

ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE MAY 2023

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 Rev Colin Renwick to be Precentor until May 2025.
4. Appoint Mr Roy Pinkerton to index the verbatim record.
5. Invite Commissioners to submit to the Procedure Committee via email: pcoffice@churchofscotland.org.uk by Monday 22 May at 12pm, nominations for consideration to serve on the Selection Committee.
6. Note the expenses levels for those attending at least 13 of the 17 General Assembly sessions in person.
7. Approve the sale of the Moderator's Residence at 2 Rothesay Terrace and the investment of the proceeds.
8. Approve the acquisition of a replacement residence, preferably by the repurposing of a property already owned by the Church.
9. Note the work undertaken to date by the Presbytery Development Group in implementation of sections 12, 13 and 14 of the Committee's deliverance at the General Assembly of 2022 and instruct the Assembly Business Committee to bring a further report to the General Assembly of 2024.
10. Instruct Presbyteries to work with the Assembly Business Committee and others to formulate and implement terms and conditions of employment for all Presbytery staff to ensure coherent terms and conditions across the Presbyteries in Scotland; such terms and conditions to be compatible with Church and civil law.
11. Approve the recommendations contained in section 9.5 of the Report in regard to the role of the Moderator of the General Assembly.
12. Pass Regulations amending the Nomination of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regs I 2013) (as amended by Regs I 2020) as set out in Appendix D.
13. Pass Regulations amending the Office of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regs II 2013) as set out in Appendix E.
14. 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 IAIN GREENSHIELDS

1.1 Continuing the recent trend of extraordinary times to serve as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, the Rt Rev Dr Iain Greenshields has responded with grace and with presence.

1.2 There have been several royal occasions on which to represent the Church, beginning in June with a National Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral to celebrate Her Late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. In September, Iain had the sad honour of preaching at St Giles' during a Service of Reflection and Thanksgiving for the life of Her Late Majesty; he then led a prayer at Her Late Majesty's State Funeral Service in Westminster Abbey. In October, Iain welcomed His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort to the City Status Ceremony in Dunfermline City Chambers, at which he delivered a blessing; he looks forward to attending the Coronation in May.

1.3 Over the course of the moderatorial year, Iain has had opportunities to bring the Church into the political realms of both the Scottish and the British Governments, meeting with the Leaders of each Political Party, with the First Minister, and with the Prime Minister.

1.4 Ecumenical and Interfaith relationships have featured largely during the last twelve months. In November, visits were organised to a Buddhist Monastery, a Hindu Temple, an Islamic Mosque, a Jewish Synagogue and a Sikh Gurdwara to mark Interfaith Week, and there was an opportunity to engage with the Chief Rabbi whilst in London. A significant moment was the signing of the St Margaret Declaration, the culmination of years of ecumenical relationship building between the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church. Then in February, together with Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Iain embarked on an historic ecumenical peace pilgrimage to South Sudan.

1.5 Personal highlights included preaching in many Priority Area congregations, celebrating milestones with local churches, and visiting Glasgow and Clyde Presbyteries. Time with CrossReach showcased their excellent work, and during visits to Services Iain saw in particular, the inspirational work being done to support those dealing with addictions in journeying to full recovery.

1.6 The Church is grateful to Iain for his hard work, gracious demeanour and faithful witness. As he returns to Parish life in Dunfermline: St Margaret's, we wish him and his wife Linda, who has been his companion and narrator, every blessing for their future ministry.

2. THE PRECENTOR

2.1 The Committee is grateful to Rev Colin Renwick for his willingness to continue as Precentor, and invite the Assembly to endorse the appointment until the General Assembly of 2025.

3. PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATION

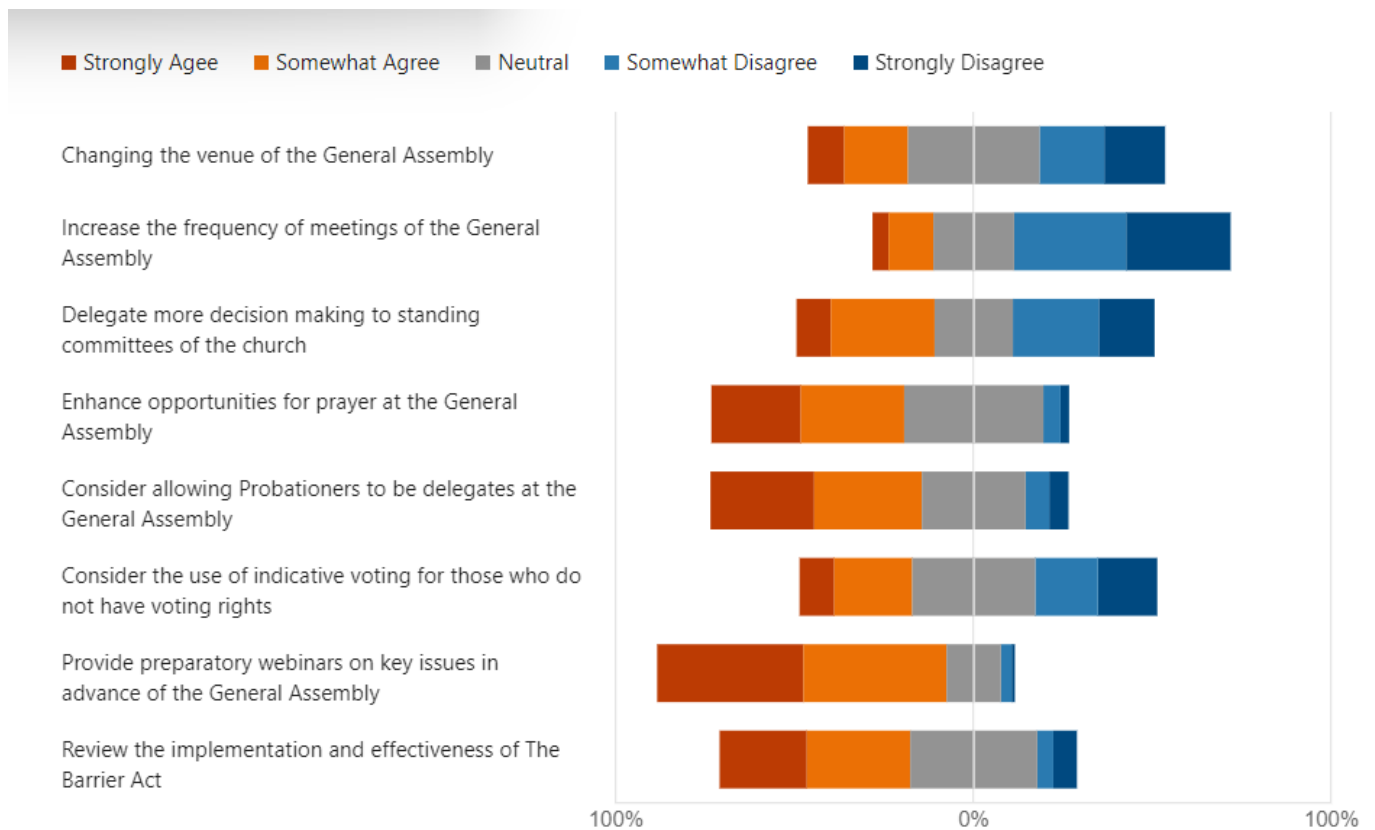
3.1 The Presbytery returns show that there are in all 994 charges, whether vacant or not, and 170 other ministers (excluding retired ones) who are members of Presbyteries. Representation is calculated for each Presbytery in accordance with Act III 2000 and the total number of Commissioners is currently made up as follows: 246 ministers, 246 elders and 15 Deacons.

4. AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

4.1 Suggested changes to Standing Orders are set out in Appendix B and C.

5. GENERAL ASSEMBLY REFORM

5.1 Last year, the Committee presented some outline ideas for reform of the General Assembly, and there was a request to bring proposals to this year’s Assembly. The post-Assembly feedback from Commissioners and other participants showing agreement or disagreement with suggestions about various areas of potential concern, has provided helpful data to inform this work.



5.2 Unsurprisingly, there is always some level of push-back to any proposed change. While the level of agreement or otherwise to a proposal doesn’t necessarily include whether it should be adopted or not, we can see in the summary above the ‘low hanging fruits’ which would be more easily implemented and readily accepted. Although an *ad hoc* group considered ‘General Assembly Reform’, there is much to review and change in the ongoing remits of the Property, Presbytery Development and Assembly Arrangements Sub Groups of the Committee. Here we report on matters not addressed elsewhere.

5.3 Enhanced opportunities for prayer are crucial in seeking and understanding God’s will for our General Assembly. To that end, there will be online and in-person opportunities to gather for prayer prior to and during General Assembly 2023, in which all are invited to participate.

5.4 Participation of probationer ministers has been considered. Currently, time and budgetary constraints preclude their full participation, but current probation training does include some time spent engaging with the General Assembly online and reflecting thereon; there is also a commitment to meet with probationers soon after the Assembly to listen to the feedback from those in training for the recognised ministries of the Church. The Committee plans to develop its collaboration with those responsible for ministerial formation.

5.5 With all the new **Presbyteries** due to be operational by 2024, there is a continuing need to develop the sense of 'Assembly and its Presbyteries'. The Committee will introduce space in future General Assembly timetables for reports from at least two Presbyteries. Currently, any Presbytery may bring business to General Assembly through the Overture process.

5.6 Good **preparation for the General Assembly** is essential if Commissioners and other participants are able to make the most of their Assembly experience. Preparatory resources including webinars, videos and text-based material have been used previously; in our conversations with Conveners and Secretaries of all reporting bodies we are encouraging them to develop ways to enhance engagement. The Committee has been able to support Presbyteries as they offer online, onsite or hybrid preparation sessions.

5.7 Increasing the **frequency of General Assemblies** is not favoured by many. An online Assembly in the Autumn could alleviate the need to wait as much as a year for General Assembly approval; but a more favourable solution would be to remit business to Standing Committees or Presbyteries with clear **delegated authority** to implement, without first reporting back to a future General Assembly.

5.8 Last year, following debate about continuing with a **hybrid format**, assurance was given that the Committee would keep hybrid practice under review. In fulfilment of the instruction to the Assembly Business Committee and the Legal Questions Committee to jointly determine appropriate arrangements for meeting in 2023, we affirm that as far as possible we would like all participants to have a broadly similar experience, and have advised Presbyteries that there should be no constraints on the ratio of Commissioners engaging onsite or online. Behind the scenes the technical teams have streamlined the Audio Visual, Assembly Hub and Zoom streaming arrangements, and have been able to increase the internet capacity of the building tenfold. More detail can be found within the Assembly Arrangements section of the Report; this is a significant part of reshaping how we transact Assembly business.

5.9 The Legal Questions Committee has a section in its Report on the **Barrier Act**, in the context of Presbytery Reform.

5.10 Recent years have necessitated changes to some of the **ceremonial and entertaining** aspects of General Assembly week. The Principal Clerk is in conversation with Holyrood Palace about the former and, indeed, some changes necessary due to Covid-19 have been carried over into our 'new normal'. Similarly, all Assembly Receptions are under constant review; for example, holding the Moderator's Reception and the Reception for Ecumenical and Overseas Delegates at Edinburgh: St Cuthbert's on the same evening has resulted in significant savings; the outcomes of this review are being carried forward.

5.11 The General Assembly is changing. Not as much as some might like. Too much for others. Above all, the General Assembly will reform, as together we respond to future possibilities, seek God's will and guidance, remain curious, ask the 'What if?' questions, take the best from past practice, and introduce new things that we believe God is calling us to do.

6. PROPERTY

6.1 Moderator's Residence

6.1.1 Between 1973 and 1999, accommodation for the Moderator was leased from the National Trust for Scotland, in Edinburgh at 7 Charlotte Square. In 1998, the General Assembly authorised the Board of Practice and Procedure either to renew the lease or to purchase or rent an alternative property. Following extensive consultation, the Board decided to buy the current flat at 2 Rothesay Terrace, using part of a substantial legacy bequeathed to the Church for general purposes.

6.1.2 The current property has a dual purpose: to provide a high-quality venue for official entertaining on the ground floor, and temporary living accommodation on the upper floor for the Moderator and their family. However, consultation with former Moderators who have lived in the premises during the past few years confirmed that the flat is no longer suitable for the latter purpose, having neither a kitchen nor a study on the upper floor – a level which is also inaccessible for anyone with mobility issues. In addition, the flat is expensive to service and maintain; its repairs and maintenance budget amounting to £10,000 a year. There is also a shared liability for repairs to common areas, such as the chimneys, rainwater goods and roof. Besides which, the use of the flat for official entertaining has markedly decreased since its purchase in 1999, when it was reported that over a thousand people received official hospitality in the former residence in the course of a typical year.

6.1.3 Accordingly, a review group was convened to draw up a business case for the disposal of the flat at 2 Rothesay Terrace and the acquisition of a replacement.

6.1.4 The review considered the relative merits of buying a replacement, renting, or re-purposing a property already owned by the Church, and concluded that the third of these options would make most financial sense: it would allow the proceeds from the sale of 2 Rothesay Terrace to generate an annual income from the Investors Trust and avoid incurring rental costs, estimated at about £3000 per month for a suitable replacement.

6.1.5 The review identified the property at 2 Grange Loan Gardens, one of the Church's furlough flats, as meeting the specification for a replacement drawn up in the light of the comments of recent, former Moderators. The World Mission Overseas Staff Trust, which administers the property, has agreed to its being used to accommodate future Moderators after the end of its current lease to another denomination in 2025.

6.1.6 The review also considered the fundamental question of whether it is any longer necessary or appropriate to provide an official residence for the Moderator, bearing in mind that since the recent pandemic people have become used to attending meetings and events using a digital platform. The feasibility of booking temporary accommodation

when the Moderator is required to attend meetings or events in person, such as during the weeks leading up to the General Assembly, was explored; but this, the review concluded, is a step too far – at least at present. Should, however, changes to the Moderator’s role and responsibilities mean that provision of an official residence is no longer required, then the matter could be revisited.

6.2 Assembly Hall

6.2.1 Net expenditure on the Hall decreased in 2022 largely due to the income generated by the return of Assembly Festival during the Summer. Unfortunately, this also resulted in a certain amount of damage to the seating in the Hall, but the cost of repairs was recovered from their deposit; discussions have taken place to improve matters. Nevertheless, the building is prone to damage from water ingress, so ensuring it remains in good order accounts for a large part of the annual property budget. Its long-term future continues to be under review, particularly in view of the need to replace various capital items in the next few years.

7. PRESBYTERY DEVELOPMENT

7.1 The work to significantly reduce the number of Presbyteries by 2024, as proposed in 2019 in the Report of the Special Commission on Structural Reform, is substantially complete: progress is charted in the table below. The Presbytery of Glasgow has expanded to include Cumbernauld but is otherwise unaltered.

New Presbyteries Already Approved	Date of Commencement
Clyde	1 September 2020
Fife	1 January 2021
Edinburgh & West Lothian	1 January 2022
Forth Valley & Clydesdale (<i>with inclusion of Falkirk</i>)	1 June 2022
The South West	30 September 2022
Lothians & Borders	1 January 2023
The North East & the Northern Isles	1 January 2023
Perth	1 January 2023
Presbyteries Currently in Discussion	Proposed Date for Overture to General Assembly and Date of Commencement
Clèir Eilean Ì: Highlands & Hebrides Argyll, Caithness, Sutherland, Ross, Inverness, Abernethy, Lochaber, Lochcarron-Skye, Uist and Lewis	General Assembly 2023 1 January 2024 (TBC)
The Presbytery of England and the Presbytery of the International Charges are discussing what Presbytery Reform means for them in their unique positions.	

7.2 Communication with Presbyteries

7.2.1 Consultation with the Assembly and Presbytery Clerks’ Forum has affirmed the importance of good, regular communication with Presbyteries and the Commissioners they send to the General Assembly. A General Assembly Information Page has been included on the Church website, keeping Commissioners and other participants up to date with the information they require in order to participate fully in the Assembly (www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about-us/general-assembly/information-for-commissioners).

7.3 Presbytery Accountability to the General Assembly

7.3.1 The Principal Clerk has established a pattern of regular meetings with the full-time Clerks of the new Presbyteries as a group together, to share information and develop good working practices as the needs and demands of the new Presbyteries emerge. Consultation with this group, and others, around specific and appropriate processes to ensure the accountability of Presbyteries to the General Assembly, is to be undertaken.

7.4 Remits from General Assembly 2022

7.4.1 The General Assembly of 2022 remitted three pieces of work to the Assembly Business Committee, namely (i) the consideration of proposals to ensure the consistency of terms and conditions of pay and grading which would align the pay and grading of Presbytery staff with the pay and grading of staff employed by the Central Service Committee, (ii) taking steps to ensure that there is appropriate **support** and training in place for Presbytery Clerks and those who line manage Presbytery Clerks, and (iii) the development of a Code of Practice and a capability process for Presbytery Clerks.

7.4.2 The Presbytery Development Group has consulted with the Assembly and Presbytery Clerks’ Forum and found that there is wide divergence in the terms and conditions upon which the current full-time employed Presbytery Clerks have been employed by their Presbyteries. Such a situation is not in the interest of the Presbytery Clerks, their Presbyteries and the national Church, and there is general agreement that work be done to ensure the terms and conditions of employment are regularised to cohere across the Presbyteries, whilst retaining the Presbyteries as the employing agency for all Presbytery staff.

7.4.3 In addition to the consultation with the Assembly and Presbytery Clerks' Forum, the Presbytery Development Group, working with the Human Resources Department in the national offices, instructed a notional pay and grading exercise to be carried out in respect of the role of Presbytery Clerk. This exercise was based on a job evaluation with basic input; a more advanced pay and grading exercise with detailed input requires to be carried out for not only Presbytery Clerks, but all Presbytery staff.

7.4.4 Progressing this work will require consultation with the Presbyteries themselves, and therefore the Presbytery Development Group seeks more time within which to discharge the remits of the General Assembly of 2022.

8. ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

8.1. Feedback from the General Assembly of 2022

8.1.1 The Committee are grateful to the 350 Commissioners, corresponding members, youth representatives and delegates who took the time to respond to the 2022 post-General Assembly survey. The feedback received enabled the Committee to learn from the first hybrid Assembly, in order to ensure that the General Assembly of 2023 can function as seamlessly as possible.

8.1.2 The Committee were encouraged by the positive experience expressed by those who joined the business of the Assembly remotely, and in future will ensure that the Top Table are connected directly with those attending online. The Committee are also cognisant of the frustrations experienced by delays in proceedings caused by city wide or Zoom network issues, which are unfortunately outwith the control of the Technical Team.

8.1.3 A frequent suggestion in the feedback was to make training mandatory to ensure the capability of those attending the General Assembly remotely or in person. The Committee would strongly encourage attendance at a training session by all attendees, even if they have attended a General Assembly recently.

8.1.4 The Committee also recognise the need to test the voting system prior to its first use, and will ensure that an appropriate time is designated for this on the first day of the Assembly.

8.2 Publications timetable

8.2.1 It has been indicated to the Committee that Commissioners would benefit from receiving the papers and reports at an early stage, in order to facilitate their preparations. Accordingly, the Committee have considered the publications timetable. Reports will begin to be published on the Church of Scotland website from Monday 24 April. All reports will be available from Friday 5 May, which will provide attendees to the General Assembly with at least two weeks to review their contents.

8.3 Risk Assessment

8.3.1 A thorough Risk Assessment has been prepared which sets out in detail the risks associated with gathering in the Assembly Hall and the steps taken to reduce these risks to acceptable levels. Some of these apply every year – for example, around technical preparations; while others are specifically related to recent changes in legislation around security. The Committee will continuously monitor relevant guidance and advice, and will keep the Risk Assessment under regular review in consultation with the Church's Health and Safety Manager. A copy of the Risk Assessment for the Assembly of 2023 can be found on the General Assembly pages of the Church website.

8.4 Commissioner Expenses

8.4.1 Expense rates for those participating in the Assembly Hall at the General Assembly of 2023 will be a maximum of £75 per night for accommodation and a limit of £15 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.

8.5 Circulation Breaks

8.5.1 The Committee have arranged for tea and coffee to be available in the Rainy Hall and in the Quadrangle during circulation breaks. In order to serve as many people as possible during these short periods, attendees are requested to have a contactless payment device available as they collect their beverage. Tea and coffee will be available for £2 each. Bottled water will also be available at £1.50.

8.6 Stewards

8.6.1 Following changes to legislation around security at public events, the Committee have reviewed the expectations and role of Stewards at the General Assembly. A Role Description has been created and approved which provides clearer expectations of the duties of a Steward. A copy of this Role Description can be found appended to the Risk Assessment.

8.7 Communion

8.7.1 As directed by Standing Order 21, the Committee has arranged for the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to take place at 9:15am on Monday 22 May. Individual glasses with non-alcoholic wine and gluten-free bread will be dispersed to those gathered in the Assembly Hall. Those participating remotely are warmly encouraged to provide their own elements and to have them ready to participate when directed by the Moderator.

8.8 Improvements to the Assembly Hall infrastructure

8.8.1 Working with colleagues in the IT department, the internet line into the Assembly Hall has been upgraded from 100 Mbps to a maximum of 1 Gbps. A complete overhaul of the equipment in the Hall has also been coordinated, which means there is capacity to ensure all Commissioners can access Wi-Fi without difficulty.

9. REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE MODERATOR

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 The Committee has reviewed the role of the Moderator of the General Assembly. This involved interviewing the majority of former Moderators, undertaking a survey of people within and outwith the Church, and engaging in conversations with those who work closely with the Moderator.

9.1.2 The primary role of the Moderator is to moderate the annual meeting of the General Assembly, but the work undertaken following this meeting has gradually taken on greater significance. The pattern of representing the Church of Scotland during the moderatorial year is long established. Evidence for this can be found in the 1960 Book of Assembly Reports, when the practice of thanking the Moderator for their work during the year in office began. The Committee on General Administration duly thanked the Moderator for undertaking “innumerable engagements in England and Scotland”, visiting Presbyteries and making an overseas trip to Australia for the Queensland Centenary celebrations.

9.1.3 The role of the Moderator has long been viewed as highly significant in the life of the Church. The Moderator acts as a spokesperson in representing the views of the General Assembly to the wider world. They play an important role in state and civic occasions, and engage with politicians across the political spectrum. The Moderator encourages and uplifts the local church by visiting many congregations through their year (often via Presbytery visits) as well as visiting many community projects and supporting the work of CrossReach.

9.1.4 The Moderator’s role and function can often be misunderstood, especially by those outwith the Church. They are described as Moderator of the Church of Scotland or the Head of the Church of Scotland. An assumption is made that the Moderator’s position is the same as that of an Archbishop, and many people will write to the Moderator on the basis that they have executive authority.

9.1.5 The question of the length of service of the Moderator has been raised on many occasions. The argument is made that the impact which the Moderator has is reduced because of the annual changeover. It is suggested that the Church of Scotland does not impact the media and wider society in the same way as an Archbishop in the Catholic Church or the Primus of the Episcopal Church might do so. It is also argued that no sooner has the Moderator begun to settle into the role, it is time to move on. However, the counter argument to this view is to highlight the danger of a Moderator becoming too powerful, perhaps even assuming an executive position, which would go against the Presbyterian understanding of the role and its place within the courts of the Church.

9.1.6 The role of Moderator has had to adapt to the changing structure of the Church. Previously, the Moderator could rely on Conveners of Committees and Councils who were often playing a prominent role in the life of the Church. The streamlining of the central structure of the Church has altered this considerably.

9.1.7 A major change over recent years has been engagement with the media. Moderators will often be interviewed by mainstream journalists, and it is of the utmost importance that those who are nominated can contend with this. It is also the case that Moderators have made excellent use of social media to share the views of the Church; again, those nominated must be able to use this tool effectively.

9.2 Survey of Views on the Role of the Moderator

9.2.1 A survey of different groups on their views of the Moderator revealed that those outwith the Church of Scotland highly valued their interactions with the Moderator, but many felt that the one-year term was too short and that there was insufficient time to build up a relationship with the Moderator, particularly in regards to representatives of other denominations and interfaith.

9.2.2 A second group survey which sought the views of our Communications professionals highlighted that some saw the role as being one of speaking truth to power. One respondent said, “An identified person helps the Church to provide impactful spiritual and moral leadership on the national stage to people of faith and no faith; memorably, wonderfully, at significant unsettled times such as the death of a monarch, and the Clutha and George Square tragedies. An impersonal statement from the Church would not have the same impact”. It was pointed out that the time required for the transition from one Moderator to the next makes “the Moderator’s year seem even shorter”. A number felt that the one-year term was too short, but others pointed out that the highly exhausting and intense activity during the year meant it would be impossible to sustain for a longer period.

9.2.3 Those surveyed from within the Church of Scotland spoke about the important role that the Moderator plays in civic and national life, and that their role in significant events such as the death of Her Late Majesty was much valued. It was agreed that the Moderator is a great encourager and that there is much value in the undertaking of visiting congregations; a visit from the Moderator is seen as significant and uplifting.

9.3 Interviews with Former Moderators

9.3.1 The interviews with 23 former Moderators took place over two years and anonymised transcriptions provided a valuable insight into previous office bearers’ views on their role.

9.3.2 The majority of former Moderators suggested that extending the length of service would be unwise. There was a recognition of the fact that Moderators do not become as well-known as an Archbishop and that they may just be fully establishing themselves in the role when it becomes time to stand down. However, there was a strong sense that extending the term could give someone too much power; that the Moderator might acquire an executive function and that the intense nature of the role’s activities would have to be scaled back if continued over two or three years. One person said: “The role of the Moderator is that you are not a bishop. You are not there to form or shape people’s opinions or policy. You are there to reflect, and you are there to represent”.

9.3.3 Almost all former Moderators were sceptical of the present system of nomination. There was a strong sense that reviving Presbytery representation in the selection process was necessary.

9.3.4 Regarding the period of being Moderator Designate, some former Moderators spoke about the fact that they did not feel adequately prepared for the role, whilst others advised that the support they received was outstanding.

9.3.5 The former Moderators interviewed spoke favourably about many memorable experiences. One said, "I've never had a busier year in my life. I've never had more fun. It was nonstop. If I wasn't talking, I was writing, if I wasn't writing I was travelling. We would be entertaining; I think we entertained 1600 people. But if you asked me what the actual outcome of all of that was, what would go down as having made a lasting impact on the Church, I'm not sure how highly I would score". However, another commented on "the complete turmoil from day one to day 365; everything was happening all the time and there was no reflection time available".

9.3.6 There was a very strong sense from all the former Moderators interviewed of an exhilarating, fulfilling and unique experience. The engagement that they had with the Church and civic society, the many interesting people that they met, the fact that they felt they were making a difference – all led to a sense that it was a remarkable opportunity. All spoke positively about Presbytery visits, although there was a sense from a few that some Presbyteries struggled to fill the required ten days. However, negative aspects were also highlighted, such as not being given adequate preparation prior to certain meetings and events, inheriting a diary they had little control over and running on adrenaline towards the end. A number spoke about not being clear on the Moderator's budget.

9.3.7 The spouses of former Moderators all played a significant and invaluable role. Many found it exhausting, but also liberating. It was felt by some that a framework or template should be produced to highlight what the role could involve.

9.3.8 One former Moderator said that they could not have survived their year without the support of the Chaplains. The Chaplains play a significant role during the week of the Assembly and Moderators greatly appreciate their pastoral care. However, many Chaplains tend to have a much more limited role during the moderatorial year.

9.3.9 In relation to life after the moderatorial year, comments from former Moderators included: "No one has asked me ... no one ever asked me how I was; no one has contacted me since I finished. So that's why this conversation is actually enormously therapeutic because it's the first time I've talked about my year, since my year as Moderator". Also: "The only message we got was that we should move out early, back to the manse – so it was this sort of shambolic backdrop, going back to a house that had been sitting empty for a year. I'll be honest with you, I think I went into a kind of shock. I mean – it was horrible".

9.3.10 A further comment points to a sense that former Moderators have not been appropriately engaged by the Church. One said, "There wasn't a way in which we could debrief the Church – apart from what we said in front of the General Assembly. I got an overview of the Church; the good and the bad (some of it was extraordinarily good, some of it was shockingly bad) in the year – and nobody was interested. Nobody wanted to know or to hear from us. That was so upsetting".

9.3.11 Most Moderators said that the process of debriefing was either non-existent or very limited. They also spoke about the fact that despite the wealth of experience gained during their moderatorial year, there was a lack of interest from the wider Church in what they have to offer.

9.3.12 The overwhelming conclusion of the interview with former Moderators was simply what a superb experience it had been on so many levels. However, it is also clear that work needs to be undertaken in regards to preparation, ongoing support and debriefing.

9.4 Key Questions

9.4.1 The Committee considered a number of questions:

- Is the Moderator's role following each General Assembly still fit for purpose today?
- Is the pattern of activity throughout the year too heavy, and are expectations placed on the Moderator too high?
- Could the role become part-time?
- Should the Moderator serve for a longer period than one year?
- Is the Moderator sufficiently supported, both pastorally and practically?
- Is there a system in place which adequately prepares the Moderator Designate and properly debriefs the recently retired Moderator?
- Is the fairly recently introduced system for selecting Moderators working well?
- Should the role change in light of the new larger Presbyteries and the fact that the new structure means there are no longer Conveners of a wide range of Councils?
- Is there an adequate set-up in place for elder Moderators – especially for those who are working and would require to leave their job for a year?
- If the Moderator has a spouse, what are the expectations for their role, if any?

9.4.2 The Committee believes that the role of the Moderator during their year is still fit for purpose, but that some adjustments should be made. The pattern of activity is indeed too heavy and more time should be given to allow the Moderator preparation, prayer and rest. Visits to Presbyteries should be adjusted, and it should not be a requirement that they must last for ten days. The Committee are also of the view that overseas visits should take place when it can be demonstrated that such a visit will be of benefit to the Church.

9.4.3 The Committee do not believe that the role should become part-time, because the expectations of the Church, and indeed of some outwith it, are very high, and seeking to fulfil these expectations on a part-time basis would not be practical. We are also of the view that the length of service should remain at one year. Extending this to two or even three years could radically alter the role, and such a development would not be in tune with Presbyterian polity.

9.4.4 The Chaplains play a very useful role in supporting the Moderator pastorally, however their role remains undefined and would benefit from a Job Description. The practical support to the Moderator provided by the Principal Clerk and the Moderator's PA is excellent. The option of creating a small team or 'Council of Reference' to support the Moderator should be considered.

9.4.5 The Communications Department undertake an outstanding job in preparing the Moderator and supporting them during the year. However, there should be more engagement by Forums and other Committees of the Church in preparing the Moderator Designate. There has been a failure on the part of the Church in offering adequate support for departing Moderators and ensuring that they are properly debriefed. Many find the re-adjustment to their previous roles very challenging and some have experienced depression as a result. It is vital that a full debrief is arranged and that outgoing Moderators are properly pastorally supported when they stand down.

9.4.6 The Committee believe that the system of nominating Moderators would benefit from Presbytery representation, especially in light of the fact that the number of Presbyteries has been substantially reduced. A revision to the Regulations for the Nomination of the Moderator will take this into account. We also believe that there is an opportunity for the Moderator to work more closely with Presbytery Moderators, perhaps arranging to meet all of them once or twice a year.

9.4.7 There is a need to create a system which offers better support to elder Moderators. A Moderator who is an elder will not have the same experience as a minister in the conduct of worship and this should be recognised. There is no system in place to account for the potential loss of income for an elder Moderator and guidelines should be produced to respond to this.

9.4.8 If the Moderator has a spouse, they can play an important and very supportive role during the year. However, while a template could be drawn up to outline what the role might be, there should be no mandatory expectations. The Church appoints a Moderator, but not their spouse, and therefore the person concerned should be entirely free to decide how much time they can devote to supporting their wife or husband.

9.4.9 The Moderator played an important role in bringing different groupings together to debate Scottish Independence in 2014. The Committee believe that there is scope to continue this practice in other areas, and that a Moderator's Annual Conference could be created.

9.5 Summary of Recommendations

- The Moderator should continue to serve for one year only.
- The number of days devoted to visiting a Presbytery should be flexible.
- Opportunities which arise for an Overseas Visit should be fully considered to determine if a demonstrable and timely benefit is evident.
- A small 'Council of Reference' could be appointed to advise and support the Moderator through their year.
- There must be a proper debriefing of the recently retired Moderator, and adequate support should be put in place to ensure that the outgoing Moderator can contend with the transition of returning to their previous life.
- The Moderator should seek to build up stronger relations with Presbytery Moderators.
- Greater 'down-time' must be introduced, in order to allow the Moderator more time to rest, reflect and pray.
- A Job Description should be produced for the role of the Moderator's Chaplain.
- A template for the potential role of the Moderator's spouse should be created, whilst acknowledging that the amount of engagement to which a spouse can commit varies for each person.
- Consideration should be given to the Moderator hosting conferences which bring together key people in Scottish society to focus on significant and topical issues of the day.

9.5.1 The Committee will continue to keep the role of the Moderator under review, given the changing nature of society as well as developments within the Church.

9.5.2 The Church of Scotland is fortunate to have been served by Moderators who have all devoted themselves tirelessly to the work of representing the Church in its highest office. The Committee believe that the Church owes a debt of gratitude to them all.

9.6 Acknowledgements

9.6.1 The Committee especially thanks Mrs Susan Pym, former Vice Convener of the Assembly Business Committee, for the extensive work which she undertook in conducting interviews with former Moderators and then transcribing them; the Rev Fiona Tweedie for statistical analysis of the survey; as well as Rev Doug Gay, Very Rev Professor David Fergusson and the former Moderators for providing insights into the role.

10. REVISION OF REGULATIONS

10.1 Revised Regulations for the Office of the Moderator of the General Assembly and Nomination thereof are at Appendix D and E.

11. THE PROCURATOR

11.1 Laura Dunlop KC will step down from her position as Procurator after this Assembly, on 31 May 2023, after serving 18 years in the role. Laura has provided invaluable legal advice to the General Assembly, has superbly represented Church interests in the civil courts and has wisely advised the Legal Questions Committee and its various task groups on many complex legal matters.

11.2 As she continues in her role as President of the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland, we wish her every future success and record our grateful appreciation of her outstanding service to the Church.

11.3 The Committee is taking steps to identify a suitably qualified person to be Procurator and hopes to bring a nomination to the opening session of the Assembly.

In the name of the Committee

DONALD G B McCORKINDALE, *Convener*
MICHAEL J MAIR *Vice-Convener*
FIONA E SMITH, *Secretary*

Addendum**Rev Donald G B McCorkindale**

Donald McCorkindale was appointed as Convener of the Assembly Business Committee by the General Assembly of 2020, having held the role of Vice Convener since 2018, and having served on the Committee since 2014. Donald has consistently encouraged the Committee to be open to doing business in new ways. He steered the Assembly through the challenges which arose from Covid-19, and has been the Committee's most passionate advocate for hybrid and online attendance at the General Assembly. His enthusiasm for collaboration and remote working has regularly seen the Committee participating in cooperative arrangements, and he has pushed to see the General Assembly reformed. To this task he has brought a vast experience of ministry within the Church of Scotland, alongside being Clerk to the former Presbytery of Lochaber. The Committee hope that the end of his term as Convener brings more time to spend with his family, alongside time to minister to the large area of Scotland which is now his Parish. We are all grateful to Donald for everything he has done in service to the Church.

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

Appendix A**REPORT OF THE SCOTTISH BIBLE SOCIETY**

'Jesus taught them by telling many stories in the form of parables, such as this one: "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. As he scattered it...'

'The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others.'

(Mark 4:2, 3, 14)

A full-sized, red, replica telephone box featured in our exhibition stand at a Christian Convention last Summer. We were inviting people to leave a message on the phone, sharing their story of how Jesus has impacted their life. Those who left a message went away with a copy of 'Light and Life', our magazine version of John's Gospel, with the encouragement to share it with someone who has not yet encountered Jesus.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is a story worth sharing. It is found in the Bible. This makes the Bible a book worth sharing. 'Share the Bible' is the phrase we have chosen, to clarify what we do and why we do it. Sharing the Bible is what we have always done, in partnership with individuals and congregations for over 200 years. Along with a new visual identity and website, 'Share the Bible' is now our explicit call to action for ourselves and for those who partner with us. Our prayer is that many will join us in this great venture here in Scotland, and as we support others in sharing the Bible around the world.

We have been humbled and inspired by the resilience of our colleagues in the Bible Society in Ukraine as they have lived through more than a year of war. They are working hard to keep up with the demand for Bibles. They continue to work with churches and Army Chaplains to bring practical aid alongside spiritual support to those in need. Supplies, even of Bibles, run out too soon.

Across the United Bible Society Fellowship, we continue to coordinate supplies of Ukrainian Bibles to surrounding countries, to meet the needs of refugees. The generosity of individuals and congregations across Scotland has enabled us to play a full part in this effort.

We also pray for the Bible Society in Russia, as their situation is complex.

The Bible Societies in Turkey and Syria are responding to the huge needs of those affected by the major earthquakes earlier this year. Often, these devastating events mean the local Bible Societies have to find new ways to support people who need so much, both practically and spiritually. Partnerships with local churches are crucial in these situations in order to bring direct help where it is needed most.

In each of these situations, *Bible-based Trauma Healing* is a longer-term need. Before the war in Ukraine began, there were 400 church volunteers trained as facilitators of this programme. Some of them have left the country and are able to support others who are displaced. In Turkey, training of volunteers from local churches will begin soon, to help those affected by the earthquakes.

Bible-based Trauma Healing continues to be of great assistance to many across Scotland. Since we started this programme in 2018, 200 church volunteer facilitators have been trained and 70 Healing Groups have been held with around 600 participants. What is offered is not counselling, but rather an opportunity to gather with others who are experiencing pain and hurt for different reasons, to support one another in the healing process with an approach that is holistic and Bible-based.

Translating the Bible into people's heart language is vital in helping people connect with God. We continue to support Bible translation work across the world, where 1.5 billion people are still waiting for a full Bible in their language. There are almost 4,000 languages that do not have any Scripture at all.

The Gaelic-speaking community have been rejoicing with us recently as the first audio New Testament in modern Gaelic was published. We are so grateful for the generosity of Faith Comes by Hearing (an American mission agency) and over 50 volunteers in Scotland who helped with the recording. Our prayer is that many will find this helpful in worship and to share with others; also that the Lumo Gospel films with the Gaelic script will be of use in schools.

Our most recent publication aims to help churches grow their small groups. '*Love, Death and Resurrection*' is the New Testament in regular book format (single column, no verse numbers). We are encouraging congregations to read through the New Testament in 40 days and get together in small groups (Book Groups) to discuss what has impacted them or bothered them each week. Then we suggest the small groups split and invite others to join them in a Bible Book Group, thus sharing the Bible with those who are not used to reading it.

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

CHANGES TO STANDING ORDERS

Redrafted SOs 15 and 17:

15. **Order of Business.** The Assembly shall appoint a Procedure Committee, the Convener and Vice-Convener thereof normally to be the Convener and Vice-Convener respectively of the Assembly Business Committee. The Assembly Business Committee shall prepare and circulate electronically before the commencement of the Assembly, 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.**

17. **Remit.** The Procedure Committee shall be wholly responsible **for any re-ordering of the business of the General Assembly.**

Redrafted SO 26:

26. **Acts of Assembly.** The Committee on Commission (SO5) shall arrange for the text of the Acts of Assembly to be finalised and shall **arrange for a list of the proposed Acts of Assembly to be circulated in advance in the Assembly Paper**, which shall be considered on the last day of the Assembly.

Redrafted SO 56:

56. **Proposals with Budgetary Implications.** Prior to making any proposal, 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, i.e. whether the proposal has budgetary implications. Advice on any proposal 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 appropriate budget controls:

(a) Any proposal 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 proposal 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 proposal in category (a) or (b) before any decision is taken.

Appendix C

AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS FOR THE HYBRID GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2023

The Standing Orders in their current form shall apply save for amendments as follows which shall, where there is any conflict with an existing Standing Order, apply in preference:

Generally: references to “laid on the table” shall include “circulated electronically in advance”.

New Standing Order 8 – Assembly Hub for online attendees: All Commissioners, Members *ex officio*, Corresponding Members, Delegates, Visitors (if any) and Youth Representatives 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 deliverance and vote on them;
- to submit notices of motion (to amend an existing section of deliverance, to propose a counter-motion to an existing section of 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).

New Standing Order 8A – In Person/Online Participation: Commissioners, Delegates, Corresponding Members and Youth Representatives 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.

Additional wording: Standing Orders 45 – Questions on Reports & 46 – Questions requiring Notice

[If attending in person]: If such a person has a device enabling them to do so, they may use the Assembly Hub 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 deliverance.

[If attending online]: Commissioners, Delegates, Youth Representatives and Corresponding 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 deliverance.

Additional wording: Standing Order 89 – 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 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]: Commissioners, Members and Youth Representatives should use the Assembly Hub to register a notice of motion in advance in respect of the relevant section(s) of deliverance.

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

Additional wording: Standing Order 105 – Taking the Vote

[For all attendees] Quick approval of business: The Moderator shall have discretion to gauge approval, without need formally to vote, of any section of deliverance by combining the following indications and forming a view: having taken into account any “requests to speak” which have been registered, they may ask in-person Commissioners to stamp their feet or stand and at the same time may ask online Commissioners to “raise a hand” on Zoom to indicate approval of a section of deliverance. If following use of this procedure any Commissioner requests a formal vote, then the Moderator shall call for an electronic vote to take place.

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 Zoom Polls 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. 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.

Additional wording: Standing Orders 106 – 110 – Dissents

[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 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.

Appendix D

[] REGULATIONS AMENDING THE NOMINATION OF THE MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGULATIONS (REGULATIONS I 2013)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Nomination of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regulations I 2013), shall be amended as follows:

1. *Delete section 2 and substitute:*

“The Moderator of the General Assembly shall be nominated by a Committee of 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 shall nominate one minister and one elder to populate the Committee^[1]; the Presbyteries of England and of International Charges shall nominate one minister or elder for the Committee in each alternate year, the first nomination being made in 2024 by the Presbytery of England. Nominations shall be sent to the Nomination Committee by 31 December. Upon receipt of all the nominations, the Nomination Committee shall select for appointment one or other of the nominees from each Scottish Presbytery, and shall appoint the nominee from the Presbytery of England or International Charges, with a view to creating overall a Committee which is diverse in office and gender and which is representative of the diversity of the whole Church.”

2. *Delete section 5 and substitute:*

“In the event of the death, resignation or supervening incapacity of persons on the Committee such that the number of persons on the Committee drops below nine, steps shall be taken to bring the number of persons back up to at least nine by seeking further recommendations of suitable appointees from the Nomination Committee.”

^[1] *Note: This drafting assumes that an Overture is to be received from the Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: (Highlands & Hebrides) at the General Assembly of 2023, but if that is not received, the first part of this sentence should instead, for the following year only, read:

(a) Each Scottish Presbytery other than those expected to form the Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: (Highlands & Hebrides) shall nominate one minister or deacon and one elder to populate the Committee and those Presbyteries expected to form the Presbytery of Clèir Eilean Ì: Highlands & Hebrides shall together nominate one minister or deacon and one elder to populate the Committee;

Appendix E

[] REGULATIONS AMENDING THE OFFICE OF THE MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY REGULATIONS (REGULATIONS II 2013)

Edinburgh, [] May 2023, Session []

The General Assembly hereby enact and ordain that the Office of the Moderator of the General Assembly Regulations (Regulations II 2013), shall be amended as follows:

1. *Throughout the Regulations, for “Council or Committee” or “Councils, Committees” substitute “Standing Committee” or “Standing Committees” as the case may be.*

2. *Add a new paragraph 1(2) instead of the existing paragraph 1(3) and re-number thereafter:*

(2) perform such duties as may be directed by the General Assembly, and represent the Church of Scotland on historic and national occasions, as they may arise; such duties shall include extensive engagement in preaching and in the leading of worship;

3. *In the existing paragraph 1(2) delete “shall normally undertake visitation overseas” and substitute “shall undertake overseas visitation only if circumstances require it”.*

4. *In paragraph 1(5):*

(a) *delete “on such occasions as the Moderator” and substitute “when he or she”;*

(b) *delete “he or she shall” on the third line; and*

(c) *delete the last sentence.*

5. *In paragraph 1(6):*

(a) *add “Presbyteries” after “Councils, Committees” in the first and sixth lines;*

- (b) *in the last line delete "15 November of the preceding year" and substitute "31 January of the moderatorial year".*
- 6. *In paragraph 1(7):*
 - (a) *delete the first sentence and the words "The Moderator may" at the start of the second sentence.*
 - (b) *after "Councils and Committees" add "Presbyteries".*
- 7. *In paragraph 1(8) after "Councils, Committees" add "Presbyteries".*
- 8. *Delete paragraph 1(9) and re-number thereafter.*
- 9. *Delete the existing paragraph 1(12) and substitute:*
"normally be expected to work in the Official Residence and in an area for the Moderator's use within the Office of the General Assembly."
- 10. *Add a new paragraph 1(13):*
"be offered a debriefing exercise at an appropriate time following his or her moderatorial year, organised by the Principal Clerk."