

SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY



REPORT

18 February 2026

WEDNESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2026

Assembly Buildings

Refreshments will be available prior to business

11am **Opening of the General Assembly**
Constitution of the Assembly and Worship

[11.45am] *Intermission*

[12pm] GENERAL COUNCIL
GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE:
Report and Resolution (pages 11–12 and 34)

1pm *LUNCH*

2pm GENERAL COUNCIL:
Report and Resolution (pages 13–33 and 34)
Task Group on the appointment process for the post or posts of Clerk
Designate and General Secretary.

5.30pm **CLOSE OF ASSEMBLY**

Times in brackets may be anticipated but not passed

GUIDE TO SPECIAL ASSEMBLY PROCEDURE

Using this Guide

In this guide you will find definitions and explanations of important elements of the Special General Assembly.

If you want to know how to do something at the Assembly such as asking a question:

- You will also find practical guidance in boxes with bullet points.

Each section finishes with guidance in italics about where to find further information.

Reports of General Council

Almost all of the time of the business of the Special General Assembly is taken up with the report of the General Council.

At the start of the business session, a member of the Assembly (usually the convener of the council) will speak about the written report and propose the resolutions – this is known as ‘presenting’ the report. Then another member of that council will speak and will second the resolutions. The business will be dealt with in sections, each with its own proposer, seconder, and resolutions.

Every report must be ‘received’ by the Assembly. This does not mean that the Assembly agrees with everything that the report says, nor that it accepts responsibility for what a report contains. Rather, it means that the council has presented its report to the Assembly in an acceptable way, and that the Assembly has received the report from the council. The report does not have the authority of the Assembly, only that of the council.

If a member of the Assembly believes that something important is not covered in any of the existing resolutions from a council or commission, they can submit an additional resolution.

If you want to submit an additional resolution:

- You should send the additional resolution to the Clerk of the Assembly in writing by noon on Friday 13 February 2026 – email to deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org
- You will need a proposer and seconder for the resolution. If you are a member of the Assembly, you are able to propose or second it yourself. If you are not a member of the Assembly, you may ‘present’ a resolution, but only Assembly members can propose and second.

You can find further information on the General Council in the Code Pars 345 and 401–402.

You can find further information on reports and resolutions in Pars III–V of the General Assembly’s Standing Orders and the Code Pars 459–472.

Ordering of Business

Each session of business is normally ordered in the following sequence:

- Speech by the proposer of a report and accompanying resolutions
- Speech by the seconder
- Questions
- Debate on each resolution
 - Speeches may be made about the resolution
 - Amendments may be proposed, although this is the exception
 - Speech by proposer of the amendment
 - Speech by seconder of the amendment
 - Questions about the amendment
 - Debate about the amendment
 - Closing speech by the proposer or seconder of the amendment
 - Vote to make the amendment the substantive resolution – which will still need to be debated and voted on
 - The proposer or seconder may close debate on the resolution with a speech
 - Vote on the resolution
 - Any dissent is recorded
- Debate on the final resolution 'That the report be received,' following the same sequence as above.

Questions

After the report has been presented and seconded, there is an opportunity for questions to be asked about anything in the reports and speeches.

Questions must be strictly asking for information about something in the report or speeches. A question should not be asked to score a point, or to make a speech.

If you wish to ask a question:

- You can ask without giving any advance warning, but you will get a better answer if you submit your question in advance.
- If submitting your question in advance, you should write it out and place it in the box provided at the front of the hall, or you can submit it by email to deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org.
- You should do this at least 15 minutes before the report in question. The more notice you give of a question, the more time there will be for the person responding to provide you with a full and accurate answer.
- Make sure that you are sitting in the main part of the hall, not the public gallery.
- Before asking your question, you should come up to the front in good time, and sit in the seats reserved for speakers, close to the microphone. By doing so, the Moderator will know that you want to speak and will invite you to do so when it is your turn - don't wait in your own seat.
- If the Moderator stands up again to speak while you are speaking, you must stop and listen to the Moderator.
- Normally, no one is able to ask more than two questions on any report, and the total time for questions is limited to 10 minutes.

You can find more information on Questions in the Code Par 476.

Debate

After questions have been asked and answered, the resolutions from the council are debated and voted on one at a time. The resolutions are numbered and printed in the Report Booklet.

In the debate, speeches are made either in support of, or in opposition to a resolution.

The final resolution of every report is 'that the report be received.' This is the opportunity for speeches to be made (but not ask questions about) on any matters in the report or for which the council should bear responsibility, but which are not included in any previous resolution.

If you wish to speak in a debate:

- Make sure that you are sitting in the main part of the hall, not the public gallery.
- Come up to the front in good time and sit in the seats reserved for speakers, close to the microphone. By doing so, the Moderator will know that you want to speak and will invite you to do so when it is your turn – don't wait in your own seat.
- If the Moderator stands up again to speak while you are speaking, you must stop and listen to the Moderator.
- To make sure everyone has a fair chance to speak, you can only speak once to each resolution, and there is a strict time limit on speaking.
- Those who present and second reports and resolutions are normally allowed up to seven minutes.
- Other speeches are usually limited to four minutes, although these timings may be reduced by the Moderator if there is a backlog of business.
- There are two lights to help you know when your time is running out. The red light turns solid and a buzzer sounds when your time is up. You must stop speaking at this point.

You can find further information on Debate in the Code Pars 473-479

Voting

When the Moderator thinks that a resolution has been sufficiently debated, they will move the Assembly to vote on it. Only voting members can vote.

There are three ways a vote can happen:

- Most votes are voice votes. The Moderator will ask everyone in favour of the resolution to say 'Aye', and then ask everyone opposed to it to say 'No'.
- If the voice vote is close, then the Moderator may call for a standing vote. First, everyone in favour will be asked to stand while holding up their voting cards. Then everyone opposed will be asked to stand while holding up their voting cards. A rough count will be taken by the Moderator. Only people on the ground floor of the hall can vote. Anyone in the public gallery will not be able to vote, so it is important that you are seated on the ground floor.
- If this vote seems close, then the Moderator may call for a card vote. When you arrive at the Assembly, you will have been given a voting card with tear-off strips for yes and no. During the vote, tellers will move throughout the ground floor with voting boxes. Put one voting strip into the box – either yes or no. The tellers will then count the votes and report the result to the Moderator.

Sometimes, the Moderator may decide to go straight to a card vote. A card vote must happen if 25 people ask for it.

Proxy voting for a member of the Assembly who cannot be present is not allowed.

You can find further information on Voting in the Code Pars 486-491.

Dissent

After a vote, you may disagree with a decision the Assembly has made.

If you feel very strongly that a bad decision has been made, then you can register your dissent in the minutes. However, if you are a minister or elder, even when you disagree, you still have a responsibility to loyally implement the decisions of the Assembly.

If you wish to register your dissent:

- Speak to the Deputy Clerk immediately after the vote has taken place.
- You can then sign a statement that the Deputy Clerk will print, which says that you dissent from the decision the Assembly has just taken.
- This is then recorded in the minutes.

You can find further information on Dissent in the Code Pars 492 and 325.

Amendments

As well as voting yes or no to resolutions, members of the Assembly can also amend resolutions.

An amendment is a change to the wording of a resolution. This may clarify what the resolution states or substantively change what is being proposed, but it cannot introduce another subject and it cannot be an outright negation of the original resolution.

When a valid amendment is proposed and seconded at the Assembly, then:

- Debate about the original resolution is paused
- The proposer and seconder may each give a speech about the amendment
- The Assembly may ask questions about the amendment in the same way as with a resolution
- The Assembly may debate the amendment
- Either the proposer or seconder may give a closing speech
- The Assembly votes on the amendment

If the vote on the amendment passes, then the amendment becomes the substantive resolution and debate continues about whether to pass that amended resolution.

If the vote does not pass, then the original resolution is not altered and debate about it resumes.

If you want to propose an amendment:

- It was agreed at the 2025 General Assembly: *“That at the 2025 General Assembly, and all subsequent General Assemblies, substantive proposed amendments, which have not been submitted to the Business Committee for licensing one week in advance of the Assembly meeting, will only be permitted, at the discretion of the Moderator, if they genuinely arise in the course of the debate, or if they relate to additional resolutions tabled in the Supplementary Business”* (GAM p.32).
- Recognising that this is not possible at the Special General Assembly, the General Assembly Business Committee has resolved that any amendment must be submitted in writing to the Clerk of the Assembly by noon on Friday 13 February 2026.
- If an amendment genuinely arises in the course of debate, it must be submitted either in writing to the Clerk’s desk or by email to deputyclerk@presbyterianireland.org
- You must have a proposer and seconder for the amendment.
- You cannot introduce another subject in your amendment or propose outright negation of a resolution.
- If you speak to the proposer and seconder of the original motion in advance, they may accept your amendment without the Assembly voting on it. If it is not accepted and you still wish to propose the amendment then, if you notify the Clerk, it will appear in the Supplementary Reports. If an amendment is accepted before the Assembly starts, then the updated resolution can be distributed in Supplementary Reports.

You can find further information about amendments in the Code Pars 477–485 and Par VI of the General Assembly’s Standing Orders.

Further information on the General Assembly can be found in the Code Pars 309–341.

The Code is available at www.presbyterianireland.org/thecode

GENERAL COUNCIL SECTION 1

Convener: VERY REV DR DJ BRUCE

Secretary: THE ACTING CLERK

REPORT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The General Assembly Business Committee met on Monday, 2 February 2026 at 10am.

A sub-group of the Committee had met on 7 January 2026 regarding some preparation for the June 2026 Assembly.

The Committee drew up arrangements for the meeting of the Special Assembly to be held on 18 February 2026, and presented them to the General Council at its meeting on Thursday, 5 February 2026.

The Committee noted that this second Special Assembly would consist of two parts as did the one in December 2025.

- Worship would begin at 11am and conclude around 11.45am.
- Business would commence at 12 noon.
- There would be a break for lunch at 1pm with business re-commencing at 2pm.

The following arrangements, similar to those which were in place for the December Special General Assembly, were presented and received by the General Council:

1. The Special Assembly would be held in public and would be livestreamed. A recording would be made available for later viewing as soon as possible. The Assembly would be open to the media.
2. There would be one item of business – a Report from the General Council.
3. Details regarding the registration of ministers and Assembly representative elders would be sent out as soon as possible from the Clerk's Office.
 - (a) With time restrictions there could be no registration cards issued before the date arranged for the Special Assembly.
 - (b) Ministers and elders should come to registration in the downstairs Conference Area of Assembly Buildings from 9:00am. Voting Cards would be given out at this time. Non-voting members of Assembly should also register.
4. The Report of the General Council would be sent out electronically as a PDF as soon as possible after the meeting of the General Council. Hard copies would be available at registration.
5. Proposed amendments should be with the Deputy Clerk no later than 5:00pm on Friday, 13 February 2025.
 - (a) The Business Committee will meet on Monday morning, 16 February to license business and any amendments.

6. Questions to the Report should, as far as possible, be submitted in advance.
7. Assembly members will be asked to fill the ground floor of the Assembly Hall first. If a vote is required during the business session, then votes will be counted on the ground floor and gallery only.
8. Lanyards are to be used to identify members.
9. Arrangements to facilitate the press are as at the Special Assembly in December, namely:
 - (a) The Board Room is set aside for the press.
 - (b) Restrictions on access to corridors and other rooms would be mentioned to the press.
 - (c) The Head of Communications again requests permission to have a briefing session with the press in Assembly Buildings before the Special Assembly. This would set boundaries and organise 'logistics'.
 - (d) The press will be asked to wear a badge indicating "press" while in Assembly Buildings.
 - (e) Permission is not given for the press to interview on the Church premises without the agreement of the PCI Communications Department.
10. Normal practical arrangements would be managed by the Convener of the Arrangements Panel.
 - (a) Tea/coffee will be provided at registration and at lunch time, but not during the afternoon session.

In addition, the General Assembly Business Committee brought a report to the General Council at its meeting on 5 February on matters remitted to it in Par 16 on page 20 of the Report to the December 2025 Special Assembly and made recommendations to the General Council. See further Pars 5–7 of Section 2 of the Report.

ROY MACKAY, Convener

GENERAL COUNCIL SECTION 2

TASK GROUP ON THE APPOINTMENT PROCESS FOR THE POST OR POSTS OF CLERK DESIGNATE AND GENERAL SECRETARY

1. Introduction

A General Assembly resolution as follows was passed on 18 December 2025.

“That a General Council Task Group be established to revise the Appointment Process, Job Description and Personnel Specification for the post or posts of Clerk Designate of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and that the General Council bring a report on these matters to a Special meeting of the General Assembly on Tuesday 17 February or other date as called by the Moderator of the General Assembly, and that the Task Group comprise:

- *The Moderator of the General Assembly*
- *The Acting Clerk of the General Assembly*
- *The Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly*
- *Very Rev Dr David Bruce (Convener of the General Council)*
- *Rev Albin Rankin (Member of General Council)*
- *Mr Hugo Wilson (Convener of the Support Services Committee)*
- *Mrs Avril Heenan (General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel)*
- *Rev David McCullagh (Clerk of Newry Presbytery)*
- *Rev Andrew Faulkner (Convener of the Council for Training in Ministry)*
- *Mrs Sarah Leung (Head of Human Resources)*
- *Mr Ken Swarbrick (Financial Secretary)”*

2. Process:

The Task Group met twice in person, on 15 and 22 January 2026, with further email consultation to finalise the Report.

Members of Assembly Buildings staff on the Task Group contributed to its initial work and, where appropriate, declared an interest when the specifics of matters which could affect their roles in the future were to be decided upon. At such times, they withdrew from the meetings, but were available for consultation.

The Head of Personnel, Mrs Sarah Leung, remained throughout.

3. Consideration of options regarding the post or posts

The Task Group considered the case both for retaining the post in its current form, and for separating the roles.

The Task Group noted that, since the job title “General Secretary” is not defined in the former or current Code of the Church, and being effectively obsolete, it has been set aside in the recommendations within this Report and in the attached supporting documents.

- (a) The case for retaining the duties of Clerk and General Secretary as the post currently exists was broadly summarised as follows:
 - i. Now is not the time for wholesale change in the model of senior leadership within the Church because:
 - ii. The process of Reconfiguration of Ministry, and its associated work of Structures and Resources Review, is not yet complete. The final report will not be before the General Assembly until such time as the work of the Structures and Resources Review Panel is completed. Any decisions of reconfigured roles at the ‘top’ should be left until this process is completed.
 - iii. The Charities Commission Section 22 External Review of Governance and Safeguarding is about to commence. It is likely to run for many months, possibly until mid-2027. It may well propose or require significant changes to the governance arrangements of the Church, particularly as they relate to the fulfilment of its charitable purpose.
 - iv. The outcomes of the current PSNI criminal investigation are unknown and cannot be predicted, but are likely to involve intense scrutiny of the roles and responsibilities of senior staff and officers of the Church. If the systemic failings which have led to this investigation are shown to have been exacerbated by poor management structures or practices, the time to address these shortcomings is after, not before they have been properly identified.
 - v. God has provided the Church with suitably gifted individuals for this role in the past, and will do so again. With some additional checks and balances, they can fulfil a useful and necessary function at a time of uncertainty.
 - vi. Stability is key in a time of transition.
- (b) The case for separating the duties of Clerk and General Secretary was broadly summarised as follows:
 - i. The skill set required for the role is very broad, including ability and/or proven experience in the following areas:
 1. Spiritual insight and leadership in support of the Courts of the Church
 2. Wisdom and discernment in support of decision-makers in Courts, Councils and Commissions of the Church
 3. Vision building for the wider Church more generally
 4. Speaking, preaching and teaching, both biblically and on broader matters of Church policy
 5. Pastoral sensitivity, especially towards ministers and their families, at times of transition or crisis

6. Management of outcomes from policy decisions, or disciplinary/judicial findings from Commissions, which may include dealing with conflict
7. Organisational and administrative abilities in relation to the operation of the General Secretary's Department
8. Organisational leadership among senior employed staff, including line management of several individuals
9. Team building among employed staff, including the ability to delegate tasks
10. Motivation and mobilisation of volunteer leaders
11. Systems management, requiring some specialist knowledge across a wide spectrum of disciplines
12. Operational experience, including balancing of available resources, risk assessment and the needs of future planning
13. Management of regulatory compliance in connection with the remits of multiple external oversight bodies
14. Financial planning
15. Governance and Trusteeship, both Holding and Charity
16. Ensuring compliance with the Law as it applies to Charities
17. Among the essential qualifications as described in the Personnel Specification is being an ordained minister of PCI.
 - i. The Task Group considers that meeting these criteria, and having relevant ability or proven experience in the above areas, is likely to make successful recruitment for the post challenging.
 - ii. The Task Group notes that locating executive responsibility across a number of senior staff positions acting collaboratively may enhance the quality of decision making and outputs.

(c) Conclusions

- i. The Task Group concludes that the current expectations of the role of Clerk and General Secretary may not be fulfilled if the role were to be retained within one Job Description.
- ii. The Group further notes the importance of checks and balances being in place for all senior positions, while recognising that accountability measures must nourish rather than hinder the implementation and development of the role for the postholder(s).

4. Recommendations

The General Council accepted the following recommendations:

- (a) That the roles of Clerk and General Secretary be separated.
- (b) That the Job Descriptions and Personnel Specifications of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk be re-drafted accordingly.
- (c) That that the post holders must be either a Ruling or a Teaching Elder. [NOTE: The 2014 personnel specification for the Deputy Clerk allows a ruling elder to be appointed (GAR 2014, p34), although this provision was removed in 2019 when only ministers were eligible (GAR 2019, p 92). The

2013 personnel specification for the Clerk of the General Assembly, which was agreed by the General Board and reported to the Assembly, states that they must be ‘An ordained Minister or Elder of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (or eligible to transfer from another denomination with a reformed theology - the essential nature of this post requires that the successful candidate meet this criterion as provided for under excepted occupations in the Fair Employment Treatment (NI) Order 1998’ (GAR 2013, p21).]. This provision was removed in 2025 for the appointment of a Clerk Designate when only ministers were eligible (GAR 2025, p70).]

- (d) That steps be taken to create a new post of Director of Operations incorporating a proportion of the current duties of the Financial Secretary, and that the Job Description and Personnel Specification for the Financial Secretary be redrafted to reflect this change.
- (e) That a model of explicit collaborative leadership at senior level (which is consistent with Presbyterian polity) represents an adjustment to practice for the Church centrally, and recommends that this be formalised through the formation of a three-person Senior Leadership Team, composed of the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and the Director of Operations, and:
 - i. That these three postholders work collaboratively as a Senior Leadership Team, and that the Team Leader will be the Clerk of the General Assembly. The designation ‘Team Leader’ is understood to mean:
 - 1. The calling and chairing of meetings of the Team, and the coordination of tasks among its members.
 - 2. Collaborative participation with the other Team members in the exercise of their duties.
 - ii. That the line management arrangements for the three members of the Senior Leadership Team be located with the Convener of the General Council, and:
 - 1. That with these additional duties in mind urgent consideration be given to the appointment of a Co-convener of the General Council, who would be a ruling elder, should the Convener be a minister.
 - 2. That in respect of workload and performance, the Convener or Co-convener of the General Council facilitate a structured process of regular face-to-face line management meetings with the Senior Leadership Team.
 - 3. That in areas of policy, the General Assembly, through its General Council, defines the direction that the Senior Leadership Team will follow.
- (f) The appointment process would require:
 - i. That HR and, if necessary, legal advice be taken on the transfer of duties for current postholders, and any related contractual matters, including any consequential amendments emerging from the current Structures and Resources Review Panel process. In this respect, postholders must be made aware that further adjustments to their roles may be sought in the fullness of time, according to normal HR rules.

- ii. That the General Council appoints an Interview Panel as follows:
 - 1. The Moderator of the General Assembly
 - 2. The Acting Clerk of the General Assembly
 - 3. The Convener of the General Council (Panel Chair)
 - 4. Mr Hugo Wilson (Convener of the Support Services Committee)
 - 5. Mrs Avril Heenan (General Assembly Structures and Resources Review Panel)
 - 6. A Presbytery Clerk (to be appointed after shortlisting of candidates)
 - 7. Mr Stephen Johnston (Chair of PCI Trustees)
 - 8. Mrs Sarah Leung (Head of Human Resources)
 - iii. That the HR department be instructed to prepare advertisements, documents and procedures in preparation for interviews for recruitment of a Clerk Designate of the General Assembly, with the intention to have the successful candidate formally nominated to the General Assembly in June 2026.
 - 1. If so confirmed, the successful candidate would take up his or her duties as Clerk Designate on a date to be agreed, but as soon thereafter as practicable.
 - 2. That following commencement, the Clerk Designate serve a six-month probationary period of service, during which time he or she will be accompanied and mentored by the current Acting Clerk.
 - 3. That the part-time post of Assistant Clerk, previously agreed with defined responsibilities in connection with Reconfiguration of Ministry, be retained but the date of its activation be adjusted as required in light of the appointment process for a Clerk Designate described above.
- (g) Draft Job Descriptions and Personnel Specifications are included as Appendices 1–3.

APPENDIX 1

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:

Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Salary Scale:

Scale E7 (under review)

Responsible to:

The General Assembly, through the General Council

Reporting to:

The Convener of the General Council

Hours

37.5 hours per week minimum

Main functions:

1. To contribute to the Christian ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland through the delivery of the duties outlined.
2. To work collaboratively as part of the Senior Leadership Team in Assembly Buildings, and to be its Team Leader.
3. To lead in the effective administration of the work of the General Assembly and in the development of strategies and plans for the delivery of its agreed objectives in a manner in keeping with the Christian ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
4. To ensure the implementation of decisions of the General Assembly through its Courts, Commissions, Councils and Committees and to carry forward its delegated responsibilities.

Main duties:

1. To develop through the General Council the overall strategy and planning of the work of the General Assembly.
2. To lead the management of change throughout the structures of the General Assembly.
3. To arrange meetings of the General Assembly, including its Commissions, and to oversee the production and retention of reports, minutes, necessary correspondence, and other records.

4. To convene an appropriate group to identify priorities for the work of the General Assembly and assign tasks as required.
5. To coordinate the work of General Assembly Councils and ensure that work which is not the direct responsibility of any Council is properly allocated.
6. To advise and support Conveners and Council Secretaries, including through regular face-to-face meetings, ensuring that the decisions of the General Assembly are implemented.
7. To ensure that the voice and decisions of the General Assembly are heard in wider society and communicated to government, other Churches and relevant bodies.
8. To advise on the application of The Code and on policy as set by the General Assembly.
9. To be available to Clerks of Presbytery, ministers and others in leadership positions for advice and support.
10. To represent the Church, as appropriate, at national, international and ecumenical events.
11. To act as line manager for Council Secretaries and Heads of Department, as agreed by the General Council from time to time, and with due regard to the responsibilities of Council Conveners.
12. To ensure that the work of Council Secretaries is co-ordinated in order to achieve the General Assembly's objectives and priorities where these apply across the remits of Councils
13. To perform such other duties as may be required by the General Assembly, including any necessary interim responsibilities and duties.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

Job title:

Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Salary grade:

Scale E7 (under review)

Responsible to:

The General Assembly, through the General Council

Reporting to:

The Convener of the General Council

SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications and knowledge:

Essential

1. An ordained ruling or teaching elder of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
2. A degree level qualification
3. A detailed knowledge and understanding of the Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
4. Detailed knowledge of the ethos, practice, structure and governance of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
5. Detailed knowledge of the work and programmes of the Councils of the Church
6. Knowledge of inter-church, governmental, political and statutory structures in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland
7. Knowledge and insight regarding the changing landscape of Christian ministry and mission in Ireland.
8. Appropriate computer skills i.e. word processing, emailing and utilising databases

Desirable

1. A degree in Theology
2. A broad understanding of all relevant legislation as it applies to the running of a charity.

Relevant experience:

Essential

1. A minimum of 5 years' post-ordination experience as a ruling or teaching elder in a congregational setting
2. Proven experience of leading or managing a number of staff and volunteer leaders, including line management experience
3. Proven ability to work collaboratively as part of a team of colleagues in related roles
4. Experience in leading in PCI roles at denominational or Presbytery level
5. Experience of servicing committees and writing reports
6. Experience leading in strategic development
7. Experience of management of change

Desirable

1. Experience as a Clerk of Presbytery
2. Experience as a Convener of a General Assembly Council or Committee
3. Experience of contributing to policy development
4. Experience of representing an organisation in the media e.g. TV and radio
5. Experience of interacting with politicians and government bodies
6. Experience of setting and managing budgets

Personal attributes:

Essential

1. Demonstrable ability to lead and motivate others through engagement, fostering good working relationships at all levels both within and outside the Church
2. Demonstrable ability to understand and empathise with those working in parish ministry
3. Demonstrable trust and respect within the wider Presbyterian Church in Ireland
4. The proven ability to respond to confidential and sensitive matters appropriately
5. Good written and oral communication skills, including public speaking
6. Strong organisational skills
7. Good conflict resolution and problem-solving skills
8. Proven team working skills
9. Ability to take initiative and manage own time effectively
10. The ability to manage change effectively
11. Personal resilience in challenging situations

Special circumstances:

Essential

1. Willing to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith in terms of the General Assembly's formula;
"I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code (Chapter 1, Section 3 Pars 9-13) to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith"
2. In full sympathy with the doctrinal position and ethos of the PCI and willing "loyally to implement" all decisions of the Courts of the Church
3. Available for irregular working hours, travel throughout Ireland and on occasions in Great Britain and beyond
4. A valid passport, or be willing to obtain one
5. A full driver's licence
6. Access to a car, with appropriate insurance cover for business purposes

APPENDIX 2

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title:

Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly

Responsible to:

The General Assembly, through the General Council

Reports to:

The General Council Convener

Salary grade:

Scale E6 (under review)

Hours:

37.5 hours per week minimum

Main functions

1. The Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly is appointed by the General Assembly to assist and, where appropriate, deputise for the Clerk in the performance of his or her duties and to carry out designated secretarial functions for Commissions, Councils and Committees as determined by the General Council from time to time.
2. To be an active member of the General Assembly's Senior Leadership Team, contributing to the effective administration of its functions and assisting in the development of its strategies and plans for the delivery of its agreed objectives in a manner in keeping with the Christian ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
3. To contribute to the Christian ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland through the delivery of the duties outlined.
4. To assist with the implementation of decisions of the General Assembly or relevant Council and to carry forward its delegated responsibilities.

Responsibilities and duties

1. To assist and deputise for the Clerk of Assembly across the range of his or her duties as required from time to time, including periods of illness, holidays and other absence.

2. To assist the Clerk in his or her support of Clerks of Presbytery, Ministers and others in leadership positions within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
3. To act in place of the Clerk under Par 349.1 of the Code.
4. To assist the Clerk in representing the Church, as necessary.
5. To proofread and index Assembly Reports.
6. To act as Recording Secretary during the Assembly and to prepare, proofread and index Assembly Minutes.
7. To minute meetings of Councils and Committees as required.
8. To carry out any other duties as delegated by the Clerk as appropriate and reasonable within this function of the post, including in regard to ad-hoc and time-limited pieces of work.
9. To assist and deputise for the Director of Operations across the range of his or her duties as required from time to time, including illness or other absence.
10. In collaboration with other departments, to act as Authorising Officer for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's registration with the Home Office with regard to visas etc, including for staff positions at Union Theological College.
11. To carry out specific Secretarial functions as follows:
 - a. To act as Secretary to the Council for Training in Ministry, supporting its Convener, as appropriate.
 - b. To line-manage staff within the Council for Training in Ministry, and other Heads of Department as required.
 - c. To act in a representative role for the Council for Training in Ministry at meetings and within groups, both internal and external to Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as appropriate.
 - d. To carry out deputation work within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on behalf of the Council for Training in Ministry, and in a general role, as appropriate.
 - e. To oversee and coordinate the work of the Conciliation Service.
12. To carry out any other requested duties appropriate and reasonable within this function of the post, including any necessary interim responsibilities and duties.
13. To contribute to the overall organisational effectiveness of the Senior Leadership Team and to perform any other duties as deemed appropriate by the General Assembly.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

Job title:

Deputy Clerk of the General Assembly

Responsible to:

The General Assembly through the General Council

Reports to

The Convener of the General Council

Salary grade:

Scale E6 (under review)

Hours:

37.5 hours per week minimum

SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications and knowledge:*Essential*

1. An ordained ruling or teaching elder of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
2. A degree level qualification
3. A detailed knowledge and understanding of the Code of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
4. Detailed knowledge of the ethos, practice, structure and governance of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
5. Detailed knowledge of the work and programmes of the Councils of the Church
6. Knowledge and insight regarding the changing landscape of Christian ministry and mission in Ireland
7. Appropriate computer skills i.e. word processing, emailing and utilising databases

Desirable

1. A degree in Theology
2. A broad understanding of all relevant legislation as it applies to the running of a charity

Relevant experience:

Essential

1. A minimum of 5 years' post-ordination experience as a ruling or teaching elder in a congregational setting
2. Experience of leading or managing a number of staff and/or volunteer leaders
3. Experience of servicing committees and writing reports
4. Experience of leading in PCI roles at denominational or Presbytery level
5. Experience of leading in strategic development
6. Experience of management of change

Desirable

1. Experience as a Clerk of Presbytery
2. Experience as a Convener of a General Assembly Council or Committee
3. Experience of the work of the Council for Training in Ministry
4. Experience of the selection process for students for the ministry
5. Experience of contributing to policy development
6. Experience of representing an organisation in the media e.g. TV and radio
7. Experience of acting within a deputising role
8. Experience of setting and managing budgets

Personal attributes:

Essential

1. Demonstrable ability to lead and motivate others through the use of engagement, shared vision and values
2. Demonstrable ability to understand and empathise with those working in parish ministry
3. Demonstrable trust and respect within the wider Presbyterian Church in Ireland
4. Demonstrable ability to foster good working relationships at all levels both within and outside of the Church
5. The proven ability to respond to confidential and sensitive matters appropriately
6. Good written and oral communication skills, including public speaking
7. Strong organisational skills
8. Good conflict resolution and problem-solving skills
9. Proven good team working skills
10. Ability to take initiative and manage own time effectively
11. Ability to manage change effectively
12. Personal resilience in challenging situations

Special circumstances:

Essential

1. Willing to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith in terms of the General Assembly's formula;
"I believe the Westminster Confession of Faith, as described in the Code (Chapter 1 Section 3 Pars 9-13), to be founded on and agreeable to the Word of God, and as such I subscribe it as the confession of my faith"
2. In full sympathy with the doctrinal position and ethos of the PCI and willing "loyally to implement" all decisions of the Courts of the Church
3. Available for irregular working hours, travel throughout Ireland and on occasions in the UK and beyond
4. Full driving licence
5. Access to a car with appropriate insurance for business purposes

APPENDIX 3

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title:

Director of Operations

Salary scale:

Scale E7 (under review)

(car or car allowance also provided)

Responsible to:

The General Assembly, through the General Council

Reporting to:

The Convener of the General Council

Main function

1. To contribute to the Christian ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland through the delivery of the duties outlined.
2. To be an active member of the General Assembly's Senior Leadership Team, contributing to the effective administration of its functions and assisting in the development of strategies and plans for the delivery of its agreed objectives in a manner in keeping with Christian ethos of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
3. To provide guidance and support to the General Assembly and its Councils in a manner that is fully accountable to the General Assembly and engages with Presbyteries and congregations, and, as appropriate, to provide guidance and support directly to Presbyteries and Congregations in relation to operational matters, including all aspects of Support Services.
4. To oversee the management of and ensure compliance with statutory requirements across all support services.

Responsibilities and duties*Leadership and Management*

5. To provide advice and guidance to the General Assembly and its Councils, as well as the wider Church, including Presbyteries and Congregations as appropriate, on operational matters covered by (but not limited to) the Support Services Committee, in line with statutory requirements and relevant decisions of the General Assembly.

6. To contribute to the administration and formulation of policies, strategies and plans as a member of the Senior Leadership Team in support of the General Assembly, its Councils and Committees.
7. To manage individual performance of staff in the Support Services Department to ensure that the department provides appropriate support to relevant stakeholders.
8. Financial oversight.
9. To monitor key operational performance indicators of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and provide commentary and evaluation to the General Assembly and its Councils as required.
10. To be the lead contact with statutory agencies dealing with queries, assisting with external investigations, providing appropriate advice.
11. To develop effective working relationships with the Church's Auditors, Solicitors, Investment Advisors, Pension Fund Administrators, Insurance Brokers and others as appropriate.
12. To support the development of the General Assembly annual, strategic, operational and financial plans.
13. To provide line management oversight, support and quality assurance to the:
 - a. Head of Finance
 - b. Head of Human Resources
 - c. Head of Conferencing and Operations
 - d. Property Support Manager
 - e. Head of IT
 - f. Head of Safeguarding

General

1. To act as the Support Services adviser to Councils, Committees, Presbyteries, Congregations, and individuals in relation to the Church's procedures and to engage, as required in Assembly Buildings meetings including those of other PCI Councils, Committees and Panels.
2. To act as Data Protection Lead for the General Assembly, carrying out associated duties as required and dealing with relevant queries from internal and external bodies.
3. To have oversight of the provision of insurance cover for the central functions of the Church.
4. To act as principal liaison for the Charities Commission NI and the Charities Regulatory Authority RoI.
5. To take on such other oversight responsibilities as required in response to the business requirements and the decisions of the General Assembly, through the General Council.
6. To contribute to the overall organisational effectiveness of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and to perform any other duties as deemed appropriate by the General Assembly or its General Council.
7. To carry out other requested duties appropriate and reasonable within the function of this post, including any interim responsibilities and duties.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

Job title:

Director of Operations

Salary grade:

Scale E7 (under review)

(car or car allowance also provided)

Working hours:

Minimum of 37.5 hours per week

Responsible to:

The General Assembly through the General Council

Reports to:

The Convener of the General Council

SELECTION CRITERIA

Qualifications and knowledge*Essential*

1. Full membership of one of the following bodies of Accountants:

- Chartered Accountants Ireland
- Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland
- Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales
- Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
- Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

or

- Equivalent experience and membership of a recognised professional body relevant to one of the key areas of responsibility in the post.
2. Have an up-to-date knowledge and practical experience of charity regulation and pension provision.
 3. Have current knowledge of data protection legislation and experience in managing GDPR compliance within an organisation.

Desirable

Have a knowledge and practical experience of the structure of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in relation to all aspects of compliance with the Support Services functions, internally and externally.

Relevant experience

Essential

1. Have at least 5 years' recent experience in operations management at a senior level within a significant organisation e.g. business, central government, local government, charitable entity or firm of practising accountants
2. Have proven experience in the management and oversight of at least two of the following specific areas of Support Services provision:
 - a. Finance
 - b. Human Resources
 - c. Property Management, including acquisitions, maintenance and disposals
 - d. IT
 - e. GDPR
 - f. Safeguarding

Desirable

3. Have a wide range of accounting and management experience.
4. Have direct experience of the provision, management and oversight of pensions and investments.

Aptitudes

Essential

1. Have a high level of both written and oral communications skills (including public speaking and presentation skills).
2. Have very good interpersonal skills in both formal and informal settings.
3. Have good organisational, management and leadership skills.
4. Have good IT skills, appropriate to the post requirements.
5. Have proven skills in initiating and managing change.
6. Have a capability of dealing with a wide diversity of external institutions as they relate to the PCI.
7. Have proven experience in working to deadlines in the context of a heavy and diverse workload.
8. Have a proven record of respecting and preserving necessary confidentiality in the workplace.

Desirable

1. Have good facilitation skills.

Disposition

Essential

1. Must be tactful and able to work with a variety of people, both centrally, across the denomination and with external bodies.
2. Must be able to take the initiative in the development of all aspects of the job and be proactive in implementation.

Special circumstances

Essential

1. An ordained ruling or teaching elder of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
2. Must be willing to carry out the role required of a member of the Senior Leadership Team and member or participant in the work of the Councils and Committees of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.
3. Must be willing to maintain registration with the appropriate professional regulatory body and adhere to relevant Codes of Practice, as applicable, including continuous professional development.
4. Must be willing to work within the Christian ethos of PCI.
5. Must evidence personal Christian faith in practice and expression, normally demonstrated by full and active membership of a Christian congregation.
6. Must be willing to work additional hours to fulfil the requirements of the job and occasional telephone/e-mail communication at home.
7. Must have access to a car, and appropriate insurance for work purposes.

Remit Concerning Par 16 of the Report of the General Council to the December Special General Assembly

5. Remit

A General Assembly resolution as follows was passed on 18 December 2025.

“That the General Assembly Business Committee bring a report to the General Council on the matters contained in Par.16 above, with the General Council reporting to the Special General Assembly on Tuesday 17 February or other date as called by the Moderator of the General Assembly, and that overseas delegates be invited as normal for the General Assembly in June 2026.”

The paragraph referred to stated:

The General Council also recommends that:

- (a) *Consideration should be given as to whether the ceremonial element of the June 2026 Assembly should be reduced.*
- (b) *Consideration should be given to the reports to the Assembly being more intentionally focused on God and His work, as follows:*

Part One – What God has done in each Council’s area of the Assembly’s work; the Council is reporting it, for encouragement, thanksgiving and learning. Thanksgiving is offered to God.

Part Two – What the Council believes God is prompting the Church to be and do in future in the Council’s area of the Assembly’s work; what the Council is seeking the Lord’s guidance for (these are the resolutions, for prayerful reflection and decision-making by the Church), and prayer from the Church for the future.

This will lead to prayer being offered.

6. Consideration

The General Assembly Business Committee considered the contents of the paragraph and, as required, brought a report to the General Council. This in turn was, as required, considered by the General Council at its meeting on 5 February. Some elements will need further consideration. However, the Committee was in a position to bring some recommendations to the Council. These were accepted and the Council now presents them as recommendations to this Special General Assembly.

7. Recommendations

The General Council accepted the following recommendations:

- (a) That the 2026 General Assembly be held from Tuesday 9 June to Friday 12 June.
- (b) That all Councils are offered the opportunity to speak to their written reports.
- (c) That in the preparation of their Reports, each Assembly Council notes the aspirations listed in Par 16b on p20 of the Special Assembly Reports, December 2025.

RESOLUTIONS

GENERAL COUNCIL – SECTION 1

GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUSINESS COMMITTEE

1. That the Report of the General Assembly Business Committee be received.

GENERAL COUNCIL – SECTION 2

2. That Section 2 of the Report of the General Council be received.
3. That the recommendations at Par 4 be adopted.
4. That the recommendations at Par 7 be adopted.

