

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH ~ SYNOD OF SCOTLAND

STRUCTURES GROUP REPORT FOR SYNOD IN MARCH 2006 THROUGH PPS

Section 3

Synod committees

The following has already been suggested by the report of the Task Group to September Synod:

1. PPS shall meet four times a year, once residentially (this is being enacted). PPS will have two working groups.
 - i. a Nominations Working Group: this will comprise one person from each Link who is on PPS and will be convened by the person nominated to represent the Synod on the Assembly Nomination Committee
 - ii. A Synod Planning Group: this will comprise seven people, with at least one from each Link.

In addition Synod resolved that the Synod Clerk, Synod Moderator and Synod Treasurer be authorised to make urgent decisions on behalf of PPS between its meetings and report any such decisions to PPS following the demise of PPR Ref. (by December 2005 there had been one meeting merely to talk about how to enable this but there had been no 'urgent' issue to deal with.)

2. The Pastoral Committee will have a crucial role and will need to meet at least five times per year. This frequency may have to be increased in order to avoid pastorates and individuals waiting too long for decisions. Whether this is so or not will depend on the level of forward thinking that can be developed. The Pastoral Committee will need to discover a new way of working. This will involve relating directly to the Link Pastoral Groups in the regions, some of whose membership will be on the Synod Pastoral Committee. From time to time it may be helpful if representatives of the Synod Pastoral Committee (in addition to the Link Pastoral Group representatives on the Synod Pastoral Committee) meet with Link Pastoral Groups to work through particular issues.

Continuing the discussion

Education

1. The Structures Group's report makes suggestions about the Education Committee and the College, in doing so it recognises that it is not for one side of such a partnership to declare a new pattern of relating. It asks PPS to bring to Synod a resolution to enter into consultation with the College on the basis of this report.
2. The Structures Group is particularly mindful of the great benefit that the Synod has in its relationship with the Scottish College. It is also mindful of the significant load this places on particular people, in particular the Education Secretary. The suggestions within this paper are intended to affirm the work that is being done, to acknowledge that the synod is significantly indebted to the College

and to underline the trust and dependence that the Synod has on the College. In addition we would underline the suggestions below are a recognition of the many and energetic skills that Jack Dyce currently offers, in particular his educational expertise, which are essential to the Assembly challenge to become a learning church, where learning is integrated in the widest possible sense.

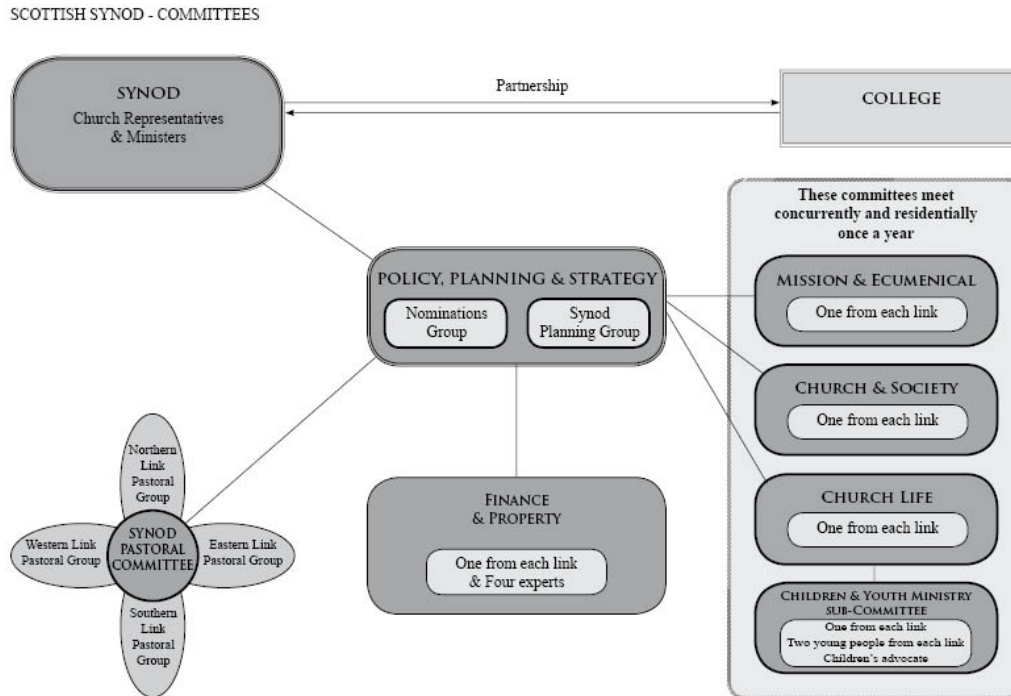
3. The Group emphasises the affirmation in paragraph 1 above because its recommendations with regard to the Education Committee are radical. The Group suggests that the Education Committee be disbanded, that the Synod graciously recognises the College as fulfilling all the requirements of the Synod in promoting Christian learning and nurture and as responsive to the needs of the Synod. The College works in an integrated fashion better to equip the 'people of God' for mission, service and worship. This includes preparation for the formal ministries of the church, continuing ministerial education, elders training, TLS and much more besides. It is the resource that promotes learning in all aspects of the church's life and seeks to enable what appear to be competing educational agendas to be complementary and to liberate the communities of the synod to celebrate the gospel in a holistic fashion. This will require a process of consultation between the Synod and the College to determine whether the College is willing and able to undertake the implications of this recommendation, to agree terms of reference and to examine any financial implications.
4. The need for Christian nurture learning and adult education is paramount in this stage of the church's story.
5. It is further suggested that there be a standing 'co-ordinating group' to work through any issues that may arise in the proposed relationship and that there be a joint review of the relationship in the fourth year of the new relationship.

Finance and Property: No great change is recommended with regard to the Finance and Property Committee. It will need to relate closely to a named person in each Link (it could well be helpful if that person were on the Link Pastoral Group). The membership of the Finance & Property should take account of the increased responsibility and work load that will be on its agenda for buildings issues.

Mission and Ecumenical and Church and Society Committees: presently work well with task groups or responsible people. The committees oversee a very wide range of work. The suggestion is that these two committees should meet at least once a year concurrently and residentially at the same venue and along with the Church Life Committee and Children and Youth Ministry sub-Committee proposed below.

Church Life Committee: The Task Group proposes establishing a Church Life Committee. The remit of this committee would be to promote expressions of church life in all their variety. It would promote exploration in worship, in the role of elders and other church leaders; it would promote team and collaborative ministry of the whole people of God. It would undertake blue-sky thinking on developing church life, attitudes and outlook for 21st century and it would explore issues of contemporary spirituality and theology. It would oversee SynNEWS (or any successor) and advise the editor of the synod website. It would promote a holistic understanding of church life.

Children and Youth Ministry sub-committee: The Group recommends the creation of a Children and Youth Ministry Committee. One of its meetings would be at the annual meetings of M&E, C&S and CL committees.



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**General comment on committees:**

**ALL COMMITTEES SHALL BE FREE TO CREATE TASK GROUPS (PREFERABLY ON A REGIONAL BASIS) TO UNDERTAKE DEFINED DETAILED WORK FOR UP TO TWO YEARS IF THIS CAN BE COVERED WITHIN THEIR EXISTING BUDGET. IF THIS CANNOT BE COVERED WITHIN THE EXISTING BUDGET THEN ANY SUCH ADDITIONAL WORK SHOULD BE AGREED WITH PPS.**

**COMMITTEE CONVENORS AND SECRETARIES SHALL SERVE FOR A MAXIMUM OF FOUR YEARS. ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS, APART FROM THOSE WHO ARE EX OFFICIO AND THOSE WHO ARE CO-OPTED (SEE BELOW), SHALL SERVE UP TO TWO TERMS OF THREE YEARS EACH AND NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO SERVE ON THE SAME COMMITTEE FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR AFTER ENDING THEIR TERM OF SERVICE. IN INTRODUCING THE NEW COMMITTEE SYSTEM THE NOMINATIONS GROUP WILL ADVISE ON THE LENGTH OF SERVICE OF THE INITIAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ANY SERVICE THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN UNDER THE PRESENT SYSTEM SO AS TO AVOID TOO GREAT A TURN AROUND AND LOSS OF EXPERTISE FROM THE COMMITTEE AT ANY ONE TIME.**

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS ON COMMITTEES SHALL NOT VOTE SHOULD THERE BE A NEED TO HOLD A VOTE ON A COMMITTEE.**

**1. Policy, Planning and Strategy Committee (PPS)**

Remit:

- To advise Synod on matters of policy, planning and strategy
- To oversee the use of Synod resources (human, financial and otherwise)
- To enable the work of Synod and to enable its various committees to liaise with one another
- To receive concerns of church meetings
- To prepare the agenda and all matters for meetings of Synod
- To ensure that matters decided by the meeting of Synod are followed through
- to receive an annual report from the Synod Team
- to advise the Synod Moderator, Synod Clerk and Synod Treasurer on matters of priority
- to act on behalf of the Synod between Synod meetings, if necessary, and to report such action to synod
- to receive advice from the Nominations Group (below) and advise Synod on appointments (or if time is of the essence to make such appointments)
- to receive advice from the Synod Planning group
- 2005-2010 to oversee and further the intentional church process
- To confirm or otherwise any urgent action taken by the Synod Moderator, Synod Clerk and Synod Treasurer
- To meet four times per year, including once residentially in order to have the space to reflect, plan and strategise in the formation of policy for Synod to consider
- To undertake any other issues which may from time to time arise and are not within the remit of any other committee, reporting this to Synod

Membership:

- Synod Clerk to service and Synod Moderator to convene
- Two representatives from each of the Southern, Western and Southern Links and one representative from the Northern Link
- One representative from each Synod Committee (Church and Society, Church Life, Finance and Property, Mission and Ecumenical, Pastoral and Youth and Children's Work plus one person under the age of 25)
- ex officio: College Principal (or alternate), Ecumenical Officer, Field Officer for Local Mission and Development, Synod Clerk, Synod Moderator, Synod Treasurer, Youth and Children's Work Development Officer
- One representative from the Women's Union
- Representatives on Mission Council

**PPS shall have two standing task groups:**

**Nominations Group:**

Remit:

- To receive names of people who might be suitable to serve on Synod Committees, Task Groups or Working Groups
- To advise PPS on appointments

- To maintain the ‘nominations matrix’ which should be published annually in the reports to Synod

Membership (appointed by PPS):

- To be convened by the person representing the Synod on the Nominations Committee of the General Assembly
- One person from each of the Links

**Synod Planning Group:**

Remit:

- To make the Synod meeting a constructive, enjoyable, inclusive and purposeful place
- To explore and advise through PPS on different ways of arranging for the meeting
- To explore ways of ensuring there is a genuine sense of community and belonging
- To advise on all aspects of the operation and planning for Synod
- To advise particularly on worship and the social aspects of Synod
- To receive and work through evaluation comments and advise on ways to respond to these

Membership (appointed by PPS):

- Synod Clerk (to service), Synod Moderator (to convene) and Synod Treasurer
- Three people with skills required for the work of the group
- One person from each of the Church Life, Church and Society, Mission and Ecumenical and Pastoral Committees
- PA to Synod Moderator and Synod Clerk

2. **Pastoral Committee**

Remit:

- To advise Synod through PPS on all pastoral matters
- To promote an inclusive community of sisters and brothers in Christ
- To work for the well being of the congregations and people in the Synod
- To appoint interim-moderators after consultation with the relevant Link Pastoral Group
- To oversee the deployment of ministers and CRCWs, and to develop a strategy for such deployment
- To scope pastorates
- To develop a strategy for the deployment of other personnel
- To arrange for interview of all candidates for ministerial or CRCW training and advise Synod on acceptance
- Having received the necessary reports from training institutions, to advise Synod on whether those completing ministerial or CRCW training are eligible to seek a call
- To be the place where pastoral matters can be referred
- To promote good practice in all areas of church life
- To meet at least five times per year and, in order to respond to issues with the minimum delay, to give authority to the convenor and secretary in consultation with the Moderator to make such necessary decisions within the policies

agreed between meetings (and as necessary working with the appropriate Link Pastoral Group)

- To undertake all other work that might be delegated to it by PPS.

**Membership:**

- two people from each of the Link Pastoral Groups of the Eastern, Southern and Western Links and one person from the Northern Link Pastoral Group
- a convenor and secretary

ex officio: College Principal, Ecumenical Officer, Field Officer for Local Mission and Development, Synod Lay Preaching Commissioners and Synod Moderator

**Link Pastoral Groups:**

There shall be a pastoral group for each Link. The Link Pastoral Groups shall be appointed by PPS on the advice of the Synod Nominations Group which will seek suggestions from church meetings in each Link of those who might be considered for service. The number of members of the Link Pastoral Groups shall be determined by PPS (on advice from The Nominations Group) taking note of the number of congregations within the region of the Link. The Field Officer and Synod Moderator will be ex officio on each Link Pastoral Group. Others may be invited to attend as and when deemed necessary by the pastoral group. Each pastoral group shall have a convenor appointed by the Synod Nominations Group.

**Link Pastoral Groups' Remit:**

- To be the immediate point of pastoral care for congregations, ministers in service, retired ministers, the widows and widowers of ministers, CRCWs and others within the region of the Link
- To advise Synod Pastoral Committee on matters over which it needs to decide, such as scoping
- Where there is particular difficulty, the Synod Pastoral Committee may appoint one or two people from outwith the region of the Link in which the issue has arisen to work with the pastoral group
- To report to the annual gatherings of the Links (at the residential meeting of Synod)
- To promote good practice in all areas of church life

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EACH COMMITTEE HEREINAFTER IDENTIFIED, WITH THE AGREEMENT OF PPS, MAY CO-OPT UP TO FOUR ADDITIONAL MEMBERS IN ORDER TO BRING PARTICULAR EXPERTISE TO THE COMMITTEE OR TO UNDERTAKE PARTICULAR AREAS OF WORK, SUCH CO-OPTED MEMBERS SHALL SERVE FOR NO MORE THAN FOUR YEARS AND SHALL NOT BE SUBJECT TO RE-APPOINTMENT FOR AT LEAST ONE YEAR FOLLOWING THE FOUR YEAR PERIOD.

4. **Finance and Property**

Remit:

- To be responsible to Synod through PPS for Synod funds

- To oversee negotiations with local churches concerning MMF
- To oversee the condition and state and review the functionality of all church property
- To be a resource to congregations preparing for major decisions concerning church buildings and other resources.

Membership:

- convenor and secretary
- One person from each Link (each of whom will constitute the team intimately involved in the MMF exercise)
- Four additional people to bring financial, architectural, property and funding expertise
- Ex officio: Field Officer, Synod Clerk, Synod Treasurer, Synod Moderator

THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES WILL MEET CONCURRENTLY AND RESIDENTIALLY ONCE A YEAR (probably Friday evening to Saturday afternoon). AT THIS MEETING THERE WILL BE OPPORTUNITY FOR SHARING OF INFORMATION AND PRIORITY AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO IDENTIFY CROSS-COMMITTEE CONCERNS. THE COMMITTEES ARE ENCOURAGED TO DO THE MAJORITY OF THEIR WORK THROUGH TASK GROUPS. THEY MAY FIND IT NECESSARY TO HOLD A SECOND MEETING WITHIN A TWELVE MONTH PERIOD BUT ARE NOT ENCOURAGED TO HAVE FURTHER MEETINGS. WORK CAN BE GUIDED BY THE CONVENOR AND SECRETARY BETWEEN MEETINGS AND INDIVIDUALS/ TASK GROUPS TO WHOM PARTICULAR RESPONSIBILITIES ARE GIVEN.

The College Principal (or his/her alternate, nominated by the College Board) shall be an ex officio member of all the committees below, particularly at the annual residential meeting in order to

- understand the education and training that might be required as a result of their work
- to advise the committees on educational principles (particularly for adult learners)
- To encourage the integration of the training and educational needs of each committee.

5. Mission and Ecumenical

Remit:

- To promote an awareness and understanding of mission and ecumenism throughout all areas of church life
- To promote a sense of belonging to and learning from the world church
- To promote with the ecumenical Officer a commitment to and development of the ecumenical pilgrimage in Scotland and relate this to the General Assembly Ecumenical Relations Committee
- To promote Commitment for Life
- To promote international partnerships
- To advocate CWM

Membership:

- convenor and secretary
- One person from each Link
- Ex officio: Commitment for Life Advocate, Ecumenical Officer, European Link Advocate, Field Officer, Synod Moderator, World Church Advocate

6. **Church and Society**

Remit:

- To advise Synod and local churches in all matters concerning the church's relations to society and in particular to the national institutions in Scotland
- To maintain a two way communication with the Assembly committee(s) covering this remit
- To maintain a two way communication with the relevant committee in the Synod of Wales
- To promote understanding and participation in constructive inter-faith relations

Membership:

- convenor and secretary
- One person from each Link
- Ex officio: Racial Justice Advocate, Synod Moderator

7. **Church Life Committee**

Remit:

- To encourage an exploration of worship, theology and sense of community within the life of local churches
- To encourage local churches to reflect on the nature of church life important for their context in the 21st century
- In conjunction with the College to promote Christian nurture
- To advocate experimentation in ways of being church
- To encourage collegiality between elders, lay preachers, ministers and other ministries
- To promote the discovery of what it means to be a learning church
- To oversee and encourage the Children and Youth Ministry sub-Committee

Membership:

- convenor and secretary
- One person from each Link
- Ex officio: Children's Advocate (role to be defined), College Principal, Field Officer, synod moderator, YCWDO

8. **Children and Youth Ministry sub-Committee**

Remit:

- To promote children's and youth work in local churches
- To develop and promote an understanding of children and youth ministry
- To encourage Links to network children and young people
- To ensure Synod-wide gatherings of children and young people

- To encourage children and young people to make their voices heard in the life of local churches and synod as an integral part of today's church
- To promote an understanding and celebration of cultures important to children and young people in the life of the church

Membership:

- convenor and secretary
- One person from each Link
- Two young people from each Link
- Ex officio: College Principal, Synod Moderator, YCWDO
- A 'children's advocate' (role to be identified)

OUTWITH THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE ABOVE THE SYNOD WILL CONTINUE TO REQUIRE A POOL OF PEOPLE TRAINED AND AVAILABLE FOR THE SECTION O PROCESS, WITH TWO PEOPLE PER LINK NOMINATED THROUGH THE NOMINATING PROCESS.

It should be acknowledged that the Synod Team (College Principal, Ecumenical Officer, Field Officer, Moderator and YCWDO) meet on approximately a six weekly basis to share news, to co-ordinate work and for fellowship – this is not a council or committee. In addition the Team, Synod Clerk and Treasurer along with the administrative staff have a sandwich lunch together on a roughly monthly basis to share issues pertaining to the office as a place of work. Again this is not a decision making group other than where simple practical issues are involved.

Appendix 1

Remits of the committees at present as formulated in 1999 by the Synod

Preparation Group prior to union in 2000:

PPR:

Remit: *Will be responsible for advising the synod on policy matters, preparing the agenda for synod meetings, and have a general oversight of the work of the synod. It will also have oversight of the Area Councils. The PPR Committee will have a Reference Committee to deal with the management of the synod office, emergencies and matters that may from time to time be referred to it by the PPR committee. The PPR Committee will have a nominating function and will have a communication role in relation to mission Council; it will be responsible, in consultation with committees, for the nomination of committee conveners. It will be a point of reference and coordination for all other committees, and will be authorised to act on behalf of the synod between synod meetings.*

Pastoral

Remit: *Will have as its primary function the support and encouragement of local church life. It will collaborate closely with the Moderator in seeking to provide adequate ministry for all areas and dealing on behalf of Synod with pastoral situations which need help. It will also be responsible for synod decisions relating to ministerial candidature; admissions to and resignations from, and deletions from the roll of ministers, and the appointment and review of non-stipendiary ministers. It will relate to the Assembly Ministries Committee*

Education:

Remit: *Will have as its primary function the support and encouragement of local church life through the promotion of lifelong learning. In partnership with the Pastoral Committee, it will assist in the recruitment, preparation, assessment and accreditation of candidates for service in the church. It will support the continuing professional development of those in church service, and will have responsibility for adult education and training, youth work and work with children. In partnership with the Mission Committee, it will seek to promote reflection and*

learning for local church development. It will relate to the relevant Assembly Committees for all ages of people. It will work through a continuing association with the Scottish Congregational College.

Finance and Property:

Remit: *Will be responsible to the PPR Committee and the synod for funds held by the synod, for negotiations with local churches and the appropriate Assembly committee regarding contributions to the Ministry and Mission Fund, and for giving advice concerning the synod's responsibility in regard to property matters.*

Mission and Ecumenical:

Remit: *Will have as its primary function the support and encouragement of local church life. It will promote an awareness and understanding of mission throughout the Areas and churches of the synod, and this will relate to the Assembly Life and Witness Committee. It will consider ecumenical, inter-faith and world church issues on behalf of the synod, having particular responsibility for ecumenical relationships in Scotland, and in this will relate to the Assembly ecumenical Committee.*

Church and Society:

Remit: *Will advise synod, Area Councils, and local churches on matters concerning the church's relation to society and in particular to the national institutions of Scotland. It will also maintain two way communications with the Assembly Committee on Church & Society and, as appropriate with the relevant committee of the Wales Synod.*