

I.
REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS & NOMINATIONS

(A) ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS

1. Introduction

Over the last year the Committee have continued to deal with the practical arrangements for the General Assembly, Committees of Assembly and the Commission of Assembly.

In accordance with Standing Order I.5 the Committee notified Presbyteries of their representation in the Assembly.

In accordance with Act II Class II 2002, the Committee nominated a Moderator-Designate.

2. Assembly Commissioners' Expenses

In accordance with Act I Class II 2001 the Committee notified Presbyteries that they had set the maximum rate for Assembly Commissioners' expenses which are paid from Central Funds through Presbyteries at £170 (£220 for Commissioners resident in the Outer Isles and £460 for Overseas Commissioners). This is unchanged from last year.

3. General Assembly

3.1. General

Once more the Committee are indebted to the Minister and Congregation of Liberton Kirk, Edinburgh for the kind use of their buildings for the Assembly. Since 2000 they have proved very accommodating to the Assembly. The Church Building itself, hall accommodation and pleasant surroundings, together with the availability of accommodation and transport links, have proved to make this an ideal venue in the nation's capital and the Committee would be pushed to find a more suitable location in Edinburgh. However, the Committee also believe that there would be merit in examining the question of whether other locations outside of Edinburgh, in particular Inverness, could be utilised for meetings of future General Assemblies and they intend to take up this matter in the coming year. Meanwhile, they expect that Edinburgh will continue as the venue for the General Assembly for 2017.

For the past number of years Mr Derrick Gillies has freely given of his time to assist as an Assembly Officer. Regrettably he is unable to do so this year. The Committee wish to record their gratitude to Mr Gillies for his many years of loyal service to past General Assemblies. This has involved no small commitment from him and his family. Mr Murdo Maciver has willingly offered to undertake this duty. The Committee are grateful to him and his assistants for the time they so freely give up to help the Assembly.

3.2. Moderator's Reception

The Moderator's Reception has been arranged for the customary time of 8pm on the Monday evening. It is hoped that this time of fellowship might be beneficial. Following debate over the last few years both at the Assembly and within the Committee, the Committee believe that the precise format of the reception is best left to the Moderator himself. Some are more comfortable with speeches than others. Some may wish to limit the occasion with only a Moderator's welcome at the beginning and his leading of worship at the end. Whatever is chosen, the Committee trust that the reception will be a useful time of informal fellowship in which the Lord will be glorified.

3.3. Timetable for General Assembly

During discussion of possible changes to the Assembly timetable at the 2014 General Assembly there was general agreement that every attempt should be made to enable the Assembly to be closed on the Thursday by 12noon or 2.30pm at the latest, thus enabling virtually all Commissioners to be able to return home that day. It was a matter of satisfaction that this proved possible last year, and the Committee and Assembly Clerks are working to this end to ensure that this is repeated again this year if practicable.

The Committee once again remind Commissioners of the change to Standing Orders anent Length of Speeches. Standing Order V.4.3. reads

That in the discussion of any question the proposer of each motion may address the House for not longer than 15 minutes, and the seconder for 5 minutes; and no subsequent speaker shall address the House for a longer period than 5 minutes; and that these limits shall be exceeded only when the Moderator shall have ascertained that the House desires any speaker to continue, and shall have intimated the ascertained desire to that effect;

It is hoped that this change, along with Commissioners exercising self-discipline in asking Questions and making Points of Information so as to avoid expressing their own personal opinions, will prove beneficial and help expedite business.

3.4. Catering

Last year changes to catering arrangements for the Assembly were forced on the Committee. Happily, the café now using the Halls at Liberton was able to provide a very acceptable lunch for Commissioners and a local restaurant was used for the evening meal. The arrangement worked well, and the exercise afforded to commissioners in making their way to the restaurant was appreciated by many of the Commissioners and the public. The Committee are pleased to report that, despite initial concerns, the cost of Assembly catering actually decreased by around 16%. It is intended to repeat the same arrangement this year.

4. Assembly Clerks' Department

The Committee remain indebted to the Assembly Office Manager, Mrs Janet MacKenzie, for the assistance she gives to the Assembly Clerks in the production of Committee Papers and Assembly Reports etc, as well as her most efficient assistance during the meetings of the General Assembly. With the increasing use of e-mail, more general circulars and memos are now being sent by this means. As well as reducing workload, there are also significant cost savings to the Church.

Last year Mr Murdo Murray (Stornoway), who is Clerk to the Finance & Sustentation Committee, agreed to help the Assembly Clerks' Department in the preparation of papers for Printing for Committees and the General Assembly. He has been most diligent in this work and has proved willing to help in whatever way he can. This has led to a considerable burden being lifted from the Assistant Clerk of Assembly and Mr Murray's willing assistance is greatly appreciated.

The Assembly Clerks continue to make available in electronic format the Principal Acts & Proceedings of the General Assembly. Although hard copies are no longer supplied automatically to individuals, Church Courts and Standing Committees of Assembly, they will be supplied if requested. Should anyone require a copy of the Acts & Proceedings they are asked to communicate the same to the Assistant Clerk before the beginning of the Assembly to ensure that adequate supplies are available.

5. Assistant Clerk of Assembly

At last year's Assembly the Assistant Clerk of Assembly sought to resign from his position, but regrettably all four nominees for the post of Assistant Clerk of Assembly withdrew their names, much to the disappointment and dismay of the Committee themselves, the Assistant Clerk, and the Assistant Clerk's own Congregation at Stornoway. In the light of this Rev. Graeme Craig agreed to continue in the interim as

Assistant Clerk of Assembly and thus withdrew his resignation. One factor which encouraged this was that Mr Murdo Murray (Gress) had been able to relieve Mr Craig of part of his duties and the Committee hoped that, as Mr Murray became more familiar with the work, he might be able to contribute substantially more in the future. The Committee have been monitoring the situation at each Committee meeting and are thankful to note that Mr Murray has made a significant contribution to easing the Assistant Clerk's workload by helping in the processing and proofing of Committee and Assembly papers as well as other administrative tasks. Should this reduction in workload continue to be the case then Mr Craig has indicated that he is willing to continue in the interim to serve as Assistant Clerk.

The Committee are considering means by which the technical aspects of clerking may be more easily communicated to others in order to facilitate the obtaining of prospective clerks.

6. Presbyterial oversight of the Congregation of Poolewe & Aultbea

Following the transfer of presbyterial oversight of the Congregation of Poolewe & Aultbea from the Free Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron to the Free Presbytery of Inverness the General Assembly, directed the Committee to consider the redrawing of Presbytery boundaries in the light of this change and to report thereon to the Commission of Assembly. The Committee have thus far made little progress in the matter.

7. Meetings of Committees and the Commission

The Committee are grateful to the Deacons' Court of Inverness, Free Greyfriars, for the use of their building at Westhill, for meetings of Committees and the Commission. They are also grateful to those who have provided hospitality on such occasions, especially Mr Glenn Fraser.

(B) NOMINATIONS

The Committee, having duly considered the returns from Presbyteries in regard to the filling of impending vacancies in Committees, agreed to recommend the lists of Committees and Clerks to the General Assembly as in the Proposed Deliverance. A note of other Special Committees for which Nominations have not been sought is added for convenience.

HENRY J.T. WOODS, *Convener*
ALEXANDER WATT, *Vice-convener*

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

(A)

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report (A) Assembly Arrangements of the Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee and thank the Committee, especially the Convener and the Assembly Clerks' Department;
2. The General Assembly welcome the practical arrangements made both for the Assembly itself and the Moderator's reception;
3. The General Assembly thank the Minister and Congregation of Liberton Kirk, Edinburgh for the kind use of their buildings for the Assembly;
4. The General Assembly thank Mr Murdo Maciver, Assembly Officer, and his assistants, for making their services available to the Assembly;
5. The General Assembly note the comments made regarding the Moderator's Reception;

6. The General Assembly note the comments regarding the timetabling of the General Assembly;
7. The General Assembly note that the Committee intend to consider the location of future Assemblies in the near future;
8. The General Assembly thank Mrs Janet MacKenzie for the work she undertakes for the Church throughout the year as Assembly Office Manager and for her assistance in preparing and printing documents for the Assembly;
9. The General Assembly thank Mr Murdo Murray, Stornoway, for his assistance in helping in the preparation of papers for printing for Committees and the General Assembly;
10. The General Assembly note that the workload of the Assistant Clerk has been substantially reduced due to the assistance of Mr Murdo Murray enabling Rev. Graeme Craig to continue as Assistant Clerk of Assembly in the interim; they direct the Committee to continue to monitor the workload of the Assembly Clerks and to provide assistance whenever possible, and to continue to consider means by which the technical aspects of clerking may be more easily communicated to others in order to facilitate the obtaining of prospective clerks;
11. The General Assembly thank all those who contribute to the efficient functioning of the various Committees of Assembly, especially the respective Committee Conveners and Clerks;
12. The General Assembly thank the Deacons' Court of Inverness, Free Greyfriars, for the use of their Westhill building for the meetings of Standing Committees of Assembly and the Commission of Assembly and Mr Glenn Fraser for helping in the provision of hospitality.

(B)

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report (B) Nominations of the Assembly Arrangements and Nominations Committee and thank the Committee, especially the Convener;
2. The General Assembly suspend Standing Order VI.4.1 to enable Mr Kenneth MacDonald to be re-appointed to Group 1 Committees for one year;
3. The General Assembly appoint Standing and other Committees and Clerks to these Committees in accordance with the following lists:

GROUP 1

FINANCE & SUSTENTATION
LEGAL ADVICE & PROPERTY

Ministers

Mr James I. Gracie, *Vice-convener*,
Legal Advice & Property Committee [2]
Mr Timothy McGlynn, *Vice-convener*,
Finance & Sustentation Committee [2]
Mr James MacInnes, *Convener*,
Finance & Sustentation Committee [2]
Mr Kenneth Macdonald, *Convener*,
Legal Advice & Property Committee [1]

Elders

Mr Lindsay Maccallum [4]
Mr Iain MacRae [3]
Dr James Millar [3]
Mr Callum MacLean (Stornoway) [1]
Mr John Gillies (Partick) *Convener*,
Legal Advice & Property Committee [1]

The General Treasurer is *ex officio* an Adviser to the Finance & Sustentation Committee
The Principal Clerk is *ex officio* an Adviser to the Legal Advice & Property Committee

GROUP 2

PUBLIC QUESTIONS, RELIGION & MORALS

PUBLICATIONS

TRAINING

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY & ADMISSIONS

Ministers

Mr Davide Ratti [4]
 Mr Andrew Allan, *Convener*, Training of the Ministry & Admissions Committee [3]
 Mr Raymond Kemp, *Convener*, Publications Committee and *Vice-convener*, Training of the Ministry Committee [2]
 Mr David M. Blunt, *Convener*, Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee [1]

Elders

Mr John N. Gillies, (Partick), *Vice-convener*, Publications Committee [4]
 Mr William Murray, (Dornoch) [3]
 Mr John MacDonald [2]
 Mr Donald MacDonald (Stornoway), *Vice-convener*, Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee [1]

The Editor of the *Free Church Witness* is *ex officio* an Adviser to the Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee
 The Magazine Editorial Team are *ex officio* Advisers to the Publications Committee

GROUP 3

WELFARE OF YOUTH & EDUCATION

HOME & FOREIGN MISSIONS

ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS & NOMINATIONS

ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

Ministers

Mr Alasdair J. Macleod [4]
 Mr Gavin Beers, *Convener*, Ecumenical Relations Committee and *Vice-convener*, Home & Foreign Missions Committee [4]
 Mr Henry J. T. Woods, *Convener*, Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee and *Convener*, Home & Foreign Missions Committee [3]
 Mr Richard Ross, *Vice-convener*, Welfare of Youth Committee [3]

Elders

Mr James Haram [4]
 Mr Samuel Cameron [4]
 Mr Donald Robertson, *Convener*, Welfare of Youth Committee and *Vice-Convener*, Ecumenical Relations Committee [1]
 Mr Alexander Watt, *Vice-convener*, Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee [1]

The Editor of *The Explorer* is *ex officio* an Adviser to the Welfare of Youth & Education Committee
 The Assistant Clerk of Assembly, the Moderator of the immediately preceding Assembly and the Moderator of the last-but-one Assembly are *ex officio* Advisers to the Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON PSALMODY

Ministers

Mr John MacLeod (Tarbat) [4]
 Mr Andrew Allan [1]
 Mr William B. Scott, *Convener* [1]

Elders

Mr Alexander Watt [2]
 Mr Callum MacLean (Stornoway), *Vice-convener* [1]

CLERKS TO COMMITTEES

Mr Murdo Murray, *Clerk*, Finance & Sustentation Committee
 Rev. John Macleod (Rtd), *Clerk*, Legal Advice & Property Committee
 Rev. John Macleod (Rtd) *Clerk*, Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee
 Rev. David M. Blunt, *Clerk*, Publications Committee
 Rev. James I. Gracie, *Clerk*, Training of the Ministry & Admissions Committee
 Mrs Isobel A. Macleod, *Clerk*, Welfare of Youth & Education Committee
 Mr Donald John Morrison, *Clerk*, Home & Foreign Missions Committee
 Rev. Andrew Allan, *Clerk*, Psalmody Committee
 Assistant Clerk, *Clerk*, Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee
 Mr Murdo Murray, *Clerk*, Strategic Review Committee
 Principal Clerk, *Clerk*, Ecumenical Relations Committee
 Mr John N. Gillies, *Clerk*, General Trustees

Other Committees have been appointed by the General Assembly as follows

PANEL OF CONSULTANTS ANENT ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL IMPROPRIETY INVOLVING ADULTS

Dr Murdoch Murchison	Mrs Marion Macleod (Glasgow)
Mr Allan Murray	Mrs Maurine Murray (Brora)
Dr Andrew Naylor	

GENERAL TRUSTEES

Mr John MacKenzie (Northern Presbytery), *Chairman*
 Mr Murdo Macdonald (Inverness Presbytery)
 Mr Donald Martin (Outer Hebrides Presbytery)
 Mr John Macdonald (Skye & Lochcarron Presbytery)
 Mr Maurice Grant (Southern Presbytery)

STRATEGIC REVIEW COMMITTEE

<i>Ministers</i>	<i>Elders</i>
Mr Timothy McGlynn, <i>Convener</i>	Mr Alexander Watt
Mr Greg MacDonald, <i>Vice-convener</i>	Mr Callum MacLean
Mr Raymond Kemp	Mr Donald Robertson
Mr Andrew Allan	Mr John Gillies
Mr Allan Murray	Mr Lindsay MacCallum

The Principal Clerk of Assembly and the General Treasurer
 are *ex officio* Advisers to the Strategic Review Committee