

# Paper A1

## Report of decisions taken on behalf of General Assembly

### Business Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	John Bradbury john.bradbury@urc.org.uk
<b>Action required</b>	For information.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>None.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To inform the Assembly Executive of decisions taken on behalf of the General Assembly since it last met.
<b>Main points</b>	
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	
<b>External (eg ecumenical)</b>	

The terms of reference of the Business Committee require it to report to the next meeting of the General Assembly or the Assembly Executive any decisions it has taken on behalf of the General Assembly since it last met.

Such decisions were previously made on a custom and practice basis by the Officers of the General Assembly and were frequently not reported. It is a matter of good governance that the Business Committee now has this authority formally delegated to it, and that it reports on its use.

#### **Adoption of a process for the term review of a Minister serving the General Assembly**

General Assembly in July 2024 took a decision not to remove termed appointments from ministers serving in General Assembly roles. This had the unintended effect of leaving us without a process for a term review. Given that some individuals were due a term review shortly after the Assembly (or it had been agreed such a review should happen

somewhat early) it was urgent to establish such a process. The adopted process is appended in Appendix 1. The intention is to review it in the light of the experience of the first few processes, then bring a revised process for adoption in the normal way by General Assembly or Assembly Executive (likely in 2026).

## **Adoption of a safeguarding policy for the work of the General Assembly and the Offices of the General Assembly**

It was realised, with some embarrassment, that whilst General Assembly adopts safeguarding processes for the whole church to adopt, we had not formally then adopted a safeguarding policy for the work of the General Assembly and the Offices of the General Assembly themselves. This clearly needed to be urgently rectified. The adopted policy is appended in Appendix 2 to this report.

## **Adoption of the Plan for Partnership**

Debate at General Assembly 2025 called for various amendments to the Plan for Partnership. In the light of that debate and consultation with ministers, the Plan has been updated. This needed to come into effect from the 1 January 2025, so the Business Committee adopted this on behalf of the General Assembly. Ministries is introducing a rolling programme of consultation and revision to the Plan, meaning that it should be able to be adopted in updated form by General Assembly each year.

## **Appointments to roles**

From time to time, it is necessary to make appointments to significant roles which the church requires to be filled. This happens when, for example, someone needs to withdraw from a role at short notice. The following appointments have been made:

**David Jones** as Convenor of the Assembly Commission of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process from 10 October, on a *pro tem* basis with a view to a new appointment being made as a renewed process is adopted. (David was Deputy Convenor. We thank Nigel Adkinson for his work as Convenor until this point).

**Ian Miller** was appointed to the Board of the Ministerial Pension Trust from Monday 16 December for four years. This was to fill an urgent vacancy on the Board. Ian is a retired pensions' professional and brings welcome expertise to the Board. A safer recruitment interview conversation was held with him by the Chair of the Board, Bridget Micklem, who was delighted to recommend him for appointment.

**Andy Braunston** was appointed to act from the 16 December as Secretary to the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline. The Assembly Standing Panel deal with disciplinary cases in their early stages. If a case is serious, it will progress to an Assembly Commission who deal with a case in its latter phase. Assembly Commissions have always had available to them a Secretary with experience of the process, to guide administrative matters and ensure the process is effectively operated. The ASPD have not had the benefit of this. Andy has served as training officer for the process, and on the recommendation of the Complaints and Discipline Advisory Group, he has been appointed to this new role of Secretary to the ASPD. He has been appointed to serve until the existing process is replaced by a renewed process. CDAG deemed the support needed by ASPDs in their work to be highly urgent, partly in the light of the sheer number of cases running at the moment. Andy will step back from serving as Secretary of the Appeals Commission in time, and will not serve as such for any case which would make him conflicted.

**John Bradbury** was appointed *pro tem* Convenor of the Complaints and Discipline Advisory Group whilst the convenor has stepped back from this role temporarily. This took effect from the 22 October following appointment by email correspondence. The General Secretary was the only existing member of CDAG whose role within the disciplinary process would not have left someone conflicted by becoming Convenor. It was deemed inadvisable to bring in a completely new person to this role on a temporary basis particularly with a complex review of the process underway that the General Secretary is involved with steering.