissioners will continue to fall; another major change has been the introduction of hybrid meetings. As a result, the Church no longer requires a space as large and costly to maintain, let alone modernise, as the current Assembly Hall.

6.2.6 The Committee continues to review the future of the building in the light of the changing needs of the Church, its priorities, its demographic and its resources. Conversations have resumed with an interested party about a long-term lease of the building which would relieve the Church of its financial responsibilities for repair and maintenance and enable the Assembly Hall to be refurbished, whilst ensuring that both the title and the right to use it for the General Assembly are retained. Should a suitable long-term lease be agreed, alternative accommodation for the General Assembly would require to be found, as was the case when the Hall was leased to the Scottish Parliament between 1999 and 2004, a move that funded the building's last major refurbishment.

7. ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 Risk Assessment

7.1.1 A Risk Assessment has been prepared which sets out in detail the risks which are present by a large scale gathering in the General Assembly Hall, and outlines the steps taken to reduce the identified risks to acceptable levels. The Committee continues to monitor all relevant guidance, advice and changes in legislation, and keeps the Risk Assessment under regular review in consultation with the Church of Scotland's Health and Safety Manager. The Committee comply with guidance from the UK and Scottish Governments in compiling the Risk Assessment and associated Evacuation documentation. The Risk Assessment for the General Assembly of 2025 is available to view on the Church of Scotland website.

7.2 Commissioner Expenses

7.2.1 Expense rates for those participating in the Assembly Hall at the General Assembly of 2025 will be a maximum of £100 per night for accommodation and a limit of £20 each day for out-of-pocket expenses. When Commissioners are staying with family or friends, a total allowance of up to £80 may be claimed towards a token gift for hosts. Attendance at 13 of the 17 sessions will be required for any expenses to be authorised.

7.3 Circulation Breaks

7.3.1 The Committee have arranged for tea and coffee to be available in the Rainy Hall during circulation breaks. In order to serve as many people as possible, those attending the Assembly in person are requested to have a contactless device available as they order their beverage. Drinking water is available throughout the building where indicated.

7.4 Exhibition Space

7.4.1 To mark the 80th anniversary of Christian Aid, an information stand is present in the Martin Hall exhibition area. Those attending the Assembly in person are encouraged to visit and learn more about the work that Christian Aid are engaged in.

7.5 Chief Steward

7.5.1 Following the General Assembly of 2024, our Chief Steward, Mr Sandy Gemmill, indicated his intention to retire at the General Assembly of 2025. The Committee are grateful to Sandy, his Depute, Mr Simon Bolam, and the Assembly Officers, Mr William Mearns and Mrs Karen McKay, for producing an Operations Guide, which will assist future Stewards in fulfilling their duties. Using this Guide, the Committee created a Chief Steward role description, and advertised for Mr Gemmill's successor. At the time of writing, interviews have not yet been held, but the Convener will update the Assembly on the completed process.

7.6 Logging the General Assembly

7.6.1 Mr Roy Pinkerton has intimated his retirement from the logging team. Roy joined the logging team in 1996 and has been the principal person appointed in that role since 2006. The Committee wish to put on record their thanks to Mr Pinkerton for his service, and for his diligence in undertaking this duty. He has approached his position with meticulous care, skill and patience to ensure that contributions to the Assembly are part of the public record and can be easily identified by interested parties in the future. The Committee is grateful to Mr David Stewart who has agreed to assume Roy's responsibilities. David is ably assisted by Ms Louise Brodie, Mr Peter Graham and Mrs Alison Murray.

7.7 Standing Committee Conveners

7.7.1 Following feedback from Commissioners, the Committee are trialling a pilot to make Conveners of Standing Committees available to answer questions prior to their report being discussed. The Convener of the Procedure Committee will inform the Assembly of arrangements as part of the Procedure Committee report.

7.8 Conference Session

7.8.1 Time has been allocated for the General Assembly to meet in a conference session. The Committee will monitor how the conference session works, in advance of any similar session planned for the General Assembly of 2026. Thanks are extended to the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team for leading in 2025; a different body will be approached to lead in 2026.

7.9 Consent Agenda

7.9.1 The Committee propose that some items of business may be taken as read, without Conveners' speeches or debate. These items will be non-contentious areas of work, but Commissioners will always have the opportunity to return an item from the Consent Agenda to the Order of Business. The Convener of the Procedure Committee will move which Reports are proposed for the Consent Agenda process at Session 3.

7.10 Pastoral Care

7.10.1 Following a successful pilot of a Pastoral Care Team at the General Assembly of 2024, the Committee will ensure a similar provision is made in 2025. The Convener of the Procedure Committee will highlight how Commissioners can access pastoral care during the Assembly.

7.11 Communion

7.11.1 As directed by Standing Order 12, the Committee has arranged for the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to take place at 9:15am on Monday 19 May. Individual glasses with non-alcoholic wine and gluten-free bread will be dispensed to those gathered on the ground floor of the Assembly Hall. Those participating remotely are warmly encouraged to provide their own elements and have them ready to participate when directed by the Moderator.

8. REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ASSEMBLY TRUSTEES

8.1 The Committee continue to be grateful to the Revd Sheila Kirk for her willingness to be the representative of the Committee at meetings of the Assembly Trustees. Work continues closely with the Assembly Trustees on areas of mutual concern and interest.

In the name of the Committee

MICHAEL J MAIR, *Convener*
SHEILA M KIRK, *Vice-Convener*
FIONA E SMITH, *Secretary*

Addendum

Dr J Graeme Roberts

Dr Roberts has served the Committee and the Church with great skill as Convener of the Property Group over the last six years. In addition to ensuring that the properties which are entrusted to the Assembly Business Committee have been maintained in line with the budgets allocated to us, he has overseen the sale of the Moderator's Residence, as well as ensuring the Assembly Hall is fit for Commissioners to gather within. His diligence, care and graceful convenership of the Property Group has seen the Committee through a significant period, and we are grateful to Dr Roberts for the time he has devoted to this work.

MICHAEL J MAIR, *Convener*
SHEILA M KIRK, *Vice-Convener*
FIONA E SMITH, *Secretary*

Appendix A

REPORT OF THE SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY

'If one part suffers, all parts suffer with it, and if one part is honoured, all parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it'.

(1 Corinthians 12:26-27)

The Bible teaches us that those who have a living relationship with Christ are joined together as one body. If one part of the body suffers, we all join in the suffering, and likewise when one part rejoices, we all rejoice together. These verses have a real significance for us, as it is estimated that one in five Bible Societies are currently working in a context of war or civil unrest.

We had a special time at our Annual General Meeting this year, when we were joined (virtually) by our colleagues from The Israeli Bible Society, the Palestinian Bible Society and the Arab Israeli Bible Society. Hearing their stories of how they are continuing to minister to their communities and seeking to share the Bible which offers hope, was both challenging and encouraging. We continue to pray for them as we admire their fortitude and trust in God.

Similarly, our colleagues in Ukraine continue to minister and carry on their work undaunted. President Zelenskyy has visited Bible House in Kyiv to thank the Bible Society for bringing the churches together, and for all the work they are doing. We continue to pray for their safety, and for their faith to remain steadfast. In this complex situation, we continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Russia too.

Our Chief Executive, Elaine Duncan, had the privilege of visiting China during the year, leading a delegation from the United Bible Societies (UBS). In the midst of the varying reports we hear about the church in China, our relationship with the government 'approved' national church is one we seek to steward well. Our partnership with the Amity Printing Company to provide affordable Bibles for Christians in China continues to be strong.

In 2024, a UBS fellowship event was held in Canada. The underlying theme of the event was 'The Bible for Everyone' and re-emphasised how much can be achieved when Bible Societies work together collaboratively and creatively across the globe.

Through our Appeals we have once again been able to give significant practical support to the Bible Societies in Egypt, Guatemala, Malawi and Ukraine. And through the generosity of our supporters, we have again been able to fund various Bible translation projects throughout the world. These are all ways in which we help other Bible Societies share the Bible in their own context.

We are hugely encouraged about our ministry here in Scotland. A magazine-style, easy-to-read gospel of Matthew was produced for distribution at Magnitude, the SU Scotland youth festival. This gospel, aimed at teenagers, was given away free, thanks to a generous supporter, to around 1,500 young people. Our prayer is that these gospels are read, and God is revealed in a real and tangible way.

We are delighted that the Church of Scotland Guild has adopted our 'Bibles for Bairns' project as one of their project partners for the next three years. When a baby is registered with us (born in specific years) they receive a 'Share the Story' Bible on their first birthday. For birthdays 2, 3 and 4 they will get an age-appropriate gift to help the family continue to engage with the Bible. On their 5th birthday they will receive a children's Bible, just as they are learning to read themselves.

Other Bible-based resources and projects continue to grow and develop. We are encouraged by the number of people being trained as Bible-based Trauma Healing facilitators. The benefit of them using this resource in their own church and community is immeasurable. Equally we give thanks for the number of teachers downloading and using our 'Must Know Bible Stories' classroom resources, including those now translated into Gaelic.

Without doubt there are both challenges and opportunities in front of us, both at home and abroad. However, we press ahead seeking God's will and wisdom, knowing we can trust him.

We are grateful to every individual and congregation who stands with us in prayer and financial support. We look forward to ways we can partner together in sharing the Bible in the year ahead.

Appendix B

REVISED STANDING ORDERS

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2025

STANDING ORDERS

I	Conduct of General Assembly Business
II	Order of Debate
III	Participation and Assembly Hub
IV	Asking Questions & Making Comments
SCHEDULES	
A	Commissioners to the General Assembly
B	Other Members and Attendees of the General Assembly
C	Overtures from Presbyteries and Commissioners
D	Conduct of Cases (including Appeals, Dissent and Complaints and Petitions)
E	Committees of the General Assembly and their Membership
F	Alteration and Suspension of Standing Orders

Note: Generally, references to "laid on the table" shall include "circulated electronically in advance".

I. CONDUCT OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS

1. The General Assembly consists of various sessions taking place over several days, with matters of business taken in those sessions as set out in the Order of Business, which is found in the Order of Proceedings.

(a) OPENING SESSION

2. **Convening.** The Commissioners elected to serve in the Assembly shall convene on the day and at the hour fixed for the meeting of the Assembly, and, after prayer by the Moderator of the preceding Assembly, the List of Commissioners shall be laid on the table.

3. **Election of Moderator.** The election of a Moderator shall then be made.

4. **His Majesty's Commission.** His Majesty's Commission to the Lord High Commissioner shall then be laid on the table and ordered to be recorded.

5. **His Majesty's Letter.** His Majesty's Letter to the Assembly shall then be read and a Committee shall be appointed to prepare an answer thereto.

6. **Standing Orders.** The Standing Orders shall be laid on the table.

7. **Committee on Commissions.** The Report of the Committee on Commissions (SO A5) shall be called for and disposed of.

8. **Order of Business.** The Assembly Business Committee shall prepare and circulate electronically before the commencement of the Assembly, in the Order of Proceedings, a proposed Order of Business for the Assembly. The proposed Order of Business shall be put to the Assembly for approval on the opening day.

(b) PROCEDURE COMMITTEE AND SELECTION COMMITTEE

9. **The Procedure Committee.** The Assembly shall appoint a Procedure Committee consisting of the Convener and Vice-Convener of the Assembly Business Committee, plus the Moderator, the Clerks, the Procurator and the Law Agent.

10. Remit. The Procedure Committee shall be wholly responsible for any amendments to the Order of Business, ie for any re-ordering (or additional ordering) of the business of the General Assembly.

11. The Selection Committee. The Assembly shall also appoint a Selection Committee. Commissioners to the General Assembly shall be free to nominate other commissioners to serve on the Selection Committee. The names of those proposed shall be brought before the first meeting of the Procedure Committee which, in turn and without being limited to those names proposed by commissioners who are not among its members, shall nominate a Selection Committee of twenty commissioners, including a Convener and Vice-Convener, whose function it shall be to select and submit to the Assembly for their approval names of persons to serve on all Special Commissions and Committees appointed during the sittings of the Assembly. Such persons selected need not be commissioners.

(c) DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES

12. The Lord's Supper. The Assembly shall celebrate the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at a time appointed by the General Assembly in the Order of Business.

13. Acts of Worship. The Moderator shall be responsible to the Assembly for the conduct of all acts of worship, and shall consult the Assembly Business Committee or the Procedure Committee as to any proposed innovation in such conduct.

(d) COMMITTEE ON OVERTURES AND CASES AND RETURNS TO OVERTURES UNDER THE BARRIER ACT

14. Committee on Overtures and Cases. The Committee on Overtures and Cases shall consist of the Clerks, Procurator and Law Agent of the Church (with the Principal Clerk as Convener).

15. Papers. All papers lodged with the Clerks in Overtures and Cases of every sort shall be laid by them before the Committee on Overtures and Cases, which shall consider the same and report to the Assembly.

16. Decision not to Transmit. If the Committee on Overtures and Cases shall decide not to transmit to the Assembly any papers in Overtures or Cases duly lodged with the Clerks of Assembly it shall report the same to the Assembly no later than the second Session, with its reasons for not transmitting the papers, and parties shall be entitled to be heard thereon at the bar of the Assembly. Intimation of a decision not to transmit papers shall be made to the parties concerned as soon as possible, and in time to allow of their being represented at the bar when the decision not to transmit is reported to the Assembly.

17. In Private. The Procedure Committee shall, in its first Report, specify any Overture or Case which in its judgement requires to be conducted in private, and any case which does not appear to it to be of that character although the Clerks of Assembly may have reported it as such. The Assembly shall thereupon determine by a special Deliverance, at what stage in the proceedings the papers in such a case shall be issued to the Commissioners. In every Overture or Case which the Assembly appoint to be conducted in private, the instruction to issue the papers shall be accompanied by a special exhortation to the Commissioners to keep them private.

18. Overtures under the Barrier Act.

- (a) The Committee on Overtures and Cases shall also advise any Committee or individual on the procedure to be followed in respect of measures requiring process under the Barrier Act.
- (b) Measures remitted to Presbyteries by an Overture under the Barrier Act shall be accompanied by a note of the voting figures in the General Assembly, the text of the relevant Report and a note by the Clerks explaining any technical or legal matters contained in the Overture.
- (c) All Presbyteries shall make a return in respect of every Overture sent down under the Barrier Act. The return shall be made upon the schedule sent electronically to the Presbytery Clerk for the purpose, transmitted to the Clerks of Assembly, and then submitted to the Committee on Overtures and Cases. The Committee shall classify the returns and make a report to the next Assembly. It shall be the duty of the Committee to report not only the number of Presbyteries for and against an Overture, but also the numbers voting in the Presbyteries as reported in the schedule.
- (d) The Report of the Committee shall include the text of such Overtures as have been approved by a majority of Presbyteries.
- (e) The Assembly Business Committee shall ensure that the Committee's Report classifying returns is ordinarily taken by the General Assembly no later than session 2 thereof, save where the Procedure Committee decides otherwise, and in any case before any debate that in the opinion of the Committee on Overtures and Cases would more usefully follow consideration of the Committee's Report.
- (f) The Report of the Committee shall be given in to the Assembly by the Principal Clerk, with the reply to the debate on the merits of the measure given by the relevant Convener. Both should be available to answer questions, as appropriate.

(e) MISCELLANEOUS

19. Minutes. The minutes of each day's proceedings, if available, together with the Order of Business for the following day or days, intimations of meetings of Committees, and miscellaneous intimations, shall be circulated to Commissioners as the Assembly Paper. The Minutes, being taken as read and full opportunity having been given for correction, shall be approved as available. Before the dissolution of the Assembly a small Committee, appointed for the purpose, shall be authorised to approve the Minutes not already approved by the Assembly.

20. Quorum. The quorum of the Assembly shall be thirty-one, of whom not less than sixteen shall be Ministers. Any Member may at any time call the attention of the Moderator to the fact that there is not a quorum present, and if, on a count being made, it is found that such is the case, it shall be the duty of the Moderator to suspend or adjourn the session.

21. Acts and Regulations of Assembly. The Committee on Commissions (SO A5) shall arrange for the text of the Acts of Assembly and of Regulations of Assembly to be finalised and shall arrange for a list of the proposed Acts of Assembly and Regulations of Assembly to be circulated in advance in the Assembly Paper, which shall be considered on the last day of the Assembly.

22. Examination of Records. Minutes of the Standing Committees of the Assembly shall be examined by the Legal Questions Committee in advance of the Assembly, and that Committee shall report on its examination to the General Assembly.

23. Special Commissions and Committees.

Special Commissions or Committees will only be appointed where the General Assembly has no existing Standing Committee to which the matter under consideration can, in all the circumstances, properly be remitted. In normal circumstances, business proposed by Standing Committees of the General Assembly or proposed by Commissioners in the course of debate shall be remitted to one or more of the appropriate Standing Committees listed in SO E4.

24. Conference Sessions. The Assembly Business Committee, or the Procedure Committee, in consultation with other Standing Committees as appropriate, may invite the General Assembly to meet in conference sessions and may arrange for guest speakers to address such sessions. When the General Assembly is meeting in conference no resolutions shall be framed or decisions taken.

25. Closing of Assembly.

When the business set down for the last day of the Assembly has been disposed of, the Assembly shall be closed by addresses by the Moderator to the Assembly and to the Lord High Commissioner, and by an address by the Lord High Commissioner to the Assembly, during an act of worship, and dissolved according to the practice of the Church.

[Numbers 26 to 30 not used]

II. ORDER OF DEBATE

Note: Commissioners will normally receive the following information electronically: the Volume of Reports of Standing Committees/individual Reports, the Order of Proceedings (containing, amongst other things, the Roll of Commissioners, the Order of Business, any Presbytery Overtures, any Supplementary Reports from Standing Committees and these Standing Orders), and the Assembly Paper (containing, amongst other things, details of Assembly Worship, Minutes of proceedings as available, and amendments/corrections to other published information). A list of Notices of Motion will be published and updated regularly on the Church website (www.churchofscotland.org.uk), although Commissioners should note that the most up to date information as to Notices of Motion will be found in the Assembly Hub. Commissioners will also find details of the remits of Standing Committees on the Church website.

31. The Assembly will deal with Reports from its Standing Committees in accordance with the following Standing Orders.

(a) REPORTS

32. Transmission. Reports of all Special or Standing Committees reporting to the Assembly shall be transmitted to the Clerks of Assembly by a date in early March notified in advance by the Clerks to all Secretaries. All Reports shall be accompanied by the Deliverance to be proposed to the Assembly, and when the Proposed Deliverance exceeds two sections each section shall be numbered consecutively.

33. Circulation of Reports and Proposed Deliverances. The Clerks shall arrange for all such Reports and Proposed Deliverances to be circulated to each Member of Assembly at least one week before the opening day of meeting. All Reports so distributed shall be held as read.

34. Oral Reports and Reports of Sub-Committees. Oral Reports shall not be received, and no Sub-Committee shall give any Report to the Assembly except with the Assembly's permission.

35. Record-keeping. Reports shall not be engrossed in the Minutes, but the Clerks of Assembly shall arrange for a copy of each Report to be preserved among the other Records of the Assembly.

(b) DECLARATORY OR INTERIM ACTS

36. Declaratory or Interim Act. The draft of any proposed Declaratory or Interim Act, as also the draft of any Overture which it is proposed to transmit to Presbyteries in terms of the Barrier Act (other than any Overture circulated in the Volume of Reports), shall be circulated to Members and laid on the table of the Assembly at least one day before a Motion for the passing of such Declaratory or Interim Act, or for the transmission of such Overture to Presbyteries, is made in the Assembly.

(c) MOTIONS

37. Time-bound

On the Motion of the Procedure Committee or moved as part of the deliverance of the Assembly Business Committee, the General Assembly may resolve that the Report and Proposed Deliverance relating to a particular Special or Standing Committee's Report be taken in a time-bound process of debate and decision. Such a Motion shall be moved at least 24 hours in advance of the presentation of the Report concerned.

Having so resolved the General Assembly shall operate the following timetable:-

- a) Start times shall be allotted to specified Sections of the Report and to the related sections of the Proposed Deliverance. Discussion of any Section of the Report shall not commence later than its allotted start time, but may begin earlier if debate of the previous Section has been completed.

- b) If discussion and debate of a particular Section of the Report has not been concluded within its allotted time, then further consideration of associated sections of the Proposed Deliverance shall be sisted and the General Assembly shall take up the next Section of the Report.
- c) If, at the close of the debate on the last Section of the Report, there is still time before the Order of the Day requires to be implemented or business is due to conclude, then the General Assembly shall return for further debate of any outstanding sections of the Proposed Deliverance remaining relative to each Section of the Report.
- d) If the Order of the Day or anticipated close of business is imminent, then any outstanding sections of the Proposed Deliverance shall be voted upon without debate, except that other Motions shall also be taken, without debate, the Convener simply having the right to indicate whether or not the Special or Standing Committee is willing to accept the Motion.
- e) Where Motions do not relate directly to the Report and Proposed Deliverance proposed by the Special or Standing Committee, they will be taken either at the end of the appropriate Section, if there is time available according to the allotted timetable, or at the end of the appropriate Section when the procedure leading to the Order of the Day (or close of business) is being implemented.

38. Right to Move. Any Commissioner to the Assembly may make a Motion upon any matter coming regularly before the Assembly; and on rising to do so he or she shall read the terms of the Motion (or may ask the Clerks of Assembly to do so), having previously submitted the Motion in accordance with SO 41. It shall be in order to move a Motion regarding any matter in the care of a Special or Standing Committee to which no reference is made in the Report of that Committee, provided that reasonable notice has been given in writing to the Convener before presentation of the Report. The mover of any Counter-Motion or amendment may reply to the discussion of his or her Motion, immediately before the Convener closes the debate.

39. Withdrawal. When a Motion has been duly seconded it shall not be competent to withdraw it, or to make any alteration upon it, without the permission of the Assembly.

40. Committee Convener. The Convener of a Special or Standing Committee when a Commissioner, on giving in the Report of that Committee, shall move the Deliverance proposed in terms of SO 33. A Convener, when not a Commissioner, shall be allowed to submit the Report of the Special or Standing Committee, and to give explanations in the subsequent discussion. In such a case the Principal Clerk, whom failing, the Depute Clerk, shall formally move the Proposed Deliverance. In all cases the Convener shall have the right of replying to the debate.

41. Notice of Motion. Commissioners are encouraged to give advance Notice of Motions. Any Commissioner may, during the sittings of the Assembly, give advance notice of Motion on any subject due to come regularly before the Assembly, other than a contentious case. The fact of giving Notice of Motion shall confer no right of priority of moving same, the Moderator being the sole judge of the order in which Members are entitled to address the Assembly. For the avoidance of doubt, it is open to the General Assembly to decline to consider any Motion of which it believes inadequate notice has been given, considering the nature of its content.

42. List of Notices of Motion. A list of Notices of Motion shall regularly, in the days preceding the opening of the Assembly and during it, be placed on the Church's website. The most up to date information as to Notices of Motion shall however be found in the Assembly Hub.

43. Submitting a Notice of Motion

[If attending in person]: If such a person has a device enabling them to do so, they may use the Assembly Hub to register a Notice of Motion as in the subsequent paragraph. Alternatively an in person attendee may email a duly completed Notice of Motion form to the Clerks of Assembly using pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk, or may complete and return to the Clerks at the top table or to the Assembly Office, a paper Notice of Motion form.

[If attending online]: Members should use the Assembly Hub to register a Notice of Motion in advance in respect of the relevant section(s) of Proposed Deliverance.

[For all attendees]: All persons entitled to do so are asked to register a Notice of Motion before the start of the relevant Special or Standing Committee's business slot, i.e. before debate on the relevant Report starts.

(d) ORDER OF THE DAY

44. When the Assembly have resolved that a case or other piece of business shall be taken up at a certain hour mentioned in the Order of Business, such case or other piece of business shall be taken not later than the hour fixed and the business before the Assembly, if not finished at the hour named, shall be adjourned. If, in the opinion of the Moderator, it would be in accordance with the general convenience of the Assembly, the Moderator may allow the transaction of the business then actually under discussion to continue for a period of not more than fifteen minutes beyond the specified time, but no fresh business shall be commenced.

(e) THE DEBATE

45. The Chair. Every speaker shall address the Assembly through the Moderator, and the correct address is "Moderator".

46. In Support. When a Motion or Motions have been made and seconded, any Member (including a formal seconder in terms of SO 50) may take part in subsequent debate.

47. Speeches.

(1) Except as provided in SOs 38 and 40, no Member may speak twice on the same question except in explanation, and then only by special permission of the Assembly.

(2) Members shall make relevant declarations of interest where the topic of debate makes it appropriate to do so.

48. Point of Order. Any Member may rise to speak to a Point of Order. A speaker is not to be interrupted unless upon a call to order. When so interrupted he or she shall cease speaking, and shall resume his or her seat until the Point of Order is decided. The Member calling to order shall state the grounds for so doing; and the speaker who has been interrupted may briefly reply in explanation, to show that he or she is not out of order, but no other Member may speak to the Point of Order unless with the permission or at the request of the Moderator, with whom the decision of the point rests, though the Moderator may put the point to a vote of the Assembly.

49. Right of reply. There shall be no right of reply to a debate except as provided for by SOs 38 and 40.

50. Time Limits. All speeches shall be limited to 5 minutes, with the following exceptions:

(i) COMMITTEE REPORTS	
Convener giving in the Report of his or her Special or Standing Committee and moving thereon (seconding to be formal)	10 minutes
Convener responding to a question	4 minutes
(ii) OVERTURES FROM PRESBYTERIES	
Introducing an Overture and moving thereon	10 minutes
(iii) PETITIONS	
Speeches of Petitioners	10 minutes

51. No Time Limit. The time limits shall apply, except in the following cases:

- when the Assembly are debating specific proposals for change under Barrier Act procedure;
- when the Assembly are exercising judicial functions;
- when the Assembly are discussing a matter of doctrine;
- in Petitions when, for special reasons, the Committee on Overtures and Cases reports that the circumstances demand an extension, and when the General Assembly adopt that opinion;
- in any other matter when the Procedure Committee declares that, in its opinion, such matter is of exceptional importance, and when the Assembly adopt that opinion.

(f) DEALING WITH MOTIONS

52. Character of Motions. Motions shall be considered as belonging to one of the following categories, and shall be dealt with as prescribed, viz:

- The original Motion.
- Counter-Motions – being Motions contradictory or negative of the original Motion or of a substantial part of the original Motion.
- Amendments being Motions not substantially contradictory of the original Motion or Counter-Motion, but for making deletions, alterations, or additions thereto without defeating its main object.
- Amendments of amendments already moved and seconded.

53. Moderator to Judge. The Moderator shall be the judge of the category to which any Motions shall be considered to belong, and the ruling of the Moderator shall be final.

54. Grouping of Amendments. When to any Proposed Deliverance there has been given notice of amendments which differ from each other only slightly in their general tenor, the Moderator shall decide whether or not to permit more than one of such amendments to be moved.

55. Voting on Amendments. When an amendment (Category 3) has been proposed it shall be disposed of by the Assembly before any other Counter-Motion or amendment is proposed. However, it shall be in order for an amendment of an amendment (Category 4) to be proposed, seconded and debated, after which the Moderator shall take a vote “For” or “Against”. When all such Category 4 Motions have been so disposed of, the Assembly shall complete its consideration of the original amendment (Category 3) and the Moderator shall take a vote “For” or “Against” the original amendment amended or unamended as the case may be. For the avoidance of doubt, it is affirmed that the order of debate for Category 3 and Category 4 Motions shall be the same except as herein provided and that the provisions of SO 40 shall apply to both.

56. Voting on Motions. After all amendments, if any, have been disposed of, the Moderator shall take a vote on the Motion which remains. If there are Motions in Categories (1) and (2), the Moderator shall adopt the following procedure. A vote shall be taken in one of the methods provided below, between all the Motions in the order in which they were made, beginning at the first. Each Commissioner may vote for one Motion only. If, on the numbers being announced, one Motion has obtained a clear majority of votes, all the other Motions shall fall; but if no Motion has obtained a clear majority, the Motion having the smallest number of votes shall be struck off and a vote taken between the remaining Motions until only one remains. A vote for or against that remaining Motion shall then be taken.

57. Deliberative Vote. The Moderator or Acting Moderator in the Chair shall have no Deliberative Vote (meaning a vote cast for the purpose of deciding a matter under deliberation).

58. Casting Vote. If the outcome of any vote is a tie, the Moderator may give a deciding (casting) vote; or he or she may decline to do so, in which case the Motion (and/or any Counter-Motion, as the case may be) shall not pass. Other options open to the Moderator are to direct that the Standing Committee in question give the matter further consideration or to seek further Motions on the matter.

(g) VOTING

59. (a) The Moderator may, in any circumstances and at his or her sole discretion, ascertain the mind of the Assembly by combining the following indications and forming a view: asking in person Commissioners to stamp their feet or stand in their places, and at the same time asking online commissioners to “raise a hand” electronically, and shall intimate to the Assembly on which side there is in his or her opinion a majority. Unless the opinion of the Moderator so intimated is at once challenged, it shall become the decision of the Assembly. If any Commissioner challenges the opinion of the Moderator, the Assembly shall proceed to take an electronic vote using a system approved by the Assembly Business Committee. Alternatively, it shall be open to the Moderator, again at his or her sole discretion and in any circumstances, to ascertain the mind of the Assembly by recourse to the use of electronic voting. The Procedure Committee shall ensure that Commissioners are familiar with the method of electronic voting.

(b) Where an electronic vote is used, it shall proceed as follows:

[If attending in person]: An in person attendee shall vote using a Bluetooth handset supplied to them at the start of the Assembly. Voting for such persons via the Assembly Hub will be disabled.

[If attending online] An online attendee shall use the Assembly Hub to vote. In the event of a failure in the technology operating the Assembly Hub, online attendees shall vote using the voting system within the application which facilitates their online attendance, or shall use such other voting mechanism as may be prescribed at the time by the Procedure Committee.

[For all attendees]: The votes from both from in-person attendance and the Assembly Hub shall be added together and the result shall be announced by the Moderator, which shall become the decision of the Assembly. The voting figures shall be minuted where the Moderator, in his or her discretion, specifically requests this, or where the Clerks of Assembly decide that it would be appropriate to do so. In no circumstances shall a second vote be taken on a matter which has already been the subject of a vote by electronic voting.

(h) DISSENTS

60. Entering. Any Commissioner dissatisfied with a judgement of the Assembly, which has not been unanimous, has the right to enter his or her dissent against it; but no dissent can be given in until the matter to which it refers has, for that session, been disposed of, the Minute adjusted, and the Assembly is ready to proceed to other business.

61. Adhering. When a dissent has been entered, it is in order for any other Commissioner present when that judgement was pronounced to adhere to such dissent. No other’s adherence may be entered.

62. Reasons. A person dissenting may do so with or without giving in reasons of dissent. If he or she dissent for reasons given in at the time, or to be afterwards given in, such reasons shall, if received by the Assembly as proper and relevant, and provided they are given in before the close of the next session (or, when made on the last day of the Assembly, before the close of the same session), be recorded in the Minutes.

63. Answers. If the Assembly appoint a Committee to prepare answers to reasons of dissent, the Report of that Committee shall, if possible, be published in the Assembly Paper; and, as approved by the Assembly, shall be included in the Minutes, if the reasons of dissent have been so circulated.

64. Record of Dissents. Reasons of dissent and answers thereto when not entered in the Minutes, shall be kept in a separate Record of Dissents.

65. Submitting a Dissent.

[If attending in person]: If such a person has a device enabling them to do so, they may email their dissent as in the subsequent paragraph. Alternatively, an in person attendee may sign the list provided by the Assembly Office.

[If attending online]: A dissent shall be entered or adhered to by sending an email to: pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk with the subject line stating “Dissent against....[insert name of Standing Committee and number of relevant section of Proposed Deliverance]”. To be recorded in the minute, any such email must be received by the Clerks by the close of the last session of the Assembly.

(i) STIPEND AND PROPOSALS WITH BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

66. Matters Relating to Stipend. It shall not be competent for the Assembly, without due notice of Motion in the hands of Commissioners in proper form (for example as a Proposed Deliverance, Notice of Motion or Crave of a Petition), to debate any proposal which might impact directly on or which might bring about binding changes to the terms and conditions of ministers which relate to stipend or stipend scales.

67. Proposals with Budgetary Implications. Prior to making any Motion, Commissioners should give due consideration as to whether this will incur the use of additional resources or affect the incoming resources for the Church’s work, ie whether the Motion has budgetary implications. Advice on any Motion can be sought from the General Treasurer. A proposal with budgetary implications must be in the hands of Commissioners in proper form providing due notice (for example, as a Proposed Deliverance, Notice of Motion, or Crave of a Petition). Specifically, to ensure sensible budget controls:

(a) Any Motion which involves potential new or additional expenditure whether of a one-off or recurring nature, must be accompanied by a statement specifying where funding will be found, whether by a reduction of existing expenditure; funding external to the Church or from additional funding provided by congregations.

- (b) Any Motion which results in a potential reduction in income, including a reduction in the funding provided by congregations, must be accompanied by a statement of where replacement funding will be found or expenditure reduced to compensate for the reduction in the income.

The Assembly Trustees and/or the General Trustees, as applicable, shall have the right to comment upon any Motion in category (a) or (b) before any decision is taken.

[Numbers 68 to 70 not used]

III PARTICIPATION AND ASSEMBLY HUB

71. In person or online participation

Members may participate in person or online at the General Assembly. A person shall be designated in advance by the commissioning Presbytery as either an in person or an online attendee for the entire duration of the Assembly. No change to a person's status as an in person or online attendee shall be possible after 28 March, save only in the following circumstances: if an in person attendee becomes ill and unable to attend the Assembly in person, they shall advise the Office of the General Assembly as soon as possible by emailing pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk. When doing so they may request to change to being an online attendee and the Office of the General Assembly shall enable this if possible.

72. Assembly Hub for online attendees.

All Members attending the General Assembly online shall require to use the Assembly Hub software application (the "Assembly Hub") to participate in the General Assembly as set out below. All such persons shall be supplied in advance with login details to the Assembly Hub and training on its use shall be made available. In particular, the Assembly Hub shall be used by online attendees throughout the General Assembly to do the following:

- to follow the business of the General Assembly, read sections of Proposed Deliverance and vote on them;
- to submit Notices of Motion (to amend an existing section of Proposed Deliverance, to propose a Counter-Motion to an existing section of Proposed Deliverance, or to propose a new Motion);
- to second a Notice of Motion; and
- to indicate a request to speak (ask a question, make a comment or raise a point of order).

[Numbers 73 to 80 not used]

IV ASKING QUESTIONS AND MAKING COMMENTS

81. Questions on Reports. After the Proposed Deliverance on the Report of any Special or Standing Committee has been moved and seconded the Assembly, before dealing with any other Motions or amendments thereon, shall have opportunity for asking questions on the Report, this being without prejudice to the right of Members to put questions, with the leave of the Assembly, at any subsequent stage.

82. Questions requiring Notice. It shall be in order to ask questions of the Convener regarding any matter in the care of the Committee to which no reference is made in the Report but in such cases timeous notice shall be given to the Convener.

83. Asking a question or making a comment

[If attending in person]: If such a person has a device enabling them to do so, they may use the Assembly Hub to ask a question or make a comment on a Report as in the subsequent paragraph. Alternatively an in person attendee may use one of the stations placed in the Hall to enter a "request to speak" against the relevant section(s) of Proposed Deliverance.

[If attending online]: Members who wish to ask a question or to make a comment on a Report should use the Assembly Hub to enter a "request to speak" against the relevant section(s) of Proposed Deliverance.

SCHEDULES

SCHEDULE A

COMMISSIONERS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A1. Roll of Presbytery. Each Presbytery Clerk shall, by 15 December of each year, transmit to the Clerks of Assembly the number of charges, appointments and deacons specified in section 21 of the Church Courts Act (Act VI 2023) – all as at 30 November immediately preceding.

A2. Presbyterial Representation. The Clerks of Assembly will thereafter intimate to Presbyteries what will be their representation in the ensuing Assembly. Any queries shall be settled by the Assembly Business Committee at the request of the Clerks. The decision of the Assembly Business Committee shall be subject to review by the Assembly on Petition by the Presbytery concerned.

A3. Question Arising. Should there arise between the month of December and the opening of the Assembly any question regarding representation not provided for in these Orders, the Assembly Business Committee shall have power to dispose thereof.

A4. Transmission of names and details of Commissioners. The names, in alphabetical order, full postal addresses, email addresses, charges and types of commission (ie minister, deacon or elder) of Commissioners from Presbyteries, shall be transmitted by Presbytery Clerks to the Clerks of Assembly not later than 31 January in each year so far as they have been elected by that time. In transmitting the names of Commissioners to the Clerks of Assembly, the Clerk of each Presbytery is certifying that to the best of his or her knowledge the Elders named therein are *bona fide* ruling Elders and are commissioned by the Presbytery.

A5. Committee on Commissions. The Committee on Commissions shall consist of the Clerks and the Convener of the Assembly Business Committee; the Principal Clerk shall be Convener. The Committee shall prepare and circulate a list of Commissioners for submission to the Assembly. Along with the said list a copy of the Standing Orders of the General Assembly shall be made available to each member. The Clerks shall arrange to make available to each Commissioner, at least one week before the opening day of the Assembly, an electronic copy of the volume of Reports and Proposed Deliverances and an electronic copy of the Order of Proceedings.

A6. Objections. During the sittings of the Assembly, the Committee on Commissions shall, if called upon, or if it shall appear to it necessary or expedient so to do, hear any person whose Commission is objected to in support of his or her Commission, and also any person or persons who may object to such Commission, and the Committee on Commissions shall have power to settle any such matters.

A7. Late Commissions. It shall be competent at any time prior to the opening of the Assembly to lodge with the Clerks of Assembly Commissions which have not previously been transmitted to them; and the Committee on Commissions shall settle any queries as to whether or not such Commissions are valid. Once the Assembly has opened and the Roll of Commissioners has been laid on the table, no further Commissions may be received.

SCHEDULE B

OTHER MEMBERS AND ATTENDEES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(a) MEMBERS *ex officio*

B1. These are the Moderator of the Assembly, on election, and the immediately preceding Moderator, the Clerks, Procurator, and Law Agent, and also the Convener and Vice-Convener of the Procedure Committee upon their election. They have all the rights and privileges of Commissioners.

(b) CORRESPONDING MEMBERS, STAFF MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE, DELEGATES, VISITORS AND OTHER SPEAKERS

B2. Definitions

Corresponding Members and Staff Members in Attendance. Representatives of Departments and Standing Committees as stated in SOs B3 – B5.

Delegates from other Churches. Representatives of other Churches who come in response to an invitation from the Principal Clerk sent at the request of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team or from the Ecumenical Relations Committee to their Church to send a delegate or delegates to the General Assembly and who are duly accredited by the Courts or equivalent authority of their Churches.

Visitors. Visitors from other Churches who come with a Letter of Introduction from Assembly or Presbytery Clerks or equivalent officer of their Church.

B3. Corresponding Members

1. (a) Where neither the Convener or Vice-Convener is already a Commissioner, each of the following bodies may appoint for each day of the General Assembly, one member, failing which one staff-member, to act as a Corresponding Member: the Church of Scotland Guild, the Church of Scotland Housing and Loan Fund, the Church of Scotland Pension Trustees, the Ecumenical Relations Committee, the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, the General Trustees, the Legal Questions Committee, the Nomination Committee, the Safeguarding Committee, the Social Care Council, the Stewardship and Finance Department, and the Theological Forum.

(b) Each such body will advise the Clerks of Assembly not less than one week before the commencement of the General Assembly of the name of the Corresponding Member appointed for each day. The names of Corresponding Members appointed under this Standing Order shall be included in the Order of Proceedings or the Assembly Paper.

2. The Assembly Trustees, being the Charity Trustees of the Unincorporated Councils and Committees of the General Assembly, and the Chief Officer, shall be Corresponding Members when not Commissioners.

B4. Status. Corresponding Members of Assembly shall be entitled to attend all sessions of the same and to speak on any matter before the Assembly affecting the interests of their Special or Standing Committee, where applicable, but shall not have the right to vote or make a Motion.

B5. Staff Members in Attendance. The Head of Ministries and Mission, the Secretary of the Social Care Council, the Ecumenical Officer, the Chief Executive of the General Trustees, the Editor of Life and Work, the General Treasurer, the Head of Human Resources, the Convener of the Nomination Committee, the Scottish Churches' Parliamentary Officer and the Head of Communications, when not Commissioners, shall attend the General Assembly as required to enable them to answer questions put to them by the Assembly or, when asked by the General Assembly, to make comment for clarification.

B6. Other Speakers. Where any Special or Standing Committee wishes that one of its members or staff members, not being a Member of Assembly nor otherwise entitled to speak in terms of SOs B3 to B5, should have an opportunity of addressing the Assembly in connection with the discussion of its Report, the Convener shall seek the permission of the Moderator; for the avoidance of doubt, such permission may be sought during a debate.

Where any Special or Standing Committee wishes that a person, not being a Member of Assembly or member or staff member of that Committee, should address the Assembly, the Convener shall submit the name of such person for approval to the Assembly Business Committee before the Assembly opens, or to the Procedure Committee during the sittings of the Assembly, and the decision of the Assembly Business Committee or Procedure Committee shall be final, unless the Assembly themselves shall resolve in terms of SO F2 hereof to dispense with the observance of Standing Orders in respect of that particular matter.

(c) YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES

B7. Status

- (i) Presbyteries shall be entitled to appoint persons to serve as Youth Representatives as follows:
 - (a) Each Scottish Presbytery other than Clèir Eilean Ì (the Presbytery of the Highlands & Hebrides) and the Presbytery of Lewis may appoint up to four Youth Representatives.
 - (b) Clèir Eilean Ì (the Presbytery of the Highlands & Hebrides) and the Presbytery of Lewis may together appoint up to four Youth Representatives.
 - (c) The Presbyteries of England and the Channel Islands, International Charges and Jerusalem may each appoint one Youth Representative.
- (ii) Each Youth Representative shall be between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five on the opening day of the General Assembly. They shall be involved in the life of a congregation within the bounds of the Presbytery and shall be regularly involved in the life and worship of the Church of Scotland. The minister of the congregation shall provide confirmation of this involvement if asked by the Presbytery of the bounds.
- (iii) The names of Youth Representatives shall be passed to the Clerks of Assembly by 31 January each year. If a Presbytery does not use fully its entitlement to appoint Youth Representatives in any given year, its unused entitlement may be allocated to another Presbytery or Presbyteries at the discretion of the Clerks of Assembly.
- (iv) Youth Representatives shall be entitled to speak and move Motions but not to vote:
 - during debates on Committee reports, and
 - during debates on Overtures.
- (v) Youth Representatives shall not be entitled to speak, move Motions or vote:
 - during debates on Petitions or Cases, and
 - during debates on matters affecting General Assembly procedure or Standing Orders.
- (vi) Youth Representatives shall not be members of the Commission of Assembly.

Oversight

- (vii) The Faith Action Programme Leadership Team shall take responsibility for Youth Representatives and shall extend to them appropriate hospitality.

(d) PROBATIONERS AND FAMILIARISATION CANDIDATES

B8. Status

- (i) Persons who are, or have very recently been, (a) in training for Ministries of Word and Sacrament or for the Diaconate and undertaking a Probationary placement ("Probationers"), or (b) Admissions candidates undertaking a Familiarisation placement ("Familiarisation Candidates"), shall be entitled to attend the General Assembly with rights as set out below.
- (ii) The Faith Action Programme Leadership Team shall supply to the Assembly Clerks by 31 March each year the names of those Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates which it proposes attend that year's Assembly. Each Probationer and Familiarisation Candidate shall attend only one Assembly in that role.
- (iii) Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates shall be entitled to speak and move Motions but not to vote:
 - during debates on Committee Reports, and
 - during debates on Overtures.
- (iv) Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates shall not be entitled to speak, move Motions or vote:
 - during debates on Petitions or Cases, and
 - during debates on matters affecting General Assembly procedure or Standing Orders.
- (v) Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates shall not be members of the Commission of Assembly.

Oversight

- (vi) The Faith Action Programme Leadership Team shall take responsibility for Probationers and Familiarisation Candidates and shall extend to them appropriate hospitality. Their accommodation, travel and subsistence expenses will be met as if they were Commissioners.

(e) DELEGATES AND VISITORS

B9. Reception. Delegates from other Churches shall be received and welcomed by the Moderator. The Assembly Business Committee is authorised, after consultation with the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and the Ecumenical Relations Committee, to recommend to the Moderator to invite two specified delegates to convey greetings briefly after all the delegates have been received and welcomed by the Moderator.

B10. Status.

- (i) Delegates to the Assembly shall have the right to attend all sessions and to speak on all matters before the Assembly, except when the Assembly are exercising judicial functions, but shall not have the right to make Motions or to vote.
- (ii) Visitors shall have the privilege of seats in the Assembly but without the right to speak, make Motions or vote. As in the case of Delegates, the officials of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, the Ecumenical Relations Committee, or other relevant Council or Committee shall extend appropriate hospitality to Visitors.

B11. Oversight. The officials of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, the Ecumenical Relations Committee, and other Standing Committees which may be interested in Delegates, shall see that Invitations to Assembly functions are procured for the Delegates, and that the Members of Assembly shall do everything in their power to make the visits of all the Delegates pleasant and profitable.

SCHEDULE C

OVERTURES FROM PRESBYTERIES AND COMMISSIONERS

- C1. Overtures.** An Overture from a Presbytery or a Commissioner shall have as its subject a matter which is of concern to the whole Church, rather than a matter of particular interest to a Petitioner. An Overture from a Commissioner must, in addition, relate to a matter which does, in the opinion of Committee on Overtures and Cases, not fall within the remit of any Standing or Special Committee.
- C2. Transmissions.** All Overtures from Presbyteries passed on or before 24 April shall be sent to the Clerks of Assembly not later than that date in each year. Overtures from Commissioners shall be lodged with the Clerks not later than the Wednesday before the opening day of the General Assembly.
- C3. Circulation of Overtures.** If the Committee on Overtures and Cases gives leave to transmit in respect of an Overture, (see SOs 14 - 17) the Clerks shall arrange for the circulation of the Overture to Commissioners, in the Order of Proceedings or in the Assembly Paper.
- C4. Form.** An Overture shall commence "It is overtured by [the Presbytery of X/ Commissioner Y] to the General Assembly, to....". An Overtures shall contain a brief statement of the matter to be brought before the Assembly, giving reasons for so doing, together with a Proposed Deliverance in numbered sections, of which the first section shall be "The General Assembly receive the Overture".
- C5. Proposed Legislation.** An Overture from Presbyteries or from Commissioners which proposes the introduction of new or the amendment of existing Acts (or Regulations) shall contain the precise terms of the legislation which they propose; and the Committee on Overtures and Cases shall not transmit to the Assembly any Overture which is deficient in this respect, provided always that the Clerks and Procurator shall be available to assist with the framing of such proposals.
- C6. When Taken.** Overtures relating to matters under the care of Standing Committees shall be assigned by the Assembly Business Committee or the Procedure Committee (unless the Committee on Overtures and Cases decides not to transmit) to the place in the discussion at which they shall be introduced to the Assembly. When the Proposed Deliverance of an Overture is capable of being treated as a Counter-Motion or amendment to the Proposed Deliverance of a Standing Committee, or as a new section of such Proposed Deliverance, it shall be so treated.
- C7. Grouping.** Overtures on the same or cognate subjects shall be grouped by the Assembly Business Committee or Procedure Committee of the Assembly and only one speaker shall be heard introducing each group.
- C8. Introduction.** An Overture from a Presbytery may be introduced and spoken to by any member of that Presbytery, specially appointed for the purpose, at the bar; or by any one of its Commissioners to the Assembly in his or her place as a Commissioner. An Overture from a Commissioner shall be spoken to by that Commissioner.
- C9. Debate on Overture.** The Introducer of an Overture, if a Commissioner, shall move the Proposed Deliverance; and if he or she is not a Commissioner the Principal Clerk, whom failing the Depute Clerk, shall formally move the Proposed Deliverance. The Introducer, whether a Commissioner or not, may answer questions or give explanations in the course of the debate and may reply to the discussion immediately before the relevant Convener closes the debate. In the normal way, the relevant Convener may answer questions or give explanations during the debate provided that he or she makes it clear that in so doing he or she is not closing the debate.

SCHEDULE D

CONDUCT OF CASES (INCLUDING APPEALS, DISSENT AND COMPLAINTS AND PETITIONS)

- D1. Commission of Assembly.** The rules of procedure for the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly shall be as set out in Schedule 2 to the Appeals Act (Act I 2014). SOs D2 - D4 apply where a matter is being brought before the Commission of Assembly in terms of those powers of the Commission of Assembly not being exercised by the Appeals Committee, or before the General Assembly, being a Petition, a Reference or an Appeal on a matter of doctrine. In SOs D2 - D4 references to the General Assembly shall be taken to refer where appropriate to the Commission of Assembly and all references shall be so construed *mutatis mutandis*.
- (a) LODGING OF PAPERS**
- D2. Appeal; Dissent and Complaint; Petition.** The papers in all cases intended to be brought before the Assembly, whether Appeals or Dissents and Complaints against the judgement of inferior courts, or Petitions, should be lodged with the Clerks of Assembly not later than 24 April, and must be lodged not less than fourteen days before the opening session of Assembly; except in the case of judgements pronounced within sixteen days of the meeting of Assembly, in which case they shall be lodged within forty-eight hours of the judgement being pronounced.
- Petition.** A Petition to the Assembly is distinguished from an Overture from a Presbytery or a Commissioner in that it shall concern a matter of particular interest to the Petitioner, rather than a matter of concern to the whole Church. The Petitioner must be able to show a legitimate interest in the action requested.
- D3. (a). Reference.** In the case of Reference of a matter from an inferior court for the judgement of the Assembly the same limits as to time for lodging of papers in the case shall apply as in SO D2.
- (b). Reference of Matter Previously Considered.** Where the matter of a Reference has previously been under consideration of the Assembly, the Reference shall state the date when the matter was previously before the Assembly and shall narrate the Assembly's Deliverance thereon.

D4. Answers. It shall be competent for all parties claiming an interest in the subject matter of an Appeal, Dissent and Complaint or Petition to lodge Answers thereto complying with the requirements of this SO D4. Answers may be lodged any time after the Appeal, Dissent and Complaint or Petition is received by the Clerks, but not later than seven days before the opening meeting of Assembly. Answers shall be in the form of articulate numbered Answers to the narrative contained in the Appeal, Dissent and Complaint or Petition, indicating in particular matters of fact that are admitted and denied, and shall set forth a concise statement of the Respondent's case, together with a crave specifying the action the Assembly are invited to take in that respect.

(b) PROVISION OF PAPERS

D5. Circulation. It shall be the duty of the Clerks on receiving papers that are to come before the Assembly in connection with cases to arrange to have these circulated to Members in authorised form.

D6. In Private. Papers relating to business dealt with by Presbyteries in private, or which the Committee on Overtures and Cases (SOs 15 - 17) consider should be taken in private, shall be circulated separately and may be dealt with by the Assembly in private.

D7. In Retentis. A copy of every circulated paper shall be kept by the Clerks of Assembly to be retained among the Records of Assembly.

(c) CIRCULATION OF PAPERS

D8. Date of Dispatch. A copy of all papers transmitted to the Clerks of Assembly not later than 24 April shall be forwarded by them to each Member of Assembly at least one week before the opening day of the Assembly.

D9. In Private. The Clerks of Assembly shall not issue in advance to Members the papers in cases which they think require to be conducted in private, until specially instructed by the Assembly so to do; but shall report such cases to the Convener of the Procedure Committee, for the information of that Committee, immediately after its appointment.

(d) INTIMATION TO PARTIES

D10. Appeal; Dissent and Complaint. In all cases coming before the Assembly by Appeal or Dissent and Complaint it shall be the duty of the Clerks of Assembly to inform the parties on both sides as soon as possible of the time at which such case is likely to be taken by the Assembly. Such intimation shall, unless in a specific case the Assembly determine otherwise, be regarded as sufficient notice.

The Clerks shall further be bound, on application made to them for the purpose, to supply a copy of all papers circulated in pursuance of the foregoing Orders to the opposite party or parties in any case, or to his or her or their duly accredited Agents.

D11. Petition. In every Petition it shall be the duty of the Petitioner to make such intimation of the Petition as may be necessary having regard to the nature of the Petition. Such intimation shall be made not more than seven days later than the time when the Petition is lodged with the Clerks of Assembly as provided in SO D2 above; and along with the Petition there shall be lodged a certificate signed by the Petitioner or his or her Agent setting forth the names of the parties to whom such intimation has been made or is to be made. The Assembly may refuse to dispose of any Petition if in their opinion sufficient intimation thereof has not been made.

(e) HEARING OF CASES

D12. Announcement. Before parties are heard in any contentious case the Clerk shall read the following announcement, viz – "The Commissioners are reminded that justice requires that all the pleadings at the bar should be heard by all those who vote in this case, and that their judgement should be made solely on the basis of the pleadings." Immediately before a vote is taken in such a case, the Clerk shall read the following further announcement, viz – "The Commissioners are reminded that only those who have heard all the pleadings at the bar are entitled to vote in this case."

D13. Appeal; Complaint; One Appellant. In cases brought before the Assembly by Appeal, where there is only one appellant (or one set of appellants concurring in the same reasons of Appeal) and only one respondent (or one set of respondents concurring in the same answers to the reasons of Appeal) the case for the appellant (or set of appellants) shall be stated by him or herself or by his or her counsel, who at the same time shall submit such argument upon the case as he or she shall think fit. The party or counsel so stating the Appeal shall be followed by the respondent or his or her counsel who likewise shall submit such arguments upon the case as he or she shall think fit. At the close of the statement for the respondent the appellant shall be entitled to be again heard, and the respondent shall also be entitled to be heard in answer to the second speech for the appellant and if, in his or her final answer, the respondent shall state any fact or submit any argument not adverted to in his or her answer to the opening statement for the appellant, the appellant shall be entitled to a reply upon the new matter introduced in the final answer for the respondent. With the exception of this right of reply, so limited, more than two speeches shall not be allowed to any party at the bar.

D14. Appeal; Complaint; More than one Appellant. In such cases as those referred to in SO D13 if there is more than one appellant (or set of appellants) insisting on the Appeal, or more than one respondent (or set of respondents) supporting the judgement appealed against, (a) on different grounds, or (b) in separate reasons or answers, each appellant shall be entitled to open and state his or her separate case, and each respondent shall be entitled to make his or her separate answer, and the debate shall be closed with a reply for the several appellants; provided always that it shall be competent to the parties, with consent of the Assembly to make any arrangement for conducting the debate other than herein prescribed, if it shall have the effect of limiting, further than is herein done, the number of speeches to be made from the bar.

D15. Appeal; Complaint; Who may appear. Any Member of an inferior court whose judgement is brought under review of the Assembly may appear at the bar in support of the judgement; but, when Commissioners have been specially appointed by the inferior court to support its judgement, the Assembly shall not hear any Member of such court other than the Commissioners so appointed, unless any Member not so appointed but wishing to be heard can show a separate and peculiar interest to support the judgement; and in all such cases it shall be competent to the Assembly to limit the number of Members of an inferior court who shall be heard in support of the judgement under review.

D16. Dissent and Complaints. In SOs D13 – D15, “Appeal” includes “Dissent and Complaints” and “Appellant” includes “Complainer”.

D17. Petition: Who may appear. In cases brought before the Assembly as the court of first instance by Petition, the party promoting the application shall be entitled to be heard in support of the same; and the Assembly shall also hear an answer from any party at the bar claiming to be heard whom it shall consider to be a proper respondent, and the debate at the bar shall be closed with a reply from the person promoting the application.

D18. Reference: Who may appear. In cases brought before the Assembly by reference from a Presbytery the reference shall be stated to the Assembly by a Member of the referring court, specially appointed for the purpose, at the bar if not a Commissioner, or in his or her place as a Commissioner if a Commissioner from the Presbytery. The Assembly shall thereafter hear the parties in the case referred in such order as the nature of the case may seem to require, keeping in view the regulations in SOs D12 - D17.

SCHEDULE E

COMMITTEES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THEIR MEMBERSHIP

(a) COMMITTEES

E1. Committees. The Committees of the General Assembly shall be those listed in SO E4 (“the Standing Committees”) together with such Special Committees (see SO 23 as the General Assembly may appoint from time to time. Clerical services for the Special Committees shall normally be provided by the staff of the Office of the General Assembly.

E2. Quorum. Save for those bodies where provision is already made for a quorum, the quorum of Standing and Special Committees shall be three. When a meeting ceases to be quorate, business must be suspended. The quorum shall apply also to sub-committees and other bodies constituted from the relevant Standing and Special Committees where such sub-committees and other bodies have decision-making powers, but not otherwise.

E3. Co-opting. When, from time to time, a Standing Committee requires to co-opt relevant expertise in order to fulfil the work remitted to it by the General Assembly, it may do so (save where otherwise stated) and the Standing Committee should acknowledge the co-option in its report to the General Assembly.

E4. Membership. The Standing Committees of the General Assembly shall have membership as follows, General Assembly appointments being made on the nomination of the Nomination Committee except where otherwise stated.

1. **Assembly Business Committee** 16/17
Convener, Vice-Convener, 2 members of the Legal Questions Committee (Convener and another member involved more in judicial matters to be nominated by the Legal Questions Committee), a further 6 members made up of ministers and elders with experience of the General Assembly appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, with the following members *ex officio*: the Moderator and the Moderator Designate, the Principal Clerk, the Depute Clerk, the Solicitor, the Procurator and the General Treasurer. The Convener and Vice-Convener shall also serve as Convener and Vice-Convener respectively of the Procedure Committee.
2. **Assembly Trustees** 12/14
12 trustees appointed (from which shall be drawn the Convener, Vice-Convener, and Administrative Trustee). In addition to appointed Trustees, the Assembly Business Committee and the General Trustees shall each appoint one of their members as a representative who shall be entitled to attend all meetings as a corresponding member but without a right to vote or make a Motion, such member being eligible to serve for a maximum period of three years.
3. **Audit Committee** 6
Convener, who shall not be an Assembly Trustee, three other voting members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, all of whom shall be independent of the Unincorporated Entities and at least one of whom shall have recent and relevant financial experience, and two additional voting members appointed by the Assembly Trustees. The quorum shall be three voting members, at least one of whom is a Trustee member. The Chief Officer and the General Treasurer shall attend without a right to vote or make a motion. In addition, other officials, as required by the Committee, may be in attendance from time to time without a right to vote or make a motion. Representatives of the External and Internal Auditors, shall be entitled to attend all meetings but without a right to vote or make a motion.
4. **Church Hymnary Trust**
Trustees, including a Chairperson, are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.
5. **Church of Scotland Housing and Loan Fund** Up to 11
Up to 3 ministers and 1 other member appointed by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, who having served a term of 4 years shall be eligible for re-appointment for a second 4 year term;

Up to 4 appointed by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trustees, who having served a term of 4 years shall be eligible for re-appointment for a second 4 year term;
Up to 3 appointed by the Baird Trust, for a term of office determined by that Trust.
Any Trustee (other than one appointed by the Baird Trust) may serve for up to a further two four-year terms if elected also as Chairperson or Depute Chairperson

6. **Church of Scotland Investors Trust**
Trustees, including a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.
7. **Church of Scotland Pensions Trust**
Trustees are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust in accordance with the relevant Pension Schemes, with a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson from their number elected by the Trustees.
8. **Church of Scotland Trust**
Trustees, including a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.
9. **Committee on Chaplains to HM Forces**6
Convener, Vice-Convener and four other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee. There is also 1 non-voting member: a representative from and appointed by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.
10. **Delegation of the General Assembly**4
The Clerks of Assembly, the Principal Clerk as Chair, the Procurator and the Solicitor of the Church, *ex officio*.
11. **Ecumenical Relations Committee** 10 plus representatives and co-optees
 - a) Convener, who will act as a personal support for the Ecumenical Officer, and Vice-Convener, both appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee.
 - b) 8 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, 1 to be attached, for the purposes of ecumenical accompaniment, to the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team.
 - c) A representative of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland appointed in virtue of the Saint Margaret Declaration; a representative of the Scottish Episcopal Church appointed in virtue of the Saint Andrew Declaration; a representative of the Church of England appointed in virtue of the Columba Declaration, and 1 representative from each of 2 churches drawn from the following: the Baptist Union of Scotland, Congregational Federation (Scotland), Methodist Church; Religious Society of Friends, Salvation Army; United Free Church of Scotland and the United Reformed Church, each to serve for a period of four years.
 - d) The Committee shall co-opt Church of Scotland members elected to the central bodies of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC) and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE, formerly the Leuenberg Fellowship of Churches).
 - e) Meetings of the Committee shall normally be held with all members, representatives and co-optees invited, but a meeting may also be called only for voting members, being those appointed under paragraphs a) and b) above. Where the full Committee is meeting, only those persons appointed under paragraphs a) and b) above shall be entitled to vote, but before any vote is taken the views of members representing other churches shall be ascertained.
12. **Ethical Oversight Committee**.....9
Convener, Vice-Convener and 7 other members, each of whom shall serve no more than two three-year terms, to be populated as follows: 3 persons who shall be trustees of the Investors Trust, 1 person from the General Trustees, and 5 appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee; of these 5, 3 will have a social justice and/or world church background; 1 will be a parish minister; and 1 will be thirty years of age or under at first appointment.
13. **Faith Action Programme Leadership Team**48
The Leadership Team will comprise
 - a) a Convener appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee,
 - b) 5 Vice Conveners, appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, to deputise for the Convener when unavailable and lead Programme Groups (with 1 of the Vice Conveners to be designated, on the recommendation of the Nomination Committee, as Depute Convener),
 - c) 5 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee,
 - d) 12 other members appointed by Presbyteries. There will be 1 such member for each Presbytery or Presbytery grouping,
 - e) The Convener, or substitute, of the Theological Forum, and
 - f) The Convener, or substitute, of the Ecumenical Relations Committee.

No Assembly Trustee, member of another Standing Committee or employee of the Church will be eligible to be a member. The quorum will be 5 members. The Convener will have a casting vote. The Convener will be appointed for a term of four years. Of the Vice Conveners 2 will be appointed for two years and 3 for three years as decided by the Nomination Committee. Subsequent to those first appointed, the Convener and Vice

Conveners may be appointed from existing members and will conclude service at the conclusion of their term as Convener or Vice Convener. Of the other members of the Leadership Team first appointed, one third will serve for four years, one third for three years and one third for two years as decided by the Nomination Committee.

Five Programme Groups will report to the Leadership Team and will have written delegated authority from the Leadership Team to take forward their respective elements of the Faith Action Programme. This will include the development of strategy and policy, and working alongside staff members in their implementation.

Each Vice-Convener will lead a Programme Group. No other members of the Leadership Team will be a member of a Programme Group.

Programme Groups, with the exception of the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group (PMPiG), will each consist of 4 members, appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee plus their Programme Group Leader. Of the 4 members, 2 will serve for four years and 2 for three years as decided by the Nomination Committee. PMPiG will consist of six members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee plus their Programme Group Leader. Subsequent to the initial appointments, all Programme Group members other than Leaders, will serve four years. Programme Groups will have power to co-opt members to their Group, subject to approval by the Leadership Team. The number of co-opted members will not exceed the number of General Assembly appointed members, and only General Assembly appointed members will have the right to vote on decisions of the Programme Group.

Programme Groups may form short-life Task Groups to assist or advise them in the delivery of the Faith Action Programme. With the exception of the Presbytery Mission Plan Implementation Group, such Groups will comprise no more than 5 individuals (of whom no more than 2 may be non-members of the Church), and be headed by a Programme Group member, with freedom to select other persons, including members of staff, as co-opts. The remit and composition of each such Group will be agreed by the Leadership Team and reviewed annually, should the task for which it is formed not be completed within a year. Task Groups will report to the relevant Programme Group. The number, size, remits and activities of such Groups will be approved by the Leadership Team Convener and reported to the General Assembly.

14. **General Trustees**
Trustees, including a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, are appointed as required, by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Trust.
15. **Iona Community Board**.....20
Convener and 5 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee;
6 members appointed by and from the Iona Community, 2 changing each year;
The Leader of the Iona Community;
1 member appointed by and from Clèir Eilean Ì, the Presbytery of the Highlands and Hebrides.
In addition the Board will invite 6 member churches of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) to appoint a representative member to the Board, such members being eligible to serve for a maximum period of 4 years.
16. **Judicial Panel**.....30
30 people being ministers, elders, deacons and members nominated by the Nomination Committee and appointed by the General Assembly. All members of the Judicial Panel shall be qualified to practise as lawyers or shall be experienced in the law and practice of the Church.
17. **Legal Questions Committee**..... 16
Convener, Vice-Convener and 10 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, plus Clerks of Assembly, the Procurator and the Solicitor of the Church.
18. **Life and Work Editorial Advisory Committee**.....9
Convener and 7 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee together with the Principal Clerk as an *ex officio* member. The members should represent a wide range of theological opinion and perspectives, with an interest and particular gifts to offer the Committee, for example journalism, magazine production, former contributors. The Committee may co-opt members with particular gifts or information.
19. **Ministries Appeal Panel**.....5
Convener, Vice-Convener and 3 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee. At least 1 member shall be legally qualified, at least 1 shall be a minister and at least 1 shall be an elder.
20. **Mission Plan Review Group**..... 15
A group of fifteen persons appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee and in line with the process for appointing persons to other legal bodies. Additionally, the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and the General Trustees shall be entitled to make suggestions to the Legal Questions Committee as to persons who are suitable for appointment to the Group, but the final decision as to nominees shall rest with the Legal Questions Committee. The members of the Group shall be suitably experienced members of the Church.

21. **Nomination Committee**20
Convener, Vice-Convener and 18 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee. Notwithstanding SO E7, no member of the Committee, having served a term of 4 years, shall be eligible for re-election until after a period of 4 years, except for special cause shown. The Convenership of the Committee shall be for 3 years.
22. **Nomination of the Moderator Committee**.....12
Twelve persons comprising eleven ministers and elders nominated by Presbyteries plus one deacon selected at random by the Clerks of Assembly. The ministers and elders on the Committee shall be selected as follows: each Scottish Presbytery (provided that in the case of Clèir Eilean I (the Presbytery of the Highlands & Hebrides) and of Lewis, this means the two Presbyteries working together) shall nominate 1 minister and 1 elder to populate the Committee; the Presbyteries of England and the Channel Islands and of International Charges shall nominate 1 minister or elder for the Committee in each alternate year, the first nomination being made in 2024 by the Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands. Upon receipt of all the nominations, the Nomination Committee shall select for appointment 1 or other of the nominees from each Scottish Presbytery, and shall appoint the nominee from the Presbytery of England and the Channel Islands or International Charges, to create a Committee which is representative of the diversity of the whole Church. The Committee is to be convened by the immediate past-Moderator of the General Assembly, failing which by another former Moderator of the General Assembly.
23. **Personnel Appeal Group**.....12
12 members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee with the Solicitor of the Church as Secretary, each appointed to serve a four-year term with the option of appointment for a further four-year term. Members shall not include any former or current members of staff of any of the Church's Employing Agencies (including the Social Care Council), nor any current Standing Committee member.
24. **Presbytery Review Committee** 15
Convener, Vice-Convener and 11 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, together with the Principal Clerk and the Depute Clerk as *ex officio* members. In making nominations to the Committee, the Nomination Committee shall seek to ensure a balance of ministers, elders and members on the Committee, and also shall aim for geographical balance. Membership of the Committee shall include persons with considerable experience of Presbytery life, of Church life, of regulatory functions, of charity governance, of Church law, practice and procedure and of the operation of Church courts. Appointments shall be for a three-year term with some initial appointments being of shorter terms to stagger those stepping down from the Committee in future years. No current employee of a Presbytery shall be a member of the Committee or co-opted onto a Review Group.
25. **Registration of Ministries Committee**7
Convener, Vice-Convener and 5 other members. Of the 7 members, 1 member is appointed by the Legal Questions Committee, 1 member is appointed by the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and 5 members (including the Convener and Vice-Convener) are appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee. The 5 members appointed by the General Assembly shall include one member who is legally qualified, at least one Minister of Word and Sacrament and at least one elder. One or other of the Clerks to the General Assembly and the Head of Ministries and Mission attend the Committee *ex officio* in an advisory capacity but are not members. The Committee is clerked by a staff member of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team; this person is not a member of the Committee.
26. **Safeguarding Appeal Panel**6
A Panel of 6 persons appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, being persons with Safeguarding and other relevant experience, and including at least two persons who shall be qualified to practise as lawyers or who are experienced in the law and practice of the Church, and at least two ministers. None of the Panel shall be a current or former employee of any of the Employing Agencies or a current member of the Safeguarding Committee. The Panel will be clerked by the Principal Clerk or the Depute Clerk.
27. **Safeguarding Committee** 11
Convener, Vice-Convener and 6 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, 1 representative (voting member) from and appointed by each of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and the Social Care Council, the Solicitor of the Church, the National Adviser (Head of Safeguarding) as Secretary to the Committee, the Chief Officer and up to 4 members co-opted by the Committee for their expertise. For the avoidance of doubt it is declared that only the following persons will be entitled to vote: Convener, Vice-Convener, the six Assembly appointed members and the representatives from each of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team and the Social Care Council.
28. **Social Care Council**.....12
Convener, Vice-Convener and 9 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, with the Chief Executive Officer of CrossReach as a non-voting *ex officio* member. At least one member shall be a Church of Scotland minister.
29. **Theological Forum**..... 13
Convener, Vice-Convener and 11 other members appointed by the General Assembly through the Nomination Committee, the membership being selected to provide an appropriate balance of (a) ministers of Word and Sacrament, (b) members of academic staff from the Divinity Schools (or equivalent) of Institutions of Higher Education in Scotland, (c) elders and (d) members drawn from the wider membership of the Church chosen for their particular expertise, experience or provenance.

(b) GENERAL PROVISIONS RELATING TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES (OTHER THAN THE LEGAL BODIES)

E5. Meaning of Member. "Member" shall refer in this section (b) of Schedule V to any member of a Standing Committee or Special Committee, including the Convener and Vice-Convener except where stated otherwise.

E6. Membership of Church of Scotland. Each Member of a Standing Committee and Special Committee shall normally be a minister, elder, deacon or member of the Church of Scotland.

E7. Period of Service and reappointment.

- (a) Members of the Standing Committees shall initially be appointed for a term of four years and shall retire after serving for four years; however, such Members shall be eligible for reappointment subject to the following rule: where more than one Member is due to retire then not more than one-half of the retiring Members may be so re-appointed ("the 50% rule").
- (b) A Member appointed in the place of one deceased, resigned or removed, or of one appointed as Convener or Vice-Convener, shall serve for the remainder of the period for which the person was appointed whose place he or she takes.
- (c) A Member retiring from a Standing Committee having served eight consecutive years, or having his or her name removed for non-attendance, shall not be eligible for re-appointment to that Standing Committee until the expiry of one year thereafter, unless the General Assembly are satisfied that there are circumstances which make re-appointment desirable.
- (d) No Member shall normally serve for more than eight consecutive years.
- (e) This SO E7 shall not apply to Conveners and Vice-Conveners, to whom SO E16 below applies.

E8. Under 35. If possible 20 per cent of the Assembly appointed members of Standing Committees should be under the age of 35 at the time of their appointment.

E9. Representatives and appointments other than by the General Assembly. Bodies entitled to appoint representatives shall be permitted to make changes in their representation for special reasons in any year. This shall also apply to direct appointments made by Presbyteries to the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team. The rules in SO E7, save for the 50% rule, shall apply to representatives and direct appointments.

E10. Non-attendance. The name of a Member shall be removed from any Standing or Special Committee which has met three times or oftener between 1 June and 1 March unless he or she has attended one-third of the meetings held within that period, unless the Nomination Committee is satisfied that there was a good reason for the non-attendance which has now been rectified. Attendance at meetings of Sub-Committees shall for this purpose be reckoned as equivalent to attendance at the meeting of the Committee itself.

E11. Replacement. When a Member of any Standing or Special Committee is unable to accept the appointment, or where from any cause vacancies occur in Committees during the year, that Committee, with the permission of the Convener of the Nomination Committee, may appoint a Member to take the place of the Member whose non-appointment or retirement has caused the vacancy. All such appointments, if for a longer period than one year, shall be reported for confirmation through the Nomination Committee to the General Assembly.

E12. Eligibility to serve on more than one Committee. No person shall be a Member of more than three Standing or Special Committees at the same time. Appointments *ex officio* shall not be reckoned in this number. This rule shall not apply to those for whom the Nomination Committee is prepared to give special reason to the General Assembly for their appointments to more than three Committees.

The Nomination Committee shall not nominate for Standing or Special Committees any of its own number except in special circumstances which must be stated to the General Assembly.

E13. Secretaries and Deputes. It shall be the responsibility of the Secretary of each Committee to attend the meetings thereof, to provide information and advice as requested, and to provide a depute for any meeting that the Secretary cannot attend.

E14. Expenses. Reasonable expenses incurred by Members of Committees, consisting of travel charges and a sum for maintenance when required, shall be defrayed.

(c) SPECIFIC PROVISIONS RELATING TO CONVENERS AND VICE-CONVENERS**E15. Appointment.**

Conveners and Vice-Conveners of Committees shall be appointed by the General Assembly on the nomination of the Nomination Committee. When the Convener or Vice-Convener of a Committee is completing their term of office, the Committee shall be invited by the Convener of the Nomination Committee to suggest the name of one who may be appointed in succession. The Nomination Committee shall satisfy itself that an open and transparent process has been followed in identifying the Convener or Vice-Convener so suggested.

E16. Period of service and reappointment.

- (a) Conveners of Standing Committees shall hold office for not more than four consecutive years (in the case of the Nomination Committee, three consecutive years) and Vice-Conveners of Standing Committees shall hold office for not more than three consecutive years, unless the General Assembly are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which make the reappointment of Conveners and Vice-Conveners desirable.
- (b) The period of reappointment shall be for one year only.
- (c) Reappointments may not be made if the Convener or Vice-Convener has already served more than four years (in the case of a Convener) or three years (in the case of a Vice-Convener) as a result of having been appointed in place of a previous Convener or Vice-Convener to complete their term.

- (d) If at the time of their appointment, a Convener or Vice-Convener is already a Member of the Committee, a new Member shall be appointed in their place for the remainder of the period of their original appointment.
- (e) A retiring Convener shall be eligible for re-election as an additional member of the Committee concerned to serve for one year only immediately following tenure of office as Convener.

E17. Replacement. In the event of the death, resignation, non-attendance or supervening incapacity of the Convener or Vice-Convener of any Committee the Convener of the Nomination Committee shall have the delegated authority to make a mid-year appointment, in consultation with the Committee concerned, whose Convener may be invited to suggest the name of one who may be appointed in succession. Where the appointment is for longer than one year an open and transparent process shall be followed in identifying the replacement Convener and/or Vice-Convener. All mid-year appointments of Conveners and Vice-Conveners shall be reported by the Nomination Committee to the General Assembly.

(d) NOMINATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS

E18. Conveners and Secretaries to Attend Nomination Committee Meeting. Conveners and Secretaries of Committees shall be entitled to be present at meetings of the Nomination Committee when the composition of their respective Committee is under consideration, but not to vote.

(e) THE LEGAL BODIES

E19. Meaning. The "Legal Bodies" means the Appeals Committee of the Commission of Assembly, the Discipline Tribunal, the Judicial Commission, the Judicial Panel, the Ministries Appeal Panel, the Mission Plan Review Group, the Personnel Appeal Group and the Safeguarding Appeal Group.

E20. Conveners and Vice-Conveners: period of appointment. Conveners of the Legal Bodies shall initially be appointed for a term of four years and shall be eligible for reappointment for further terms of four years. Vice-Conveners of the Legal Bodies shall initially be appointed for a term of three years and shall be eligible for reappointment for further terms of three years.

E21. Members: period of appointment. Members of the Legal Bodies shall initially be appointed for a term of four years and shall be eligible for reappointment for further terms of four years.

E22. Nomination process for Legal Bodies (including Conveners, Vice-Conveners and Members).

- (a) In parallel with the Nomination Committee processes, the Legal Questions Committee will draw up a list of people whom it considers suitably qualified to serve on the Legal Bodies and will approach these people to ascertain whether or not they agree to serve. If any forms are submitted through the wider nomination process, these forms will be passed direct to the Convener and Secretary of the Legal Questions Committee for consideration as to suitability.
- (b) At its January/February meeting, the Nomination Committee will receive the list of names proposed by the Legal Questions Committee. The Convener and Secretary (Principal Clerk and/or their Depute) of the Legal Questions Committee, and the Solicitor will appear at the Nomination Committee to discuss the list of names and to answer any questions thereon. Thereafter, subject to that discussion, Nomination Committee will approve the list of names. For the avoidance of doubt, the Nomination Committee as a whole will not receive any names other than those being put forward for nomination on the list of names. The approved names will then be proposed to the General Assembly in the Report of the Nomination Committee, for appointment.

E23. Special rules for Legal Bodies. The rules in SOs E19 - E22 apply in preference to the normal rules set out in SOs E7 - E17 above, which shall not apply to the Legal Bodies.

(f) THE TRUSTS

E24. Meaning. The Trusts means the Church Hymnary Trust, the Church of Scotland Housing and Loan Fund, the Church of Scotland Investors Trust, the Church of Scotland Pension Trust, the Church of Scotland Trust and the General Trustees.

E25. Special rules for Trusts. The rules in SOs E7 - E17 above shall not apply to the Trusts.

(g) NOMINATION COMMITTEE REPORTING TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

E24. List of Nominations. The Nomination Committee shall include in its Report its list of nominations to be submitted to the General Assembly. The Report, so prepared, shall be included in the Volume of Reports issued to Members of the General Assembly.

E25. Amendment to Report.

- (a) No amendment to the Report of the Nomination Committee shall be in order of which due notice has not been given.
- (b) All Notices of Motion proposing amendment to the Report, including such as propose the omission or insertion of any name or names, or the addition of a name or names where the full number eligible has not been nominated by the Committee, must be given in to the Clerks before midday on the penultimate day of the General Assembly. All such Notices of Motion shall be circulated in the list of Notices of Motion.

SCHEDULE F**ALTERATION AND SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

F1. Alteration. Any proposal for alteration of Standing Orders shall be either (a) on the Report of the Legal Questions Committee and included in the Volume of Reports or (b) by Overture and the subject of at least one day's notice in the list of Notices of Motion. This Standing Order shall not apply to SO E4 which may be amended by the Principal Clerk in accordance with the decisions of the General Assembly.

F2. Suspension. It shall always be competent for the Assembly, on the Motion of any Commissioner and on cause shown, summarily to dispense with the observance of the Standing Orders, or any part of them, in any particular case: provided that such Motion shall receive the support of not less than two-thirds of those voting on the question when put from the Chair, and that such suspension shall not contravene any Act of Assembly.