

THE REPORTS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AS THEY APPEAR IN THE BLUE BOOK WITH KEY POINTS SHOWN

SATURDAY 19TH MAY:

Legal Questions Committee (5)

1. Report back on the consultation on membership of Church Courts highlighting the responsibilities and expectations of those who are members of Kirk Sessions, Presbyteries and the Assembly
2. Present two new acts (Ordination by Presbyteries Act and Parish Ministry Act) which will replace the Ministry Act
3. Having reviewed the Disciplinary Acts, bring forward a single replacement Discipline Overture for General Assembly to pass down to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act
4. Bring forward amendments to the Legal Aid Regulations which apply under the Disciplinary Acts
5. Report back on the study of the matters requiring to be addressed if new legislation were to be proposed to allow Ministers and Deacons to officiate at same-sex marriages
 - a. Including a formal "opinion" from the Church's Procurator
 - b. The Legal Questions Committee was clear that they had not been asked to draft such legislation and that there has been no work undertaken to do so
6. Bring forward a draft Act to permit "virtual attendance" at certain church meetings
7. Bring back an interim report on the process of Presbytery Review which is currently being trialled

Joint Report from Ministries Council and Legal Questions Committee (6)

1. Report back on issues that have arisen while implementing the Ministers and Deacons in Civil Partnerships and Same-Sex Marriages Act

Council of Assembly (Part 1) (7)

1. Report on
 - a. Stewardship and Finance (no reduction in requirements from congregations expected),
 - b. Work with Refugees,
 - c. Interfaith Work,
 - d. Gaelic in the Church,
 - e. Charitable Governance,
 - f. Operational Matters
 - g. Membership of Councils and Committees
2. Intend to promote a further National Day of Prayer in the autumn

Joint Report from Council of Assembly, Ministries Council, Mission and Discipleship Council, Panel on Review and Reform and Legal Questions Committee (8)

1. Report on resourcing the Implementation of Local Church Review across all Presbyteries – strengthening the support for the process of LCR which is recognised to impact on a range of Assembly Councils and Committees and will be essential to the progress of the Council of Assembly Strategic Plan. Recognise that there has been variable progress to date in different Presbyteries and seeking to improve the level of participation in, and benefit from the process.

MONDAY 21ST MAY:

World Mission Council (9)

1. An extensive report, concentrating on what it means to be a Christian in a multi-faith society across the world
2. Highlights the need to work with other faith groups without compromising the Christian beliefs we hold while reaching out and loving our neighbour in real and practical ways, whoever they are and affording them the human dignity they deserve
3. Practical involvement and help is highlighted as a visible demonstration of the reality of this approach

World Mission Council Special Report (10)

1. Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa

Council of Assembly (Part 2) – Strategic Plan (7)

1. Report back on the work to date on the Strategic Plan "Worshipping God, Inspiring Faith, Connecting People" (separate document) and asking Assembly to adopt it as the basis for the next ten years in the

Church. Instruct Presbyteries and Kirk Sessions to study the document and to consider how best to implement its goals and recommendations, especially through the LCR (Local Church Review) process.

2. Acknowledge the involvement of the wider church in discussions so far
3. Keystone “Love God and Love Your Neighbour” leading on to “Worship”, “Active Discipleship”, “Connecting with Communities”
4. 8 overarching goals – details of these to follow in the text of the Strategic Plan text itself which will be available just prior to Assembly

Council of Assembly (Part 3) – National Offices (7)

1. Background – very poorly utilised with far too much space for staffing and the wrong sort of space – the infrastructure is ageing and there is a generally poor state of repair
2. Three options
 - a. Basic maintenance
 - b. Sell 123 George Street and keep 117-121, while rationalising occupancy on to ground plus two floors
 - c. Investigate leaving George Street and leasing/buying elsewhere
3. Additionally, consider more use of Assembly Hall – NOT COST EFFECTIVE AND NOT BEING PURSUED
4. Note the listed status of the George Street offices
5. Costings
 - a. £3.2m
 - b. Business Plan being costed taking into account potentially rental income and allowing for the upgrading of overall facilities
 - c. Searches for suitable properties within a twenty-minute walk of a major transport hub are being undertaken in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stirling and Perth – information awaited
6. Key areas which need to be understood regarding Option 2
 - a. Culture Change and the Working Environment
 - b. Detailed Design
 - c. Confirming Funding
 - d. Tendering
 - e. Statutory Permissions
 - f. Logistics
7. Expect a recommendation to be brought to 2019 General Assembly

TUESDAY 22ND MAY:

Ministries Council (11)

1. The definition and composition of Ministry, a celebration of Women in Ministry, Legislation to support Ministers
2. A development Programme for 2018 to 2021 including Continuing Ministerial Development, Training, Hub-style Ministries
3. Ongoing work including Priority Areas, the Recruitment and Discernment Process, the Diaconate, Pioneer Ministries
4. Financial including stipend

Ecumenical Relations Committee (12)

1. Bring forward a new Ecumenical Policy for the Church of Scotland – Local, Universal and Shaped by the Mission of God – and ask Assembly to adopt this and ensure a strategy for implementation is prepared and progressed – Theological Basis presented as an appendix
2. Consider the interaction of the new policy with the ACTS Review which is currently ongoing
3. Feedback responses from ecumenical partners to the Assembly decision in 2017 on “An Approach to the Theology of Same-Sex Marriage” (via TF Report)
4. Report from WCRC, the visit to the Vatican, other churches interactions.

Panel on Review and Reform (13)

1. Overall coordination and supervision of how the Church is managing the achievement of its Vision Statement “To be a Church which seeks to inspire the people of Scotland with the Good News of Jesus Christ through enthusiastic worshipping, witnessing, nurturing and serving communities”
2. Key things identified:
 - a. A Missional Mindset, marked by an openness to change
 - b. Enabling Leadership in each congregation – not “the Minister does it all”

- c. Good support structures at the regional and national level
 - d. Action – not just words – concerted action and prayer on the part of all, wherever they are serving
3. Areas of work
- a. Local leadership roles (Commissioned Local Ministers, Focal Ministers)
 - b. OLM – payment and placement
 - c. Kirk Sessions
 - d. Leadership for the under 50s
 - e. Pioneer Ministry
 - f. Widening the range of people who can administer the Sacraments – a report will come to General Assembly in 2019
 - g. Path of Renewal
 - i. Local teams model including Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds and Teachers
4. Considering “Reforming the Kirk – Finances” with a potential model set out

Safeguarding Committee (14)

1. New Safeguarding Act brought to Assembly for approval

Iona Community Board (15)

Guild (16)

1. Highlight the new Guild Strategy, Themes and Projects for the period 2018-2021

WEDNESDAY 23RD MAY:

Church and Society Council (17)

1. A long report with 22 deliverances under the following headings:
 - a. Flourishing Local Communities
 - b. Building an Economy Driven by Equality
 - i. Ethical finance
 - c. Caring for Creation
 - i. Low carbon economy
 - ii. Church of Scotland Investment policy
 - d. Doing Politics Differently
 - i. Participatory Budgeting
 - e. Building Global Friendships
 - i. Nuclear Weapons
 - ii. Refugees
 - iii. Relationship with Europe and the EU
 - f. Ensuring the Health and Wellbeing of All
 - i. Alcohol
 - ii. Long-term future of the NHS
 - g. Investing in Young People
 - i. Young People Education and Action Group

Registration of Ministries Committee (18)

General Trustees (19)

THURSDAY 24TH MAY:

Committee on Chaplains to Her Majesty's Forces (20)

1. Highlight an unintended consequence of the “Registration of Ministries” Act which has left many feeling marginalised

Social Care Council (21)

1. The report, as in previous years, details the work being carried out by CrossReach, working in the three areas of Children and Family Services, Adult Care and Services to Older People against a background of increasing financial pressure from pension and living wage requirements.
2. Examples of the work carried out in each area are given, highlighting the real difference that the work of CrossReach makes.

Theological Forum (22)

1. The report from the Theological Forum this year concentrates on four main strands of work, stemming from the General Assembly of 2017
 - a. Some detail on the relationship between baptism and admission to the Lord's Supper, both for children and adults, concluding that the normal practice should be for baptism to precede admission to the Lord's Supper but that, on occasion, unbaptised children or adults may be permitted to take communion – noting that this should be accompanied by clear offering of instruction and the offering of baptism
 - b. A very short paragraph on the responses received from other churches to the Forum's report of 2017 "An Approach to the Theology of Same-sex Marriage" with no indication of the content of such responses but a very general undertaking to take the feedback forward into further thinking on the topic of...
 - c. The urging from the 2017 General Assembly to "investigate theologically the theme of reconciliation, with particular reference to the divisions within the Church of Scotland, Scottish Churches and Scottish society with respect to same-sex marriage". This work has started but a final report will not be presented at this stage – indeed no expected date for this is given.
 - d. Noting that early work is being undertaken with the Panel on Review and Reform on potentially changing the types of people within the church who can be involved in Sacramental Ministry

Overture on the Westminster Confession of Faith

1. Brought by The Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles
2. This overture, in a lengthy preamble, retraces the debates that there have been since the late 1960s and asks that Assembly instruct the Theological Forum to revisit this ground again while reviewing the need for the continuing role of a subordinate standard.
3. It cites the decision of the 1974 General Assembly that, before such changes should be considered, a new Statement of Faith acceptable to the General Assembly should be drawn up – in the deliverance of the overture, however, this requirement is notably absent; instead it is replaced by the option of drawing together a collection of different statements of faith, creeds and affirmations which could be used as a "resource" for the church

A Number of Further Reports including Pensions Trustees (23), Housing and Loan Fund (24), Church Hymnary Trustees (25), Church of Scotland Trust (26), Church of Scotland Investors Trust (27), Nomination Committee (28)

FRIDAY 25TH MAY:

Mission and Discipleship Council (29)

1. Focusing on Discipleship and aligning with themes from Strategic Review
2. Learning about our faith
3. Elders as Disciples
4. Pastoral Care as Discipleship
 - a. Includes mention of "Diverse Gender Identities" Booklet
5. Young People as Disciples
 - a. Developing a theological framework for Ministry with Children and Young People
6. The Year of Young People

National Youth Assembly (30)

1. This is a narrative report with no deliverances which details the topics covered at the National Youth Assembly which in 2017 were Young People and Discipleship, Interfaith and Priorities of the Church