INFORMATION FOR POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS IN 2027

NAME OF STANDING COMMITTEE/AGENCY: Ecumenical Relations Committee	
CONVENER/CHAIR:	Rev Ross Blackman
VICE-CONVENER(S):	Rev Dr Conor Fegan
SECRETARY:	Rev Dr John L McPake

REMIT:

• Serve the General Assembly, and the bodies appointed by the General Assembly, in advising it with respect to the ecumenical life of the Church of Scotland, with particular reference to Article VII of the Articles Declaratory of the Church of Scotland.
• Articulate the Ecumenical Policy of the Church, and review the Policy as necessary.
• Brief and advise the Moderator of the General Assembly and the Principal Clerk of the General Assembly, through the Ecumenical Officer, with respect to the ecumenical life of the Church.
• Facilitate engagement with the presbyteries of the Church with a view to encouraging the development of local and regional ecumenical initiatives.
• Facilitate the establishing of mission-orientated local ecumenical partnerships in conjunction with the presbyteries of the Church and other partner churches.
• Maintain and develop the relationship of the Church of Scotland with: the Church of England, in the light of the Columba Declaration (2016); the Scottish Episcopal Church, in the light of the Saint Andrew Declaration (2021) and the Catholic Church in Scotland, in the light of the Saint Margaret Declaration (2022).
• Facilitate engagement with the member churches of Action of Churches Together in Scotland (ACTS) (and with any successor body), and with other churches in Scotland.
• Facilitate engagement with the member churches of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), Churches Together in England (CTE), and with other churches in the United Kingdom.
• Facilitate engagement with the member churches of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), the World Council of Churches (WCC), and with other churches and ecumenical bodies.
• Facilitate theological and doctrinal engagement in Faith and Order dialogue in conjunction with the Theological Forum.
• Nominate representatives of the Church of Scotland to represent the Church in the Assemblies and Synods of other churches, and on ACTS, CTBI, CTE, CEC, CPCE, WCRC and WCC, and to receive reports from them.
• Support the work of the Ecumenical Officer in their representative and administrative functions.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE SOUGHT AT THIS TIME:

Members of the Committee should be committed to the unity of the Church for which Christ prayed (John 17). In practical terms, this means working to build good relationships with other denominations of the Church, principally in Scotland, but also in the rest of the UK and further afield; working to strengthen existing and emerging ecumenical organisations; and fostering ecumenical working at presbytery, parish and congregation level. An understanding of the history, structures and theology of the Church of Scotland is important but equally, an interest in and some knowledge or experience of the theology, structures and practices of other denominations is helpful. Some knowledge of ecumenical theology and of the history of ecumenism in Scotland is good too but these can be and are developed through involvement in the ongoing work of the Committee.

EXPECTATIONS OF MEMBERS:

Members are expected to attend and participate in Committee meetings. Members should also expect to be given other occasional responsibilities such as attendance at and reporting on Assemblies or Synods of other denominations; accompanying other agencies of the Church of Scotland to foster ecumenical thinking and working across the Church and engaging with presbyteries and local ecumenical partnerships.

MEMBERSHIP AND ANTICIPATED VACANCIES:
The membership of the Committee is comprised as follows:
Eight members appointed by the General Assembly.
A Convener, who will act as a personal support for the Ecumenical Officer, and a Vice-Convener, appointed by the General Assembly.

It is anticipated that there will be vacancies for a Convener and two members to be filled with a start date of June 2027.

Other non-General Assembly appointees:
A representative of the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland. (Saint Margaret Declaration (2022))
A representative of the Scottish Episcopal Church. (Saint Andrew Declaration (2021))
A representative of the Church of England. (Columba Declaration (2016))
One representative from each of three churches drawn on a rotational basis from:

Baptist Union of Scotland
Congregational Federation (Scotland)
Methodist Church (Scotland)
Religious Society of Friends
Salvation Army
United Free Church of Scotland
United Reformed Church (Scotland)

The Committee shall co-opt Church of Scotland members elected to the trustee or central bodies of the following:

Scottish Christian Forum
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
Conference of European Churches (in conjunction with the United Reformed Church)
Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (in conjunction with the United Reformed Church)
World Council of Churches
World Communion of Reformed Churches

FREQUENCY, TIMING AND VENUE OF MEETINGS:
Meetings are normally held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. Since February 2020, all meetings have been online, although this is subject to review. Members should normally anticipate six meetings per annum: September, November/December, January, February, April/May and June.

DETAILS OF SUB-COMMITTEES/GROUPS:
The Committee does not have standing sub-committees, per se. Sub-committees are formed, as required, for particular pieces of work. Contact Groups, in relation to shared Declarations, are maintained in partnership with the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Church of England.

FURTHER DETAILS:
Potential new members would gain a good overview of the work of the Committee by reading the 2018 General Assembly Report, which contains the revised Ecumenical Policy of the Church of Scotland, and the 2019 Report, which outlines the Ecumenical Strategy to which the Committee is working. The Remit of the Committee was renewed at GA 2023 and the Report of the Committee for that year provides further useful information.