

STANDING ORDERS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A. AS TO REPRESENTATION OF PRESBYTERIES

1. That all Commissions, transmitted to the Clerk of Assembly, shall be revised by him, in so far as regards their regularity in point of form, and that the Clerk shall prepare a Report on the subject and submit the same to the Committee appointed by the Assembly for the revising of Commissions.
2. That the Clerk of the Assembly shall furnish all Presbytery Clerks with printed copies of the form of Commission to Representatives hitherto in use, according to Act 8, Assembly 1853, and Act 9, Assembly 1863, as amended by Act 2, Class 2, 2021.
3. That there shall be attached to Commissions a statement, certified by the Presbytery Clerk, of the number of charges in each Presbytery at the date of the Commission, and of any changes that have taken place during the previous year.
4. That Clerks of Presbyteries shall send intimation to the Clerk of Assembly on the death of a colleague, or of the induction of a colleague immediately after that event has taken place.
5. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall consider in the month of January annually any changes in Presbyteries which may have occurred in the course of the previous year, for the purpose of ascertaining the effects as regards representation and shall immediately thereafter intimate to the Presbyteries concerned what will be their representation in the ensuing General Assembly.
6. That each Presbytery shall appoint Commissioners to the General Assembly comprising an equal number of Ministers and Elders according to the notification of representation issued by the Assembly Clerks' Office.
7. That the decision of the Assembly Clerks' Office, so intimated to Presbyteries, shall be subject to review by the General Assembly, if appealed against or dissented from.
8. That should any question arise between the month of January and the meeting of Assembly, not provided for by these Orders, the Assembly Clerks' Office shall consider these and how to dispose of such questions.
9. That it shall be competent for Commissioners appointed by the Presbytery of North America to take their place at the General Assembly using audio-visual technology platform according to the principles set out in Act 33, Class 2, 2010 and the arrangements set out in Act 5, Class 2, 2020.

B. AS TO THE TRANSMISSION TO THE CLERK OF ASSEMBLY OF PAPERS FOR THE ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. That all papers intended to be transmitted to the Assembly - namely, Memorials, Overtures, Petitions, Applications, References, Complaints and Appeals, with Extracts of Minutes of Inferior Courts, relative thereto, as also Reasons of Complaint or Appeal; and in cases of Libel with the Defences and Evidence adduced - shall be transmitted to the Clerk of Assembly not later than 15th April in each year, in order to be printed in sufficient numbers for the use of the members of Assembly; and that papers passed by the Inferior Courts at a later date shall be transmitted to the Clerk without delay.
2. That the Clerk of Assembly shall lay the aforesaid papers before the Assembly Business Committee and parties concerned shall be in attendance at the meeting. The Committee shall report to the First Session of the General Assembly on the receivability of the documents. In the event of the Committee resolving not to receive a particular document, the parties concerned shall have a right of appeal against the finding of the Committee to the General Assembly.
3. That Presbyteries shall transmit to the Clerk of Assembly their Returns to Overtures not later than one week before the meeting referred to in C.1 below; that said Presbyterial Returns shall consist of certified extracts from the Minutes of Presbytery; and that a separate leaf of paper shall be used for the Return on each Overture sent down by the General Assembly.
4. That all such papers shall be printed by the Clerk, except such papers as he may consider undesirable to print; that papers not printed shall be submitted in manuscript; and that if the Committee does not endorse the view of the Clerk, the papers shall forthwith be printed for the use of the Assembly.

5. That these regulations shall not apply to Applications for authority to sell congregational property, which Applications shall be forwarded from the relevant Deacons' Court (or Finance Committee), through the Presbytery of the bounds, to the Principal Clerk who shall lay each Application before the Board of Trustees in accordance with the procedure stipulated in Act 14, Class 2, 2015.

6. That in regard to returns from Presbyteries to any Overture transmitted to them under the Barrier Act the total number of Presbyteries in the Church shall constitute the appropriate base for calculating a majority and a non-return shall be taken as signifying disapproval of the matter contained in the Overture.

C. AS TO ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. That the Business Committee of Assembly shall comprise the Principal Clerk, the Assistant Clerks, and the Clerks of all the home Presbyteries, and shall meet at a convenient point around 15th April annually, to examine all papers in the hands of the Principal Clerk due to come before the Assembly. The Committee shall appoint its own Convener and the Principal Clerk shall act as Clerk to the Committee.

2. That the Committee at this meeting shall formulate a programme of business for the Assembly, after giving due consideration to the following:

2.1. the number of Reports from Committees and Boards and the length of time thought to be required for each, taking account of which Reports, or sections of Reports, should be the subject of less formal discussion.

2.2. the periods of informal discussion rather than formal debate that the Assembly may wish to take up.

2.3. all other items of business due to come before the Assembly and estimated time thought to be required for each.

2.4. the number of delegates expected at the Assembly.

2.5. any Appeals, Dissents and Complaints, Overtures, Petitions or References or any other cases coming to the Assembly from the inferior courts.

3. That the Committee shall in their Report designate as routine those Petitions they consider ought to be in this category, and to recommend this to the Assembly in its report, at which point amendments to the contrary may be given in without prior notice, the final decision on whether any Petition be so treated to lie with the General Assembly.

4. That if there be no objection to a Petition being classified as routine, the Motion relating to it in the Proposed Deliverance of the Report shall be moved and seconded. An objection to a proposal to treat a Petition as routine or an amendment to the Motion relating to it, will require that the Petition be taken up at a suitable point in the Assembly Programme.

5. That the Business Committee take up the examination of Presbytery records at the April statutory meeting and report on their findings in the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

6. That the Business Committee shall present its report to the Assembly at the first session and its report shall be bound with all the other reports to be distributed in advance of the Assembly.

F. AS TO THE ASSEMBLY CLERKS

1. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall present its report to the Assembly at the first session and its report shall be bound with all the other reports to be distributed in advance of the Assembly.

2. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall see that all papers presented to them in Cases from Inferior Courts, whether forming part of the Record, or produced in evidence before said Courts, have been duly dated and numbered by the Clerk of said Courts, and marked with his initial; and that the Assembly Clerks' Office shall not receive any paper which is not authenticated, unless upon special cause shown, to be reported by them to the General Assembly.

3. That the Assembly Clerks prepare a report on deceased Minister and Elders for the period commencing from the last Assembly with the report presented to the General Assembly at a suitable time.

E. AS TO DOCUMENTS IN CASES COMING UP TO THE ASSEMBLY

1. That all such documents shall be filed by the Clerk and distributed securely for consideration at the meeting of the Business Committee referred to in C.1 above.
2. That all such documents shall be in a form corresponding to the recognised practice and according to *pro forma* provided by the Assembly Clerks' Office.
3. That all such documents shall be bound together and provided with an alphabetical index; and that a copy thereof shall be securely distributed to each member of the Assembly or placed in their hands if so required.
4. That a copy of all the documents shall be kept by the Clerk of Assembly and stored among the Records of Assembly.

F. AS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. Use of Audio-visual Technology

1. That when exceptional circumstances prevail where the General Assembly is unable to meet physically in one location to constitute the Assembly in the normal way due to restrictions on public gatherings, the Assembly Clerks' Office in consultation with the Moderator and the Assembly Business Committee will appoint the General Assembly to meet using audio-visual technology platform according to the general provisions of Act 5, Class 2, 2020 and the principles set out in Act 33, Class 2, 2010.
2. That meetings constituted using audio-visual technology shall be hosted in the Assembly Hall, St Columba's Free Church, Edinburgh.
3. That in-person meetings of the General Assembly may include an audio-visual technology element for the benefit of Commissioners of the Presbytery of North America only, according to the principles set out in Act 33, Class 2, 2010 and the arrangements set out in Act 5, Class 2, 2020.

2. Devotional Exercises

1. That a bell shall be rung for one minute; and members shall take their places in the House before the Moderator takes the Chair.
2. That the Assembly Hall doors shall be closed each day during the opening exercises to prevent interruption by persons entering the House during that time.
3. That the Assembly shall spend the first hour or more of the first session of the second full day of their meeting in devotional exercises.
4. That any proposal for a pause in the Assembly's proceedings with a view to engage in special devotional exercise, shall be made to the Assembly only through the Moderator.

3. Printing the Acts

1. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall make arrangements for the printing the Acts of Assembly and that they shall arrange that the Acts be divided into two classes: Class 1 – those which have passed the Barrier Act; Class 2 – Acts which are of General Interest to the Church.

4. Reports of Committees

1. That the Reports of all Boards and Committees reporting to the General Assembly [excepting only a report from any meeting of the Assembly Business Committee with the purpose of reporting on changes to nominations to vacancies on Board and Committees] shall, together with Deliverances to be proposed, be transmitted for printing to the Clerk of Assembly not later than the first day of April. All Reports shall be bound together electronically and sent to Commissioners to the General Assembly not later than ten days before the meeting of the Assembly.
2. That Reports shall not be engrossed in the Record, but, after being printed, a copy of each, certified by the Clerk as being that given in to the Assembly, shall be kept *in retentis*, and the Reports shall be appended to the printed volume of the Acts and Proceedings of Assembly.

3. That verbal Reports shall not be received, and no Sub-committee shall give in any Report to the Assembly except by express leave of the Assembly.
4. That paragraphs of a proposed Deliverance on the Report of a Standing Committee shall be numbered, and the mover shall not be required to read it when it is already in the hands of members of Assembly.
5. That when any Committee is appointed during the Assembly's sittings it shall be competent to move amendments to the proposed Deliverance on its report without previous notice.
6. That it shall be competent for Commissioners to give notice in writing of questions to be put to the person presenting a Report to the General Assembly - this without prejudice to the right to add supplementary questions or the right of members generally to propose questions from the floor.

5. The Submission of Amendments and Addenda

1. That amendments and addenda to the proposed deliverances of reports taken during the first session may be moved without previous notice.
2. That amendments and addenda to the proposed deliverances of all other reports taken in subsequent session shall be given in and read by the Clerk as specified in the following table. Amendments or addenda given in after the specified deadline shall not be accepted.

Reports due to be taken up during:

Amendments and addenda to be given in before:

1st Session (Monday evening)

Beginning of the Session

2nd Session (Tuesday morning)

Adjournment Monday evening

3rd Session (Tuesday evening)

Adjournment of 2nd Session

4th Session (Wednesday morning)

Adjournment Tuesday afternoon

5th Session (Wednesday evening)

Adjournment Wednesday morning

6th Session (Thursday morning)

Adjournment Wednesday evening

6. The Reading of Speeches and Length of Speeches

1. That, previously to the discussion of any question which does not arise upon or contemplate the approval or disapproval of the Report of a Committee, the House shall determine, in such manner as may seem expedient, the order of priority belonging to the motions given notice of, and that, when a motion approving of a Report has been made and seconded, the House shall determine in the same manner the order of priority belonging to any other motions given notice of.
2. That in the discussion of any question the proposer of each motion may address the House for not longer than 25 minutes, and the seconder for 15 minutes; and no subsequent speaker shall address the House for a longer period than 10 minutes; and that these limits shall only be exceeded when the Moderator shall have ascertained that the House desires any speaker to continue and shall intimate the ascertained desire to that effect.
3. That, when meetings of the General Assembly are constituted using audio-visual technology due to restrictions on in-person meetings, 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 10 minutes; and no subsequent speaker shall address the House for a longer period than 5 minutes; and that these limits shall only be exceeded when the Moderator shall have ascertained that the House desires any speaker to continue and shall intimate the ascertained desire to that effect.
4. That when a Convener or Chairman, not being a member of Assembly, is permitted to present the Report of his Board or Committee, the Convener or Chairman and the mover of the Deliverance shall be required to come to an arrangement by which their combined speeches shall not exceed the time normally granted to the mover of a motion in terms of Standing Order E.6.2, or as that Order may be amended by this or any subsequent Assembly. It shall be competent for the person who presents a Board's Report or Committee's Report to answer questions relating to the Report and to reply to the discussion, even if he be not a member of Assembly.

5. That when the Report of a Board or Committee is moved and seconded, and the Board or Committee has requested that members additional to the mover and seconder are granted permission to present specific areas of the Report, the maximum time allowed for the whole exercise will 45 minutes.

6. That a member of the Assembly in moving or seconding an amendment shall confine himself to the matter of the amendment and shall have the right to speak at a later stage to other matters in the Report and other amendments, provided that the total time taken in speaking shall conform to Standing Order E.4.3.

7. That it shall not be competent for anyone other than a member of the Assembly to ask questions or take part in the discussion.

8. That the Assembly may grant permission to a person who is not a member of Assembly to present a Board's Report or Committee's Report, or an Overture, Petition or Reference. A person granted such permission may ask questions of the proposer of any amendment or addendum to his report, he may refer to any amendment or addendum, but he may not take part in the discussion.

9. That the Assembly may call on persons who are not members of the Assembly to answer questions on specific items of business for reasons of information and clarification. Persons called upon in such instances shall confine themselves strictly to answering the questions put.

7. Sessions of Informal Discussion

1. That Sessions for informal discussion may be held during the Assembly in addition to the formal discussion specified in E.4 above, on a recommendation in the Assembly Clerks' Report. The Assembly Clerks' Office shall make its recommendations at the First Session through its Report to the Assembly. All commissioners shall be expected to attend these discussion sessions. While no formal proposal or motion may be presented at these sessions the discussion ought nevertheless to give prolonged consideration to the items specified by the Assembly. The Sessions shall be chaired by the Moderator.

2. That Committees and Boards shall highlight with an asterisk, items in their annual Reports which they consider require substantive debate, in order to assist the Assembly Clerks' Office with its recommendations about informal discussion sessions and to aid commissioners in their preparations for the Assembly. This shall not preclude any commissioner asking questions about, or speaking to, other items in reports.

8. The Conducting of Causes

1. That legal representatives shall not be heard at the Bar in any Causes which may come before the House unless the General Assembly makes an exception.

2. That when a Presbytery acquiesces in the sentence of a Commission of Assembly, it shall not be entitled to appear as a separate party at the Bar of the Assembly, but the members of Presbytery may nevertheless be heard.

3. That in no case shall there be more than two speakers for each party at the Bar, including the reply to which the appellant or complainer shall be entitled; and when there are more than two parties, there shall only be one speaker, and one speech for each, besides the reply - it being understood that where there is more than one complainer, each shall be considered as a different party only in case of its appearing to the Assembly that the complaints rest upon distinctly separate grounds.

4. That, previously to hearing the parties in any Cause, the Clerk shall read the following announcement, - viz., "The members are reminded that justice requires the pleadings as at the Bar to be heard by all those who vote in the Cause, and that, in particular, no member ought to vote against either side of the Bar who has not heard the pleadings on that side".

4.1. That the Clerk of Assembly shall not issue the papers to the members of Assembly, with reference to cases which he thinks require to be conducted with closed doors until specially instructed by the Assembly to do so; but he shall report such cases to the Convener of the Business Committee, for its information immediately after its appointment.

4.2. That the Business Committee shall, in their first Report, specify any case which, in their judgment, requires to be conducted with closed doors; and any case which does not appear to them of that character, although the Clerk may have reported it as such.

4.3. That, in all cases thus reported on by the Business Committee the Assembly shall itself determine, by a special deliverance, at what stage of the proceedings the papers shall be issued to the members.

4.4. That in every case which the Assembly appoints to be conducted with closed doors, the instruction to issue the papers shall be accompanied by a special exhortation to the members to keep them private.

9. Motions and Votes

1. That every motion, whether original or amended, if not already in the hands of the Clerk, shall be given into the Clerk in writing, as soon as it shall have been made to the House.

2. That the person who makes the first motion shall be entitled to the privilege of giving a reply, in which new matter must not be introduced; and that thereafter the debate shall be held to be definitely closed, and no other person shall be entitled to speak excepting with regard to the manner of putting a vote.

3. That all motions after the first that are truly amendments on the first motion shall be disposed of in accordance with Standing Order No. E.9.6 below, and that when an amendment raises an issue different from that in other amendments, it shall be dealt with as a direct countermotion.

4. That where there are only two motions before the House, the question put to the vote shall be second or first motion.

5. That when there are three motions, the first question shall be, whether the second or third motion shall be put as amendment against the first; and the second question shall be, whether the first motion or the amendment so fixed shall be the decision of the House.

6. That when there are more than three motions, the first question shall be whether the last proposed shall be put as the amendment, and so till only three remain, when the procedure shall be as prescribed in the immediately preceding sub-section.

7. That in Causes, it shall not be competent to move an amendment to the motion, unless it be of such a nature as to decide the case, or to forward it in its progress.

8. That when any proposal has been submitted in the Report of a Committee any motion for approval of such proposal shall take precedence of any countermotion or amendment.

10. Mode of taking the Vote

1. That on a division being called for, all parties who are not members, but have the privilege of entering the House, shall withdraw.

2. That on a division being called for the Clerk shall announce that no member ought to vote against a motion or amendment who has not been in attendance during the discussion thereof; that thereafter no one shall be permitted to enter the House till the vote has been taken and the result declared; that two or four Tellers shall be appointed by the Moderator, drawn equally from supporters of each motion before the House; and that these Tellers shall take their place at the Clerk's table. But when the issue of a vote by show of hands is not immediately obvious the Tellers shall count the votes seat by seat taking up their positions at the ends of each seat in turn in order to do so.

3. That the vote shall, in the discretion of the House, be taken either by calling of the Roll or by a show of hands, or by card, or by an electronic polling function when audio visual equipment is being used.

4. That as soon as the vote shall have been taken, the Tellers shall report the state of vote to the Clerk of Assembly, who shall write it down, and announce it to the House.

5. That the Report of the Tellers, when announced to the House, shall be held as final and conclusive, and not subject to any revision by scrutiny or otherwise.

11. Dissents

1. That no dissents against any deliverance of the Assembly shall be given in until the matter in which it is pronounced is, for that session, disposed of, the Minutes are completed and adjusted, and the House is ready to proceed to other business.

2. That prepared reasons for dissent or complaint be not engrossed in the Minutes of the Assembly or its Commission but held *in retentis*. Where a brief statement is written at the time of lodging a dissent, it may at the discretion of the Court be engrossed in the Minute. That at meetings of the Commission of Assembly, members of the Commission shall have the right to request permission for leave to Complain by submitting to the Assembly Clerk reasons for a Complaint within ten days, such reasons to be held *in retentis*. Both the Commission and Assembly may refuse to receive Reasons if they are not couched in respectful language.

3. That where Reasons for Dissent are held *in retentis*, the General Assembly or their Commission shall appoint a Committee to answer Reasons, except where the Reasons are deemed frivolous or unspecific. When the Assembly appoints such a Committee, it shall report to the Commission of Assembly at its October meeting. If such a Committee is appointed by the Commission, it shall report to the next stated meeting of the Commission, or to the following General Assembly, whichever falls first. The Committee's Report shall contain both the Reasons and the Answers, and, if the Report is adopted, it shall be engrossed in the Minutes.

12. Drafts of Declaratory or Interim Acts and Overtures

That the Draft of any proposed Declaratory or Interim Act, as also the Draft of any Overture which it is proposed to transmit to Presbyteries for their opinion in terms of the Barrier Act, shall be laid on the Table of the Assembly, and printed and circulated among the members, at least one session of the Assembly before a motion be made for the passing of such Declaratory or Interim Act, or for the transmission of such Overture to the Presbyteries of the Church.

13. Letters addressed to the Moderator

That all letters addressed to the Moderator for the purpose of being communicated to the Assembly, shall, in the first instance, be laid by him before the Assembly Business Committee, who shall advise the Moderator as to the way of disposing of them.

14. Deputations from other Churches, etc.

1. That the list of corresponding Churches and Societies shall be as determined by the General Assembly from time to time on the recommendation of the Assembly Business Committee.

2. That deputies from corresponding Churches or Societies shall forward their commission or letters of introduction so as to reach the Clerk of Assembly not later than the first day of May in each year; and he shall submit the same to the Assembly Business Committee so that arrangements may be made for the deputies to address the General Assembly.

3. That deputies from Churches and Societies other than those aforesaid shall likewise forward Commissions or letters of introduction to reach the Clerk of Assembly not later than the first day of March, and he shall report the same to the Commission of Assembly meeting in that month, who shall be empowered to decide which of the deputies shall be received by, and invited to address, the Assembly. In the event of failure of the Commission to meet, the Assembly Business Committee shall meet at the earliest opportunity, and shall decide which deputies shall be received by, and invited to address the Assembly.

4. That in the case of strangers who may be desirous of being introduced to the Assembly and addressing the House, notice thereof shall be conveyed to the Moderator, who shall report the same to the Assembly Business Committee, that they may advise in the matter.

15. Examination of Presbytery Records

1. That Presbytery Records shall be submitted to the Assembly Clerks' Office in good time to be examined by the Business Committee at the April statutory meeting of the Committee.

2. That the Business Committee shall examine the Presbytery Records and report to the General Assembly on the results of the examination.

3. That the Assembly Clerk is authorised to attest as correct such records as have passed the examination with regard to form and content.

4. That the Assembly Clerk is authorised to issue a statement of attestation, with an instruction for such a statement to be engrossed in the records of the Presbytery, when the General Assembly has approved the Business Committee report on the examination of records.

5. That the Business Committee report on the examination of Presbytery Records be sent to Presbyteries and engrossed in their records.

16. Examination of Minutes of Boards and Committees

1. That the Minutes of Boards and Committees shall be called for at the first session of the Assembly, and that a Committee shall be appointed for examining of the same.

2. That the Committee shall fill up a schedule with the information required by the Assembly regarding each book, the said schedule to be returned when the report of the said committees shall be called for.

3. That a copy of the Report, as sustained by the Assembly, shall be transmitted to Boards and Committees, and engrossed in their Record.

4. That the Assembly Clerk is authorised to issue a statement of attestation from the minutes of the Assembly, or of its Commissions, with an instruction for such a statement to be engrossed in the records of Boards and Committees, when notice of the attestation is not possible physically.

17. Additional General Assembly Committees

1. That a committee be appointed to prepare a Loyal and Dutiful Address to Her the Queen

2. That a committee be appointed to act as the Receiving Party for the visit of the Lord High Commissioner.

18. Printing of Assembly's Proceedings, etc

1. That the Minutes of Commission, together with roll of matters to be taken up on the following days, and lists of members of Committees, be printed and placed in the hands of the Members of Assembly on the opening day.

2. That when a motion is duly seconded, and in possession of the Assembly it shall not be competent to make any alterations upon it without the permission of the House, excepting in the shape of an amendment, or second or third motion, as the case may be, regularly proposed to the Assembly.

19. Minutes

1. That the minutes recorded at any of the Sessions of the Assembly shall be passed by the Clerks to Commissioners at the end of each day in electronic form where possible.

2. That proposed corrections be submitted to the Clerks for notice to the General Assembly when the minutes are called for approval.

3. That the minutes be called for approval only at a morning Session of the Assembly, with the exception of the minutes of the last day of the Assembly's sittings, which minutes shall be read over and approved of before the rising of the Assembly.

4. That when the minutes are called for approval, they will not be read, but that submissions for corrections will be reported on by the Assembly Clerks.

20. Standing Orders

1. That the Standing Orders be held as read by vote in the First Session of the Assembly, and immediately before the appointment of Committees of the Assembly, and that they be printed in the first day's proceedings.

2. That the operation of Standing Orders may be suspended on a motion without notice, and by resolution of the Assembly, carried by a majority of at least two thirds of its Commissioners.

3. That a proposal to change Standing Orders must come by overture from the floor of the General Assembly or from the Assembly Business Committee.

4. That a proposal to suspend Standing Orders may not be made for the purpose of introducing new items of business to the General Assembly other than for emergency items or items of a time-critical nature.

21. Conduct of Commissioners

1. That courtesy demands that all Sessions of the Assembly be attended by Commissioners, and that private meetings should not be held during the Sessions of the Assembly.
2. That with the exception of comfort breaks the Moderator shall require the permission of the Assembly for absence from the chair during sittings of the Assembly. The Moderator shall not undertake visits on behalf of the Assembly without their prior authority.
3. That the use of all forms of social or electronic communications media during private sessions of the Assembly when confidential matters are being discussed or debated is prohibited.
4. That the use of all forms of social media for the purpose criticising or passing judgement on decisions of the General Assembly or on its Commissioners is prohibited for the sake of the honour and good name of the General Assembly.
5. That all Commissioners will observe a strict livestream code of conduct while addressing the General Assembly and that personal comments regarding, for example, dress and appearance, should be strictly avoided, to ensure our Christian values are presented to viewers in the livestream environment.

22. Recording of Assembly Proceedings

1. Recording of Assembly proceedings by video recorder etc., by television companies, or by sections of the media shall not be permitted unless prior permission has been received from the Assembly Media Officer acting in accordance with guidelines provided by the Assembly Business Committee.
2. Use of flash photography by private individuals during the proceedings of the General Assembly shall not ordinarily be permitted, though exception will be made in cases such as the installation of the Moderator, reception of delegates, and presentation of individuals to the Moderator.
3. Notwithstanding the above, the Assembly Business Committee shall have the power to make arrangements at any time for the recording in any way of any part of the Assembly proceedings by any means they consider appropriate.

23. Media Officer

The General Assembly shall have the Church's Media Officer act as their Media Officer. The Assembly Media Officer shall be responsible *inter alia* for liaison with representatives of the media and giving such guidance as may be necessary for them to carry out their duties.

G. AS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

1. Types of Committee

That the business of the Church between one Assembly and the next ensuing shall be carried on by Standing Committees and Boards together with the Assembly Business Committee. Membership of committees, boards and panels in all cases of *ex officio* appointments shall be confined to ministers holding a seat in a Presbytery of the Church or to *bona fide* acting elders of the Church. In all other cases of *ex officio* involvement in the work of Committees and Boards those appointed shall be regarded as consultants to the relevant Committee or Board.

2. Composition of Standing Boards and Committees

1. That Standing Boards and Committees shall consist of the following:

1. **Board of Trustees** to discharge the functions of the Board of Trustees as presently constituted; to continue to have members of the Board appointed as directors of the Free Church of Scotland General Trustees' Limited; and to assume oversight of an **Executive Office** comprising the following functions:

1.1. **Administrative Office** to monitor and prepare regular reports on financial performance; to oversee the annual budgeting process; to keep under review matters of legal compliance and risk management; and to provide general administrative support to the Church. The Board shall receive regular reports on financial performance, legal compliance and risk management from the Administrative Office and shall allocate time within its meetings for consideration of these.

1.2. **Assembly Clerks' Office** to make all arrangements for the General Assembly reporting to the General Assembly, either directly or through the Business Committee of the Assembly, in relation to

matters connected with the conduct of business at meetings of the General Assembly or meetings of the Commission of Assembly; to receive nominations from Presbyteries for vacancies on committees and boards when they occur, and, following consultation with the relevant committee or board, to make recommendations from these submissions, through the Board, to the General Assembly; to advise on matters of Church practice and procedure in light of the rules and procedures laid down in *The Practice* and in Church legislation and to initiate reviews of the practice or procedures of the Church where these might benefit from modification; to maintain formal relationships with other churches and ecclesiastical bodies; and, in the case of the Principal Clerk of Assembly, to act as Custodian of Titles.

Any proposals from the Assembly Clerks' Office to modify Church practice or procedures shall be reported to the General Assembly. The Assembly Clerks' Office shall be at liberty to enlist additional assistance as required, and at its discretion, to assist with the fulfilment of the various aspects of its remit.

1.2.1 *Membership of the Board:* Twelve members comprising at least four ministers and at least six office bearers of whom up to two might be deacons. Members shall be appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The General Assembly shall appoint one of the Board, who shall always be an elder, as Chairman, for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three Trustees. The Principal Clerk of Assembly *ex officio* is appointed as Adviser to the Board.

1.3 **Communications Group** to have overall responsibility for all internal and external communication; to progress the communications strategy developed by the now defunct Communications Oversight Group; to implement improvements in communications across the whole Church; to support the Media Officer in responding to media enquiries on behalf of the Church and to take over the remit of the current Media Group; to consult widely with Boards, Presbyteries and Congregations as required.

1.3.1 *Membership:* The membership and the Chairman of the Group will be appointed by the Board of Trustees.

1.4 **Media Oversight Group** to support the Church's Media Officer and Parliamentary Officer; to help respond to matters which represent a significant threat to the reputation or impact of the Church; to be consulted on, and help shape major responses to, government consultations and the Church's reaction to government legislation and policy. Given the nature of the work, the Group will conduct its business by telephone and email.

1.4.1 *Membership:* Chairman of Mission Board, Chairman of Board of Trustees, Assembly Clerk, CEO and Mission Director. The Public Engagement Coordinator will be included when the Media Officer is consulting the Group on matters relating to the public square or Government policy.

1.5 **Public Engagement Group** to establish ad-hoc committees, relating to particular areas of policy, as required which can prepare an initial draft response to consultations; to establish a sounding body who will be asked for comments on proposed publications by email; to liaise with the Board of Trustees (or its executive) ahead of any publication, via the Chairman and CEO, to protect the institutional reputation of the Church; to support Presbyteries or Kirk Sessions seeking to engage with Local Government, Health Boards, or other public bodies; to work with and support the work of a Free Church Parliamentary Liaison Officer.

1.5.1 *Membership:* the membership will be appointed by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Public Engagement Coordinator, and that Group will have a maximum of five members including the Public Engagement Coordinator *ex officio*, who will chair the Group and the Principal Clerk, *ex officio*, who will act as Clerk to the Group. The Parliamentary Liaison Officer, *ex officio*, is appointed as an advisor to the Group.

1.5.2 *Sounding Board:* membership will include a representative from each home Presbytery, a representative of the Mission Board, a Member of the ETS Senate, and other representatives decided by the Public Engagement Group.

1.6 **Project Management Group** to review the practice and procedures of the Church with a view to improving accessibility and clarity and diminishing unnecessary administrative burdens.

2. **Board of Ministry** to discharge the functions of the Board of Ministry as presently constituted; to assume oversight of matters relating to the working conditions of ministers and other personnel,

excluding those connected with the Free Church Offices and Edinburgh Theological Seminary; to work with Presbyteries in seeking to further equip ministers and others in areas such as mentoring, leadership and management skills; to consult with Presbyteries and the Missions Boards in assessing and specifying training needs for ministry candidates in the areas of knowledge, skills and character and to develop appropriate delivery mechanisms prior to, during, and following a formal academic training programme; and to assume responsibility for issues currently remitted to the Panel of Pastoral Advice.

2.1 With reference to the provision of pastoral care and advice, the Board of Ministry shall be at liberty to enlist such additional expertise from around the Church as might be required to deal with situations as they arise.

2.2 The Student Finance Scheme shall be overseen by the Board of Ministry in consultation with the Chief Administrative Officer.

2.3 *Membership:* Ten members in total including the Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary *ex officio*, one additional member of the ETS Senate appointed annually by them on an *ex officio* basis, and one additional member who shall be a minister in a Training Congregation nominated by the Board of Ministry. The remaining membership shall comprise three Ministers and four Elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Board. The Board shall be empowered to appoint Consultants and Advisors as required, particularly to liaise closely with the Mission Board and to assist with interviews and other functions of the Board.

3. **Mission Board** to discharge the functions of the Home Missions Board and the International Missions Board as previously constituted, and to assume responsibility for developing appropriate denominational partnerships at home and abroad, as well as partnerships with other organisations and agencies, in order to enhance the Church's ability to reach out with the Gospel.

3.1 *Membership:* Eight members in total comprising six ministers and two elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Board.

4. **ETS Board** to discharge the functions of the Edinburgh Theological Seminary (ETS) Board as presently constituted.

4.1 *Membership:* Nine members including the ETS Principal, one member of the ETS Senate, the Chairman of the Board of Ministry and the President of the Students' Representative Council, all *ex officio*. The remaining membership shall comprise two elders and three ministers appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. Elders appointed to the ETS Board shall have suitable qualifications or experience in education, preferably tertiary education, or in the administration or promotion of education. The Chairman shall be appointed from the membership of the Board by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The Chairman shall not be a member of the ETS Senate. The quorum shall be three members of the Board.

5. **Ecumenical Relations Committee** to promote, foster and develop relations with other denominations and like-minded believers in seeking the propagation of the gospel and the advancement of Christ's kingdom in Scotland and beyond. The Committee will take steps to promote and protect the position of the Free Church of Scotland with respect to her place in the wider Church. The Committee carried out its remit as defined by this Act and as the General Assembly may appoint.

5.1 *Membership:* Seven members in total comprising the Mission Director, the Mission Board Chairman, the Principal Clerk, Assistant Clerk Representative, the Moderator, the Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary, and one Elder, appointed for a four-year term, with the Convener appointed by the General Assembly and the Principal Clerk appointed as Clerk to the Committee.

6. **Psalmody & Praise Committee** to discharge the combined functions of the Psalmody Committee and the Special Committee on Praise.

6.1 *Membership:* Six members in total comprising at least two ministers and at least two elders appointed by the General Assembly for a four-year term renewable for one further term of four years. The Convener shall be appointed from the membership of the Committee by the General Assembly for a four-year term, renewable for one further term of four years. The quorum shall be three members of the Committee.

2. That the termination of the appointment of any member of the Boards and Committees specified above in 1.1-1.6, by death, resignation or discipline, shall be reported as soon as possible after the event to the Assembly Clerks' Office. Upon notification, the Assembly Clerks' Office, in consultation with the relevant Board or Committee, shall proceed to appoint a replacement who shall serve until the ensuing General Assembly at which the relevant Board or Committee shall report on the same.

3. That Presbyteries may nominate Elders and Ministers from other Presbyteries to fill vacancies on Boards and Committees when there is a shortage of eligible and available nominees within their own bounds. The General Assembly, noting the above declaration, amend Paragraph 2 of Act 48, Class 2, 2008 as follows: The Committee when seeking nominations from Presbyteries shall outline for their information the skills and expertise expected of nominees for each vacancy. Presbyteries shall normally nominate candidates from within their own bounds. When there is a local shortage of available and eligible Ministers and Elders, Presbyteries may nominate candidates from outwith their own bounds. If a Presbytery is unable to identify a suitable candidate, the Assembly Clerks' Office shall arrange to fill such a vacancy from elsewhere. Appointments made in these cases shall exist for the duration of the term of service specified, unless terminated by death, resignation, translation to another Presbytery or discipline. Presbyteries are directed to ensure that nominees are available, willing and able to serve *before* submitting their names.

4. That in accordance with Act 24, Class 2, 2003, paragraph 5, a Minister shall not normally be nominated to serve on any Assembly Board or Committee during the first three years of his ministry. This restriction shall also apply to Ministers newly admitted to the Free Church from other denominations.

5. That a person serving a full term on any Committee or Board specified in this Act shall not be eligible for nomination to any Committee or Board until at least one year has elapsed from the date at which the full term of appointment ended.

6. That uninterrupted absence from meetings by any member of a Committee or Board during the period from the General Assembly to 31st December in any calendar year, without good reason given by him and sustained by the relevant Committee or Board, shall be considered a resignation of his membership of that Committee or Board, who shall inform the Assembly Clerks' Office accordingly before 31st January of the ensuing year. Upon notification the Assembly Clerks' Office shall proceed to appoint a replacement who shall serve until the ensuing General Assembly at which the Clerks shall report on the same.

7. That the Assembly Clerks' Office shall consider in October annually impending vacancies to Committees and Boards due at the ensuing General Assembly. After this meeting, and not later than 31st October, the Assembly Clerk shall notify Presbyteries, indicating the vacancies which require nomination from within their bounds, as well as the skills required for these positions and inviting them to submit names of suitably qualified personnel by 31st December. Not later than 15th March the Assembly Clerks' Office shall formulate its Report to the ensuing General Assembly giving due consideration to these submissions and any other matters affecting Committee and Board appointments.

8. That with the exception of the Board of Trustees and the Psalmody & Praise Committee, each Board and Committee referred to in 1-6 above shall hold three statutory meetings per annum, with the liberty to arrange additional meetings as required.

9. That in the selection of names of Ministers and Elders to form any Special Committee, which is to report to a subsequent Assembly, the Assembly shall not be restricted to its own members.

10. That when the appointment of a Special Committee has been resolved on, the Committee shall not be nominated till the following day, except in cases the urgency of which does not admit of a day's delay.

11. That no Committee shall sit while the Moderator is in the Chair at any Session of the Assembly's meeting.