

How Knox works – October 2021

Introduction

This guide is for new elders and deacons, and anyone else wanting to know detail about how Knox works. It seeks to incorporate relevant sections of the Book of Order (BOO) of the Presbyterian Church and to describe how those provisions are applied in Knox Church. It is a living document and needs to be reviewed at least after every General Assembly in case Book of Order provisions or Knox practices have changed. Alongside this guide is a manual of templates, processes and procedures assembled by the Church Council Clerk. The Church Council has adopted policies and terms of reference for committees that can be found on the Council section of the Knox Church website: [Knox Church – Dunedin, New Zealand](#)

Theology

The way the Presbyterian Church is structured reflects who the Church understands God to be and how we believe God interacts with us. Our structure is not, therefore, primarily about effectiveness or efficiency, but about a God who interacts with us communally. We believe that we discern the will of God for our world in groups, which in our church we call 'councils'. So our church has a conciliar structure locally, regionally and nationally. Locally, in the congregation, the key body is the Church Council which is charged with ensuring that the whole congregation and its various parts are formed and led by Word and Sacrament, namely the living Christ. Our ministers are known as ministers of word and sacrament to point to the Christ who shapes who we are and what we do.

The Church Council

The Presbyterian Church sets aside ministers and elders to guide and govern the Church's life (BOO 1.4 (6)). Elders and ministers serve together as the Church Council.

In Knox, elders are elected by the congregation to serve for a term of three years extendable to six, after which the elder must step back for at least one year. They can subsequently be re-elected. Nominations for the number of vacancies are brought by the Church Council and the congregation is also given opportunity to bring nominations. In its search for people to nominate, the Church Council seeks suggestions from the congregation. The Church Council then considers all names and lists, in order of preference, those people it plans to approach, according to the number needed. On occasion, if the Council has not been able to find an appropriate person to nominate, the Council has reported to the AGM that it wishes to have a vacancy until it is able to bring a nomination. The election occurs at the Annual General Meeting. Once people are elected to the Church Council, they receive training from the ministers and others. After that, the Church Council decides whether and when to proceed to ordination and/or induction. They are ordained and/or inducted in a service of worship. People previously ordained as elders are not re-ordained but must be inducted. A church council may only nominate for election and ordination as an elder, a person who is a member of Knox Church

Meetings may be face to face or by electronic means. The Church Council is accountable to the Southern Presbytery. In performing its functions, the Church Council must give particular weight to the views of the ministers. The church council does not exercise authority over the ministers except where specifically provided to the contrary in the Book of Order.

Characteristics of a healthy congregation

International studies have researched congregational life. An example is the National Church Life Survey based in Australia which has also undertaken research in New Zealand. It has identified twelve characteristics of a healthy congregation. The Council seeks to attend to those characteristics:

Culture:

1. Faith-filled and collaborative confident disciples
2. Collective identity – “we are like this”
3. Collaborative leadership, permeable and open

Actions/approaches:

4. Intentional and aligned (knew vision – clear sense of direction)
5. Strategised – thought carefully
6. Innovative – not afraid to try something new and to fail. Willing to risk.

Inclusive and empowering:

7. Focus beyond themselves, always positioned towards the community
8. Be Hospitable – thoughtful about all aspects of welcome, including at the front door
9. Be Inclusive across diversity – generations, ethnicities, sexual orientation

Learning communities:

10. Empowering - the gifts and skills of people are released in the congregation. People already involved always asking “How can I include you?”
11. Communities and leaders that learn – reading, watching, coached, mentored
12. Sustainable practices – Leadership models boundaries, rest, for themselves and others

Terms of Reference of Church Council (adapted from Book of Order 7.2)

The Church Council provides for governance, spiritual oversight, pastoral care of members, leadership in mission, plays a role in the wider community and, taking account of the role of the Deacons’ Court, has responsibility for the management of finances and property (BOO 7.2 (1)).

The Church Council aims to have a structure that is as simple as possible to achieve the direction set in the Knox Plan. That structure will attend to worship, pastoral care, employment, Christian education, outreach, finance and property and the offering of hospitality.

The Code of Ethics

At the first meeting after the ordination and/or election of new elders to Church Council, all Council members sign the Code of Ethics. The current Code of Ethics of the Presbyterian Church is as follows:

1. *The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, as a part of the church of Jesus Christ, is committed to conducting itself in accordance with the Gospel so that all people are treated with honesty, transparency, dignity, and respect.*
2. *People representing or working for the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (“the Church”) are required to abide by this Code of Ethics. This includes ministers, employees, and volunteers.*
3. *This Code is to be read in the context of, and along with, the Book of Order and the Church’s Conditions of Service Manual. It reflects the standards of conduct expected because of the special relationships of pastoral care and ministry in which the Church is engaged. It is supported by subordinate documents that address particular areas of practice within the church.*

4. *People representing or working for the Church will:*

4.1 *Demonstrate high ethical standards of behaviour at all times. This recognises obligations of truthfulness and confidentiality towards people the Church deals with, together with an acknowledgement that it is unacceptable to subject people to exploitation, harassment, or abuse, whether financial, sexual, physical, psychological, spiritual, cultural or otherwise in any discriminatory way, nor to take advantage of any vulnerability of others. All dealings with others will be characterised by compassion and natural justice.*

4.2 *Demonstrate appropriate levels of competence commensurate with the role and task undertaken. This recognises obligations of using appropriate supervision; regular opportunities for spiritual growth; stewardship of time and talents; personal upskilling and recreation; awareness of strengths and limitations; collegiality and respect for others within the Church; recognition and respect for boundaries; and the need to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of those with whom the Church interacts is protected and enhanced.*

4.3 *Comply with the laws and usages of the Church and the laws of the communities in which the Church operate*

Members of the Church Council are also subject to the Church's Child Protection Policy.

Governance

The Church Council is a council of twelve persons elected by members of the congregation and ordained as elders.

The Church Council exercises leadership, among other things, by using planning processes. Every three years, near the beginning of the year, the Knox Church Council adopts a three year Plan, called the Knox Plan. Work in preparation for developing that Plan begins towards the end of the previous year when the Council reviews its progress on the previous Plan and decides what needs reworking. At its annual retreat, normally held at the end of January, the Council takes that review a step further and identifies the key signposts or matters it wishes to address in the next three years. An introduction to the draft Plan is produced and the draft Plan and introduction are then distributed to the congregation for input. People are asked to provide feedback by email, personally to a Church Council member or at a meeting held after worship. If there are substantial changes from the previous Plan and the Council senses there may be questions and challenges, more than one congregational forum is held, perhaps with a new iteration of the Plan. Once the process of consultation is completed to the satisfaction of the Church Council, the three year Plan is adopted.

The Plan is communicated in several ways. It is included occasionally in the Friday email that goes to the congregation. It is posted on the website. Extracts are sometimes included in the Sunday order of service, if there is space. The ministers normally spend at least a couple of Sundays after the Plan is adopted, speaking about the Plan.

Once the three year Plan is adopted, the Council then develops an annual plan. This sets out the priorities for that particular year and normally sets the months in which particular activities are planned to occur. The achievement of that plan is monitored and reported normally by the use of colour coding. At the end of the year, the Church Council reviews progress on the annual plan and considers why objectives were or were not achieved and what needs addressing.

The Church Council puts emphasis on communication. After each Council meeting, a detailed report called Highlights is produced and distributed to the congregation in the next Friday email. Also, there is normally communication to the Deacons' Court reporting any matters to which the attention of the Court needs to be drawn.

Leadership in Mission

From the Book of Order 7.2 (2):

To enable the congregation to identify and play its part in God's mission to the world, the church council must

- a) put in place systems and processes which allow for and comply with the policies of the General Assembly,*
- b) organise activities, including meetings, to enable the congregation to discern and develop its part in God's mission,*
- c) nominate office bearers for election by the congregation,*
- d) elect church council members to become members of presbytery*
- e) nominate elders to presbytery to attend the General Assembly*
- f) accept persons as members of the congregation and recognise persons as associate members,*
- g) remove members and associate members from the appropriate congregational roll,*
- h) appoint or remove any person exercising functions and responsibilities within the congregation, and;*
- i) employ any person to undertake such duties as the church council considers necessary and appropriate.*

The Church Council oversees health and safety, privacy and other relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, including for example in relation to sale of alcohol on the premises. Some of this such as compliance with fire regulations falls within the ambit of the Deacons' Court. The Church Council has a set of policies which are accessible on a discrete part of the website and which are updated every year.

The Church Council has sub-committees which change according to need. At present the operating sub-committees are Caring Community which attends to hospitality, Pastoral Care which oversees the provision of pastoral care, Worship which helps plan worship and meets quarterly and Outreach which has a focus on activities that reach into the wider community. Each committee links to the Church Council through a Council member being chair or a member of the group.

Ministries and Rosters

A wide variety of tasks within the church that support weekly / monthly congregational life are undertaken by people associated with the congregation, with some people taking leadership roles in coordinating those people and rosters. A non-exhaustive list of these types of activities are welcoming, money counting, worship support, flowers, morning tea, technology, prayers and others. Opportunities should be sought to recognise and thank those who co-ordinate as well volunteer their time and expertise.

Personnel

In relation to employment, the Church Council and Deacons' Court each appoints two members to a Personnel Committee. The ministers are ex officio members. The Personnel Committee has terms of

reference. The Committee is chaired by a member of the Church Council and normally comprises people with expertise and experience in employment matters. One of the ministers manages staff.

In the Church's employment agreements, the Deacons' Court is named as employer in its role as the legal instrument used by the Church Council. Employment responsibilities are set out in the Book of Order and the Presbyterian Conditions of Service Manual. Administrative roles are under the oversight of the Deacons' Court and non-administrative roles under the oversight of the Church Council. Key decisions require attention by the Council and consultation with ministers. At Knox we use the Personnel Committee to enable both the Deacons' Court and the Church Council to work together in attending to employment matters.

The present employees are the organist and choir director (Karen Knudson - 13 hours per week), the Office Secretary (Jacqui Carroll – 15 hours per week) and the Facilities Officer (Les Carse – 15 hours per week). Karen was initially appointed in about 1996, Jacqui in 2014 and Les in 2019. Each has an employment agreement and position description and there are annual performance reviews.

Participation in Presbytery, Synod and Assembly

The Church Council appoints elders to Presbytery, Synod and Assembly. They serve as commissioners and not representatives and vote in accordance with their own consciences under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. An elder elected by a church council as commissioner to presbytery must be a member of the church council. The church council may elect an elder from another congregation within the area of the presbytery if the church council is unable to elect an elder from within its membership. Elders are ordinarily elected as commissioners to presbytery for a term of 12 months, but may be elected for a shorter term of not less than 3 months. The church council furnishes to presbytery a letter of commission in respect of each elected commissioner. The church council may elect one of its members to act as an alternate for the elder commissioned to presbytery in the event that a commissioned elder is unable to attend a presbytery meeting.

Risk Management

The Church Council maintains a risk management register. The Deacons' Court is responsible for health and safety in relation to property. The Personnel Committee is responsible for health and safety in relation to employees. The Church Council has overall responsibility, and particularly over health and safety matters not covered by the Deacons' Court or the Personnel Committee. The Moderator will ensure that incidents are reported to the Council at its monthly meeting.

Worship

From the Book of Order 7.2 (3):

To enable the congregation to fulfil its function to worship God, the church council must

- a) fix the times and places of public worship,*
- b) along with the minister or interim Moderator ensure that there is leadership in worship,*
- c) provide for the celebration of the sacraments of baptism and holy communion,*
- d) ensure that the minister has final authority as to who preaches and conducts worship, and*
- e) apply to presbytery to train and commission elders to celebrate the sacraments of baptism and communion.*

Knox morning worship is normally led by the ministers or by visiting ministers. It normally follows a classic structure as set out in the Directory for Worship (1995).

Music

There is an organist and choir director. The Knox Choir has assisted at worship for over 150 years. The Choir practises each Wednesday evening and sings on Sunday mornings during term time. There is also a junior choir which practises each Wednesday and sings once a month. There are special choral services held in the evenings about ten times through the year. Knox provides an organ scholarship normally for younger organ scholars. They are taught by the organist. Some young people at Knox have learned to play the organ and occasionally play on Sundays. Alternative musical styles are also emerging, especially in the evening services. There is an informal group, the Friends of the Choir, which provides practical and fundraising support for the choir director and choir.

There are many special services held at Knox including in relation to Columba College, Otago Girls' High School, the Scottish clans and the University of Otago. Knox utilises the Christian year and there are normally services held in relation to Holy Week and Easter, the special Sundays of the Christian year and Advent and Christmas.

Roles of ministers and organist and choir director

As regards roles in relation to worship, Knox seeks to apply the understandings set out in the *Directory for Worship* (1995).

1.4.5 "The minister has certain responsibilities which are not subject to the authority of the Session/Parish Council. The minister is responsible for the actual conduct of worship and in a particular service of worship for: i. the selection of Scripture lessons to be read, ii. the preparation and preaching of the sermon or exposition of the Word, iii. the prayers offered on behalf of the people and those prepared for the use of the people in worship, iv. the music to be sung or offered."

The Directory also states:

"The minister may confer with a worship committee, the Session/Parish Council, or others in planning services of worship. Where there is a choir director or other musical leader, the minister and that person will confer to ensure that anthems and other musical offerings are appropriate for the particular service. The Session/Parish Council should see that these conferences take place appropriately and on a regular basis. The sequence and proportion of the elements of worship are the responsibility of the minister who should consult with the Session/Parish Council."

The Directory sets out our understanding that the final decision about worship, including music, rests with the ministers. That includes, in the shaping of a particular service of worship, who is appropriate to provide musical leadership. The position description of the Organist and Choir Director at Knox sets out the Church's expectation of that role. Where the Organist and Choir Director is to be involved in a particular service, the consultation referred to above needs to occur. That does not mean that the Organist and Choir Director selects or needs to approve every musician who helps lead worship. At Knox it is also expected that the Organist and Choir Director and relevant minister will consult with each other in relation to those services in which the Organist and Choir Director is to be involved.

There is a Worship Committee which includes the ministers, the organist and choir director, Church Council members and others appointed by the Church Council. This normally meets quarterly to attend to any policy or process issues which may have arisen and to ensure there are plans in place for the quarter ahead. It also provides feedback to the ministers regarding worship.

In 2020, Knox moved from quarterly celebration to monthly communion in the morning service. When possible, quarterly dressing of the church is still undertaken, respecting the historical significance of that aspect of worship at Knox. The celebration of Communion in the evening is irregular according to the nature of the worship that is occurring there.

Pastoral Care

From the Book of Order 7.2 (4)

To enable the congregation to provide pastoral care for one another and the wider community, the church council must

- (a) provide pastoral care for the congregation,*
- (b) support the minister,*
- (c) compile and maintain congregational rolls,*
- (d) respond to complaints, and*
- (e) deal with disciplinary matters in accordance with the requirements of the Book of Order.*

Pastoral care is provided by a team of about 30 visitors as well as the ministers. The 2020 pandemic led to a significant restructuring of the provision of pastoral care as previously it had been predominantly by face to face visiting. The team of 30 visitors is coordinated by three conveners. These conveners regularly meet with the ministers and report to the Church Council.

Knox Church has three rolls which are kept up-to-date – Members, Associate Members and the Pastoral Roll. The Pastoral conveners and the ministers have responsibility to keep the rolls up-to-date, working closely with the Office Secretary. Normally, on the recommendation of the ministers following a decision of the Pastoral Conveners, the Council adds or removes the names of people on the members and associate members rolls of the Church. Pastoral conveners add and remove the names of people on the Pastoral Roll. Once a year, normally before the Annual Meeting, the Church Council formally adopts the latest iteration of the Members and Associate Members rolls.

The Church Council has occasionally dealt with complaints that were not of sufficient seriousness to warrant reporting to the Presbytery. Where complaints arise from an employee, the Personnel Committee attends to it, with guidance from the Assembly legal advisor.

The Church Council also issues trespass notices from time to time. This has occurred where people using our premises have asked for a notice to be issued or where the behaviour of someone in worship or a meeting has been regarded as unsafe. The Church Council takes an active role in relation to discipline and especially in relation to complaints of misconduct.

Spiritual Oversight

From the Book of Order 7.2 (5)

In providing spiritual oversight of the congregation, the church council must provide teaching and training programmes for members of the congregation, children and youth.

In relation to education, Knox has:

- A Sunday School that meets during Sunday worship, after it joins in the first part of the service;
- A Youth Group
- A Young Adults Group
- Lenten study groups

- Small groups that meet for shorter series
- An Advent daily retreat with Holy Name and All Saints
- Occasional day retreats

The Associate Minister has responsibility for the Church's education programme. He reports regularly to the Church Council and appoints people to roles. Prior to his appointment, there was an Education Committee however that is presently in abeyance. When there was a sole minister this committee attended to this area of the Church's life.

Finance and Property

From the Book of Order 7.2 (6)

In enabling the congregation to manage its finances and property, the church council

- a) formed a deacons' court to administer the property and finances belonging to or held in trust for the congregation,*
- b) receives reports from the deacons' court at each meeting of the church council, and*
- c) determines the use of the buildings owned on behalf of the congregation.*

The Deacons' Court

The role of the Court is to manage finance and property and, in so doing, to take account of the Council's decisions and direction. The Deacons' Court is incorporated under the Otago Foundation Trust Board Act. The Deacons' Court is not an incorporated society. The Synod of Otago and Southland has stated that incorporation under the Act gives no more authority than is given by the Book of Order and by the Act. The incorporation does enable the Church Council to use the Court as a legal instrument through which the Church enters into contracts.

The Church Council nominates people for election as deacons, normally at the Annual Meeting. Deacons are elected for a term of three years. The term may be extended for up to six years, as for elders, and the deacon must then step back for at least a year. Deacons are trained for their role and may then be ordained and inducted if not previously ordained or they are inducted.

Responsibilities of the Deacons' Court

From the Book of Order 7.15

In the performance of its functions and the exercise of its powers the Deacons' Court is subordinate to the Church Council and must

- a) give particular weight to the views of the minister,*
- b) comply with the requirements set out in the Book of Order,*
- c) obtain the approval of the church council and the congregation for the annual budget, including the expenditure of any monies,*
- d) arrange for the use or letting of any building or property, and*
- e) consult with, and have regard to the views of, the minister and of the church council before appointing or dismissing administrative staff.*

More specifically the functions of the Deacons' Court are (7.12):

1. *Managing all finances and property belonging to the congregation or held in trust on its behalf*

2. *Collecting all contributions and offerings from and to the congregation*
3. *Keeping bank accounts and any other financial records as may be necessary*
4. *Expending monies on behalf of the congregation, including payment of stipends, salaries and honoraria*
5. *Preparing budgets and statements of accounts, and having the accounts reviewed or audited in accordance with the Financial Reporting Act*
6. *Providing a financial report when required by the Church Council*
7. *Raising and securing loans*
8. *Letting any building or other property*
9. *Appointing and dismissing administrative staff, and*
10. *Any other function necessary for the proper administration of the property and finances of the congregation*

If the Church Council makes a decision that affects the functions of the Deacons' Court, it must
(a) inform the Deacons' Court of the decision, and
(b) provide a copy of any part of its minutes that relates to the decision.

The members of the Deacons' Court appoint their own chairperson for a term of not more than one year. The minister may choose to be a member of the Deacons' Court.

The minister or associate minister is a member of the Deacons' Court. At Knox, two elders attend each Deacons' Court meeting on a rotation basis. The Church Council may reverse or alter any decision of the Deacons' Court. The Deacons' Court has two sub-committees, the Finance Committee and the Property Committee.

The Knox Foundation

There is another incorporated body, the Knox Foundation Inc. which receives bequests, legacies and gifts that do not have a specific purpose. The Foundation operates in terms of a Trust Deed. The Trustees are appointed as follows: minister or nominee, session clerk or nominee, Chair of the Finance Committee or nominee, two trustees appointed by the Deacons' Court, two trustees appointed by the trustees.

Church Council Calendar of Activities:

Event	Date
Election of Members to Church Council	At Annual Meeting normally held in October each year
Election of Office Bearers	At first Council Meeting after the Annual Meeting
Appointment of Members to Committees (for a term of one year)	At first Church Council Meeting after the Annual Meeting
Election of Office Bearers and appointment of members to committees to fill any vacancies	At the meeting of Church Council, as soon as practicable after the vacancy occurs
Meetings of the Church Council	Annual Retreat normally end of January and monthly except for January and December.
Annual Meeting of the Congregation	October each year
Meetings of the sub-committees	As required, normally quarterly.

Adopt the Annual Report and receive the audited financial statements for the preceding financial year	At the Church Council meeting prior to the Annual Meeting and at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation
Adoption of the Budgets	Annually in June, before the beginning of the financial year - approved at the Church Council meeting in May and at a congregational meeting in June
Approve/review the Strategic Plans and the annual Business Plans	Annually, at last meeting of year and usually at the Annual Retreat end of January
Review of the policies	Annually, usually at the Church Council meeting in February
Review of the functioning of the Church Council	Annually, usually at the meeting after the Annual Meeting

Month by Month Calendar of Activities:

The following table provides a month-by-month summary of routine activities of the Church Council.

Month	Activity
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note impending vacancies on Church Council Seek nominations for eldership on Church Council Select and begin approaching potential nominees to Church Council
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise nominees to Church Council Receive Deacons' Court report regarding financial statements for preceding year
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise Annual Report Advertise nominations to Church Council
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive Deacons' Court report regarding auditor's management review and any Court review of audit process Review the Risk Register
	Annual Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Election of new Council members Election of new Deacons
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointments to Committees Council members sign Code of Ethics Appointment of Presbytery and Synod elders
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No meeting
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Retreat normally at end of January – review strategic plan, develop elements of annual plan, including aspects of life to be addressed during the year

February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt annual plan
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review risk register
April	
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church Council approves budget
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congregation adopts budget

Induction of members of the Church Council

As part of their induction, members will be provided with copies of:

- How Knox works;
- The most recent Annual Report;
- The Three Year and Annual Plans;
- Minutes of the last three meetings;
- The Budget.

Expectations of members of the Church Council

A member shall, in good faith, behave in a manner that is consistent with generally accepted procedures for the conduct of meetings at all meetings of the Church Council and its committees. Members are expected to be forthright in meetings and have a duty to question, raise an issue, fully canvas all aspects of any issue confronting the Church, and participate in the decision making process on any proposal according to their understanding. Members will keep Church Council discussions confidential. Members of the Council have an obligation to actively and fully support the Church, its operations, ministers and staff.

Roles and Responsibilities of Office Bearers

From the Book of Order 7.7 (2)

7.7 (2) The minister or a member of the Church Council nominated by the minister shall be Moderator of the Church Council.

7.6 (3) The church council also appoints such other officers as it considers necessary and appropriate to fulfil its functions.

Role of the Moderator as Chairperson

The Moderator shall preside as Chairperson at every meeting, unless unable to do so in which case the Moderator can appoint another member of Council or another minister to moderate the meeting. The Moderator will confirm the agenda for Church Council meetings in consultation with the Clerk. The Moderator will ensure that the Church Council Members are kept informed on all matters that may be of interest to them.

Review of the Ministers

The ministers and Church Council will participate in the three yearly Presbytery review of the ministers. Notwithstanding this, as has been done at times, the Church Council may choose to instigate an independent review.

Church Council Clerk

The tasks include administration of the Church council's activities:

1. Notifying the presbytery clerk of changes of status
2. Calling meetings on behalf of the Moderator and distributing papers in advance
3. Keeping a record of minutes from meetings
4. Maintaining Church Council records
5. Producing and distributing congregational notices as needed
6. Be the point of contact for members of the congregation
7. Liaise between the ministers and the congregation

Committees

The Church Council may appoint committees and these may include people with appropriate expertise who are not members of the Church Council. Members of committees are normally appointed annually at the first meeting of the Church Council after the Annual Meeting. Vacancies can be filled at any time by the Church Council.

Church Council Meetings, Preparation, Conduct and Reporting

From the Book of Order 7.16

- (a) The Moderator presides over each meeting of the Church Council and must ensure that each meeting is opened and closed with prayer.*
- (b) The Moderator must give the members of the Church Council not less than 10 working days' notice of a meeting.*
- (c) The notice must be either in writing or given at the close of the previous meeting.*
- (d) The Moderator may convene a special meeting of the Council in case of urgency.*
- (e) The Moderator must give reasonable notice to all members of a special meeting.*
- (f) The Moderator must call a special meeting if not less than 3 members of the church council so request.*

The Moderator:

- (a) cannot move or second a motion, and*
- (b) has no deliberative vote, but may, if the council is equally divided, exercise a casting vote.*

Quorum

A quorum of the church council consists of one third of the members of the Church council and must comprise not fewer than 3 members of the Church Council, and include the Moderator.

Congregational Meetings

The Moderator or the Church Council may call a congregational meeting. At least 10 working days' notice must be given at a service of worship. Less notice may be given in the case of an emergency meeting if there are reasonable grounds to consider there is an emergency. The Moderator of the Church Council may chair a meeting of the congregation. A member of the church council or presbytery may also chair a meeting where they have been appointed or deputed by the Moderator of the Presbytery.

Church Council meetings

Church Council normally meets at least monthly at the Church. The meetings are usually on the fourth Wednesday of the month beginning at 7.30 pm. Usually these meetings are in person together, however video conferencing meetings have been used when meeting in person has not been possible.

Agenda

An Agenda is prepared for Council meetings by the Clerk, in consultation with the Moderator. The Agenda and supporting papers is circulated to all members at least five days prior to the meeting. Proposals are clearly marked. Members have an obligation to carefully read all documents. The Agenda is confirmed at the start of each meeting.

The normal sequence for the Agenda is:

- Devotions and pastoral matters
- Moderator's welcome and opening remarks;
- Consent proposal (normally including the minutes);
- Strategic issues discussion;
- Committee reports;
- Other matters for decision;
- Important notices and major correspondence;
- Matters arising from the minutes;
- General business; and
- Confirmation of next meeting and future meeting schedule.

Proposals and Major Correspondence

Proposals are automatically accepted near the beginning of the meeting unless a discussion or debate is requested by a member. Major correspondence comprises any correspondence received by the Moderator or the Clerk about which the members should be aware. Such correspondence may include, but is not limited to, correspondence from members, presbytery or assembly.

Major correspondence will be included in the papers of the Church Council or tabled at the meeting. Such correspondence will normally be "*For Noting*", however, any member can ask for any item of correspondence to be discussed.

Ministers' Reports

The ministers' reports are a key component of the Church Council meeting. The reports are normally provided in a written format and expanded verbally during the meeting.

Financial Report

The Financial Report from the Deacons' Court reviews the current and projected financial performance of the Church including:

- balance sheet to end of the previous month;
- profit and loss to end of the previous month with comparatives against the budget on a month and year to date basis;
- forecast of cash flow with identification of any potential problems.

Other Reports

Other reports from committees and persons given particular tasks report on their work and particularly the milestones to achieve the Annual Plan. Each such report shall contain any proposals the committee wishes the members to note or action.

Church Council Minutes

From the Book of Order 7.18

The Moderator must ensure that there is a secretary of the church council and that the secretary:

- (a) accurately records minutes of the proceedings of the church council,*
- (b) sets out in the minutes the names of the members present, and*
- (c) on request, makes available extracts of the minutes to persons affected.*

Minutes will contain a brief reference to the relevant papers tabled (or a summary of the background information to the matter being decided) plus the proposal adopted by the Council. The Moderator will confirm the wording of a proposal before voting by the Council. If the Council is unanimous in voting in favour of the proposal, the minutes record that the decision is agreed. If a majority of Council votes in favour of a proposal, the minutes record that the decision is carried. Members of the Church Council who dissent can ask to have their dissent noted in the minutes.

Minutes and an Action List will be prepared in draft by the Clerk and provided to the Moderator for review within 5 working days of the meeting. The draft minutes and Action List will be distributed to Members within 10 days after the Church Council meeting and will also be circulated with the next Agenda. Minutes are confirmed at the next meeting. Where changes are required, these must be moved at the meeting and adopted by the Council. Changes may relate only to ensuring accurate reporting of what actually occurred. Once the Council has adopted the minutes they cannot be amended, unless agreed at a subsequent Council meeting. The Clerk will maintain a complete set of Church Council papers.

The congregation and staff safety and privacy

The Church places a high value on the safety, rights, personal dignity and privacy of its members and employees. The Council shall not cause or allow conditions, procedures, or decisions which are unsafe, undignified, unnecessarily intrusive, or which fail to provide appropriate confidentiality or privacy. It will ensure the Church complies with regulations contained in the Privacy Act, Human Rights Act, Health & Disabilities Commission Act and all other relevant legislation.

Communication on behalf of the Church

Statements about Knox Church matters are made by the Ministers or the Council Clerk. The Ministers or the Council Clerk only shall approve or initiate any public communication which reflects or is consistent with the values and beliefs of the Church.

22 October 2021