

**I.**  
**REPORT**  
**OF THE**  
**COMMITTEE ON ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS & NOMINATIONS**

**(A) ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS**

**1. Introduction**

It is no wonder that the God who ordered all the planets in their perfect orbit should seek order in His Church (Gen. 1:14-19, 1 Cor. 14:33 and Heb. 8:5). We ought therefore to be thankful as a Church that the fathers who have gone before us, in following the Lord's principle, have set up the administrative structure that we enjoy today. Within that structure, the principal role of the Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee is to enable the efficient running of the General Assembly and its statutory Standing and Special Committees. Whilst much of the work appears superficially to be routine, it does command a great deal of diligence, especially by the Assembly Clerk's Department and many other unsung heroes on the ground.

From time to time, tasks are assigned to the Committee by the General Assembly, which, although being properly within the bounds of the Committee's responsibility, are rarely required. As will be seen later in this Report, the General Assembly of 2022 remitted two of these duties to the Committee. The realigning of Presbytery Boundaries was fairly straightforward to deal with. However, the other duty, arranging an alternative venue for the 2023 General Assembly, was more challenging. Nevertheless, the Committee progressed its duty cheerfully and with a good deal of harmony.

In accordance with standing Order 1.5 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. General Assembly**

**2.1 Location**

In May 2022, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland agreed to approve the 'Solemnisation of Same Sex Marriage', thus allowing ministers to conduct same-sex 'marriages'. The same Assembly also took a further step in the pursuit of closer relations with the Church of Rome by adopting the 'Saint Margaret Declaration'. In light of these deplorable decisions our Assembly resolved to no longer use Liberton Kirk, Edinburgh, for future meetings. Since 2000 the suite of buildings at Liberton has proved a most appropriate meeting place, and we shall always be grateful to the Minister and Congregation at Liberton Kirk for placing their beautiful building at our disposal, and for their help and guidance in matters practical. The Committee are also thankful to Rev. James I. Gracie, Edinburgh, for his unstinting support over the years and to the Gracie family for their gracious hospitality, particularly to the Assembly Clerks.

The Assembly of 2022 empowered the Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee to investigate what options might be available as an alternative venue and to choose the most appropriate. A Subcommittee was appointed in June 2022 and they visited three possible venues: the Free Church (Continuing) building at Arthur Street, Edinburgh; the Faith Mission College, Edinburgh; and Partick Free Church (Continuing), Glasgow. Following deliberation the Committee unanimously resolved to hold the 2023 General Assembly in Glasgow and discussions commenced with the Partick Congregation. The Committee would like to place on record the ready assistance and co-operation of Partick and other congregations in the Southern Presbytery in preparing for the Assembly.

## **2.2 Location 2024**

The Committee also discussed future arrangements and are bringing a recommendation to the General Assembly. This matter is addressed in section (B) which will be taken separately from the main Report.

## **2.3 Assembly Officer**

The Committee are grateful to Mr Iain MacIver for agreeing to undertake the role of Assembly Officer and they are also very grateful to his various assistants for the time they so freely give to help the Assembly.

## **2.4 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 £180 (£230 for Commissioners resident in the Outer Isles and £460 for Commissioners from Overseas within Europe and £600 for Commissioners from Overseas outwith Europe). The Committee are due to review Assembly Commissioners' expenses in October 2023.

## **2.5 Assembly Timetable**

For obvious reasons, the timetabling of the Assembly follows a similar pattern each year. The Committee, in giving guidance to the Assembly Clerks' Department, reviews matters each year and suggest changes where appropriate. At the time of writing it is still unclear how many visitors and delegates may be able to attend the Assembly from outwith the Church. This will obviously affect the number of speakers, who may be less in number than on previous occasions. It is anticipated that the Assembly will have completed their business by lunchtime on Thursday, allowing most Commissioners sufficient time to return home that day.

## **2.6 Assembly Catering**

It is expected that catering during the Assembly will follow a broadly similar pattern to previous years. The Committee have liaised with a group of ladies in Glasgow who have kindly undertaken to provide lunch on Tuesday and Wednesday. A Moderator's reception will be held on the Monday evening and the same group of ladies will provide catering for that event. For the Tuesday and Wednesday of the Assembly week, a reservation has been made at a nearby hotel for a meal at 5pm.

## **2.7 Assembly Broadcasting**

It is hoped to be able to broadcast the Assembly proceedings, as in recent years, on Zoom, using the Partick broadcasting facilities. It is also proposed to have a notice displayed on-screen during periods of recess, or at such times as the Assembly might be meeting in private, explaining what is happening and when the broadcast is expected to resume.

## **3. Assembly Clerks' Department**

The Committee are once again indebted to Mr Murdo Murray (Stornoway), for all the work he undertakes on behalf of the Department. Quietly behind the scenes he organises the preparation and printing of papers for Committees and the General Assembly. His assistance is all the more valuable as it is discharged with cheerful efficiency, and the whole Church owes him an enormous debt of gratitude.

Mrs Isobel Ann Macleod, Snizort, will continue to serve as Assembly Office Manager.

## **4. Meetings of the Commission**

During the past year there was no urgent business to be brought before the Commission of Assembly, and therefore the Commission did not meet. Whilst the Commission of Assembly will continue to be available to meet under the terms of its appointment, if required, for urgent business, it is hoped that meetings will continue to be infrequent.

## **5. Archive Facilities**

The uncertainty arising from the relocation of the General Assembly, even temporarily, from Edinburgh,

has delayed any further progress in identifying suitable premises for storing official records and other materials. Whilst the Committee are no longer in a position to bring firm proposals, they will continue to monitor this matter in consultation with the Assembly Clerks' Department.

#### **6. Clerk to Publication Committee**

The Committee are happy to report that Mr Donald Macleod (Knock & Point) has agreed to serve as Clerk to the Publications Committee, and they wish him the Lord's help as he settles into this important role. We are indebted to Rev. David Blunt who served as interim Clerk for far longer than had been anticipated.

#### **7. Consolidation of Northern and Inverness Presbyteries**

The General Assembly of 2022 received a Petition from the Free Northern Presbytery anent Realignment of Presbytery Bounds and directed the Committee to consider, in consultation with the relevant Presbyteries, how Presbytery bounds might be realigned in the north of Scotland for the better functioning of Church Courts in these districts, and report to the 2023 General Assembly. Discussions were duly held and it became evident that both the Northern and Inverness Presbyteries felt that the time had arrived for their consolidation. The Committee have drafted appropriate legislation and this is contained in the Proposed Deliverance.

#### **8. Special Committees**

An Advisory Panel on Building Projects has for many years been reappointed by the General Assembly on an annual basis, but following discussion with interested parties it has become apparent that the remit of this Panel could best be served by the Finance & Sustentation Committee. Accordingly, the Committee, in consultation with the General Trustees, are recommending to the Assembly that the Advisory Panel on Building Projects be discontinued from this Assembly, with its functions being remitted to the Finance & Sustentation Committee. The late Mr John Mackenzie (Assynt) served as Convener of the Advisory Panel for many years, and we recall with gratitude his interest in these matters and the practical skills he placed at the disposal of the denomination.

The Committee also gave consideration to the Panel of Consultants Anent Allegations of Sexual Impropriety Involving Adults, which is also reappointed by the Assembly annually. The Legal Advice & Property Committee are currently engaged in a wide-ranging review of this whole area, and will, in due time, bring forward proposals regarding this Panel. In the interim, the Committee are recommending that the Panel be reappointed by the General Assembly.

#### **9. Review of Memoranda of Procedure**

It is one of the stated functions of this Committee to review the Memoranda of Procedure of all other Standing, and, where appropriate, Special Committees. For various reasons this has not been pursued over the years. The Committee resolved to commence such a review in 2023, with each Group of Committees submitting their Memoranda on a rotational basis, beginning this year with Group 1 Committees. Once a complete cycle of review has been completed, the Committee will consider whether the practice should be continued.

### **(B) ASSEMBLY LOCATION 2024**

The Committee resolved to recommend that the 2024 General Assembly meet at Partick Free Church (Continuing), Glasgow. They are not recommending that this become a permanent location, but are of the opinion that allowing two consecutive Assemblies to be held there would give a more complete picture of the 'pros and cons' of meeting in Glasgow, and also give an opportunity for any initial difficulties to be resolved.

### **(C) 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.

CALUM MACLEOD, *Convener*  
A. JAMES MACINNES, *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 express their gratitude to Mrs Isobel Ann Macleod, Assembly Office Manager, for her assistance during the General Assembly and in the preparing and printing of documents for the Assembly;
3. The General Assembly thank Mr Murdo Murray for his continued willingness to assist in helping in the preparation and printing of papers for Committees and the General Assembly;
4. The General Assembly thank Rev. James Gracie for his unstinting assistance in the organising of the Assembly over many years and the Edinburgh manse for their gracious hospitality to the Assembly over many years;
5. The General Assembly thank the Minister and Congregation of Partick, Glasgow, for affording them the kind use of their buildings for the Assembly;
6. The General Assembly thank Mr Iain MacIver, Assembly Officer, and his assistants, for making their services available to the Assembly;
7. The General Assembly welcome the practical arrangements made both for the Assembly itself and the Moderator's reception;
8. The General Assembly approve of the arrangements made for the public broadcasting of the Assembly;
9. 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;
10. The General Assembly note the proposals regarding the Advisory Panel Anent Buildings Projects and thank all those who have contributed, in different capacities, over the years;
11. The General Assembly note the information regarding the Panel of Consultants Anent Allegations of Sexual Impropriety Involving Adults and await with interest further mature proposals;
12. The General Assembly note with interest the proposals regarding a review of the Memoranda of Procedure of the various Committees;
13. The General Assembly note with interest the update on a possible location for storing official records and other materials and encourage the Committee towards a final resolution of this matter;
14. 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;

15. The General Assembly thank the Committee for their work in connection with Presbytery boundaries and enact as follows:

That the Free Presbytery of Inverness and the Free Northern Presbytery be consolidated to form a reconstituted Free Northern Presbytery with the seat in Inverness;

That the first meeting of the reconstituted Free Northern Presbytery shall be held on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 7.30 o'clock in Greyfriars Free Church, Westhill, Inverness, with Rev. Henry J. T. Woods as Moderator;

That the reconstituted Presbytery shall inherit and discharge all benefits and burdens which may have pertained to the former Courts now within their bounds, according to existing legislation.

**(B)**

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report (B) General Assembly Location 2024 of the Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee and thank the Committee, especially the Convener;
2. The General Assembly appoint the General Assembly of 2024 to meet within Partick Free Church (Continuing), Glasgow.

**(C)**

1. The General Assembly receive and adopt the Report (C) Nominations of the Assembly Arrangements & Nominations Committee and thank the Committee, especially the Convener;
2. 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, *Convener*,  
Finance & Sustentation Committee [4]  
Mr Raymond A. Kemp [3]  
Mr Greg MacDonald, *Convener*,  
Legal Advice & Property Committee [2]  
Mr Murdo MacIver, *Vice-convener*, Finance &  
Sustentation Committee, and *Vice-convener*, Legal  
Advice & Property Committee [1]

*Elders*

Mr Donald MacDonald (Stornoway) [2]  
Mr George MacMillan [2]  
Mr Colin Crichton [1]  
Mr Colin MacDonald (Duthil-Dores) [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  
A General Trustee member is *ex officio* an Adviser to the Finance & Sustentation Committee

GROUP 2  
PUBLIC QUESTIONS, RELIGION & MORALS  
PUBLICATIONS  
TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY & ADMISSIONS

*Ministers*

Mr David M. Blunt, *Convener*,  
Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee,  
and *Vice-convener*, Training of the Ministry &  
Admissions Committee [4]  
Mr Richard R. Ross [4]  
Mr Brent C. Evans [4]  
Mr Henry J.T. Woods, *Convener*,  
Publications Committee [2]  
Mr David S. Fraser, *Convener*,  
Training of the Ministry & Admissions Committee [1]

*Elders*

Mr John Campbell [4]  
Mr Duncan MacSween [4]  
Mr Alan Wilson [3]  
Mr Lindsay MacCallum, *Vice-convener*,  
Publications Committee, and *Vice-convener*,  
Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee [2]  
Mr John M. King [2]

The Editor of the *Free Church Witness* is *ex officio* an Adviser to the Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee  
The Magazine Editors are *ex officio* Advisers to the Publications Committee  
The Principal of the Seminary is *ex officio* an Adviser to the  
Training of the Ministry & Admissions Committee

GROUP 3  
WELFARE OF YOUTH & EDUCATION  
HOME & FOREIGN MISSIONS  
ASSEMBLY ARRANGEMENTS & NOMINATIONS  
ECUMENICAL RELATIONS

*Ministers*

Mr William Macleod, *Convener*,  
Ecumenical Relations Committee [3]  
Mr Kenneth M. Macdonald, *Vice-convener*,  
Home & Foreign Missions Committee [2]  
Mr Timothy J. McGlynn, *Convener*,  
Welfare of Youth & Education Committee, and  
*Vice-convener*, Ecumenical Relations Committee [2]  
Mr Gavin Beers [2]  
Mr A. James MacInnes, *Convener*,  
Home & Foreign Missions Committee, and  
*Vice-convener*, Assembly Arrangements &  
Nominations Committee [1]

*Elders*

Mr Randall Taylor [4]  
Mr Calum Macleod, *Convener*, Assembly  
Arrangements & Nominations Committee [3]  
Mr Gordon Furzer [2]  
Mr Iain A.C. MacPherson [2]  
Mr Norman Smith, *Vice-convener*,  
Welfare of Youth & Education 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 James I. Gracie, *Vice-convener* [4]  
 Mr Calum Smith, *Convener* [3]

*Elders*

Mr Donald Martin [3]  
 Mr Derek W. Maclean [2]  
 Mr Graham Sinclair [2]

## CLERKS TO COMMITTEES

Mr Murdo Murray, *Clerk*, Finance & Sustentation Committee  
 Mr Murdo Murray, *Clerk*, Legal Advice & Property Committee  
 Rev. Calum Smith, *Clerk*, Public Questions, Religion & Morals Committee  
 Mr Donald Macleod, *Clerk*, Publications Committee  
 Rev. Andrew R. Allan, *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 R. Allan, *Clerk*, Psalmody Committee  
 Assistant Clerk, *Clerk*, Assembly Arrangements & Nominations 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

Mr Colin MacDonald (Dores)  
 Dr Andrew Naylor

Mrs Marion Macleod (Glasgow)  
 Mrs Maurine Murray (Brora)

## GENERAL TRUSTEES

Dr Andrew Naylor (Outer Hebrides Presbytery), *Chairman*  
 Mr Lindsay MacCallum (Northern Presbytery), *Vice-chairman*  
 Mr Murdo MacDonald (Inverness Presbytery)  
 Mr Thomas MacInnes (Skye & Lochcarron Presbytery)  
 Mr John N. Gillies (Southern Presbytery)