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First IPC Presbytery of England

P R O C E D U R A L C O D E

Being part of the Book of Church Order
for those congregations of the International Presbyterian
Church within the care of the above-named Presbytery



“As no city, town, house, or family can maintain their estate and prosper without policy and governance, so the church of God, which requires more purely to be governed than any city or family, cannot without spiritual policy and ecclesiastical discipline continue, increase and flourish.”

*John Calvin & Guillaume Farel,
the Genevan Book of Church Order, 1556
(Print: Calvin at home in Geneva)*

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NB: The CONSTITUTION OF IPC, the DOCTRINAL & PRACTICE STATEMENTS are separate documents that, together with this PROCEDURAL CODE, may be regarded as a comprising the IPC Book of Church Order.

ABBREVIATIONS

“BCO”	Book of Church Order
“CPR”	Civil Procedure Rules (Jordan Publishing 2002)
“DRP”	Dispute Resolution Procedure
“EPCEW”	Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England & Wales
“FG”	Form of Government
“IPC Practice”	The (Proposed) Collection of Papers dealing with Practices of the International Presbyterian Church
“IPC Constitution”	The Declaration of the Constitution of the IPC dated 11 April 1978, incorporating in the Schedule older material.
“OPC”	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
“PCA”	Presbyterian Church in America
“PCI”	Presbyterian Church of Ireland
“PC(USA)”	Presbyterian Church of the USA

PART 1 – THE OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE

1.1 The Overriding Objective: pleasing the Lord Jesus Christ

1.1.1 This is a new¹ procedural² code for the IPC with the overriding objective³ of enabling the Session and others to deal with matters in ways that please the Lord Jesus Christ who is Head of the Church, King of kings and Lord of lords, Creator of all things and the Second Person of the Triune Godhead.

1.1.2 Dealing with matters in ways that please the Lord Jesus Christ includes:

- (a) being obedient to the teachings of God’s word, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and being submissive to the sense of Holy Scripture as promulgated in the IPC Constitution and its Schedule (in particular to that system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith);
- (b) making prayer a central component of any decision-making process and trusting the Holy Spirit’s guidance;

¹ To date there has been very little in the way of written procedures (for example at Liss - a short 1¹/₂ page document entitled “Local Procedures”). At Presbytery and Synod levels there has been nothing, so far as I am aware. If a system of Presbyterian churches, or a denomination is to function at all with any coherence and efficiency, a comprehensive, clear and simple procedural code is essential. This should lead to an organisational efficiency which liberates people to undertake the more important aspects of church life. Callahan addresses the importance of a streamlined organisational structure and comments that *“Effective congregations conserve their member’s time by developing the most streamlined organisational structure possible, so that people can be involved substantively and responsibly in the total life and mission of the church.”*

² The scope of this code is procedural only, hence reference is made in various places, to “IPC Practice” or “the IPC Constitution” which encompasses material of a more theological nature. Thus the new code tends to avoid any theological content. In this respect, it differs from the approach in other procedures in other Book(s) of Church Order (“BCOs”). Theological content is usually there to explain or defend the reason behind a practice. However, this can make it unduly cumbersome. A procedural code should be chiefly contractual engaging a common understanding for the workings of the procedural machinery of the church, e.g. how people become members, including what is expected of them, or how the officers of a church are appointed, how they should operate, etc. The laying down of clear understandings and expectations in these key areas will it is hoped reap rich long term benefits for the IPC.

³ The idea of stating a “benchmark” objective which overrides everything else in a set of procedures is not novel. Lord Woolf, for example, when he reformed civil justice procedure in the courts in 1999 after many years work, established the idea of an overriding objective in the Civil Procedure Rules (“CPR”). But the idea was around in other forms before then, e.g. in the Children Act 1989 which enacts the paramountcy of the welfare of the child as a type of overriding objective. The value of such a device is that it creates a directional impetus and application to what might otherwise be a rudderless ship drifting on the tide. Bringing to a set of procedural rules an attitude of asking “is this pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ?” at every point is a key concept in how one approaches church procedure, and should do much to avoid dry legalistic approaches which can be so common and off-putting in this area. It may for example be more pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ to relax a rule than to abide by it in the letter, in certain situations. It is here that the pleasing of Christ should be paramount and this always should result in interpreting a rule in a way that serves that overriding purpose.

- (c) having regard to the principle⁴ of dealing with the Lord's work in the Lord's way;
- (d) being thankful in everything to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.⁵

1.2 Seeking to give effect to the Overriding Objective

The Synod, the Presbytery, the Session, the Diaconate and any trustees must seek to give effect to the Overriding Objective when they exercise any of their powers or otherwise carry out any of their business.

1.3 Duty of the Members of the Congregation

The Members of the Congregation are required to help the Session to further the Overriding Objective.

1.4 Power to Amend Procedural Code

Except for the Overriding Objective in §1.1.1, this code may be amended by the Presbytery with the approval of the Synod but any amendments concerning church membership shall require the approval of the members.

⁴ As described by Francis Schaeffer in "No Little People" Chapter 4 when he writes: "*Let us not think that waiting on the Lord will mean getting less done. The truth is that by doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way we will accomplish more, not less. You need not fear that if you wait for God's spirit you will not get as much done as if you charge ahead in the flesh. After all who can do the most, you or the God of Heaven and earth?*"

⁵ "*Every blessing that God confers upon us perishes through our carelessness, if we are not prompt and active in rendering thanks.*" (Calvin on II Cor 4:6).

PART 2 – CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Communing Members of an IPC Congregation

2.1.1 In order to become a communing member (referred to as “a member”) of an IPC congregation a person must:

- (a) have been baptised, whether as a child⁶ or an adult⁷;
- (b) demonstrate a credible profession of faith⁸ in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord;
- (c) have publicly declared and affirmed to the congregation their profession of faith and acceptance of membership in accordance with IPC Practice; and
- (d) unless the Session otherwise allows, not be a member of any other church.

2.1.2 The Session has the discretion whether or not to admit a person to membership as it sees fit in accordance with the above criteria, but always giving paramount effect to the Overriding Objective.

2.1.3 Any candidate for membership who considers the Session has acted wrongly in the exercise of its discretion shall use the Dispute Resolution Procedure.

2.2 Non-communing Members of an IPC Congregation

2.2.1 Any child of one or both communing members of an IPC Congregation is through the covenant and by right of birth⁹ a non-communing member¹⁰ of the same congregation to which his or her parent belongs.

⁶ See appendix for IPC Practice on children’s baptism. It is not a prerequisite for membership that a child’s baptism should take place in accordance with IPC Practice.

⁷ See appendix for IPC Practice on adult baptism. It is not a prerequisite for membership that an adult’s baptism should take place in accordance with IPC Practice.

⁸ This reflects some of the EPCEW’s and the PCA’s criteria for membership which provides: “Acceptance to membership is determined by the Session. It is open to all such persons as have made a credible profession of faith in Christ as God the Son, their Saviour and Lord, have been baptised and exhibit a teachable spirit” (see Chap 3.1.1 of the EPCEW’s Form of Government). The EPCEW version does not (in contrast to the PCA) have the Lord’s Supper as a criterion for membership; it expresses the taking of the Lord’s Supper as duty of members: “Members have a responsibility faithfully to attend the means of grace, submit to the authority of the Session, respect and encourage their Elders, promote the peace and prosperity of the congregation, give of their substance as the Lord may prosper them, pray for the work of the Gospel at home and abroad and exhibit a Christian spirit at all times.”

⁹ Calvin writes: “The offspring of believers is born holy, because their children, while yet in the womb...are included in the covenant of eternal life...Nor...are they admitted into the church by baptism on any other ground than that they belonged to the body of Christ before they were born” (Antidote to the Council of Trent).

¹⁰ This criterion follows the PCA. See Chap 6-1 where it provides that “The children of believers are, through the covenant and by right of birth, non-communing members of the church. Hence they are entitled to baptism, and to pastoral oversight, instruction and government of the church, with a view to their embracing Christ and thus possessing personally all benefits of his covenant.”

2.2.2 A non-communing member is entitled to be baptised if his or her parent or parents so require in accordance with IPC Practice.

2.3 The Effect of Membership

2.3.1 Only persons who are communing members of the congregation and who have reached the age of 18 may vote in relation to that congregation's business (see Part 3).

2.3.2 Unless the Session has permitted otherwise for a particular person, only communing members of the congregation may become a Sunday School Teacher or fulfil any other teaching or mentoring function in relation to children or young people in that congregation.

2.3.3 Unless the Presbytery has permitted otherwise for a particular person, only persons who are communing members of the congregation are eligible to be called to the office of elder or deacon in that congregation or serve as a trustee.

2.3.4 Unless the chairman of a Congregational Meeting has permitted otherwise for a particular person, only members of the congregation (whether communing or non-communing) may speak in public and call for proposals at such meetings (see Part 3).

2.3.5 Attention is drawn to §1.3 requiring members to help the Session further the Overriding Objective which is in addition to other responsibilities of membership in accordance with IPC Practice.

2.4 Membership Transfer and Termination

2.4.1 A member of one IPC congregation may for good reason transfer their membership to another IPC congregation in which case the Session of his new congregation shall admit that person's name to the Membership Record provided there is no objection by the Session of his old congregation raised under §2.5.2 below;

2.4.2 Membership of an IPC congregation shall be permanent and shall cease only in the following circumstances:

- (a) upon a member's death;
- (b) upon a member's transfer of membership to another congregation or church (in cases where the member's new church does not have a formal membership system, this shall be considered a transfer of commitment, and IPC membership shall not cease until the Session is satisfied after contact with the member that cessation would be appropriate);
- (c) in a situation where the Session considers a member to have left the congregation;
- (d) upon the termination of membership by the Session.

2.5 Membership and Discipline Situations

2.5.1 Attention is drawn to it being part of the function of the Session to protect the purity of the church and the honour of the Lord Jesus Christ in ways which are primarily ministerial¹¹ not magisterial (in other words appealing to the heart of an offending member without resort to legal force); but this does not mean the Session will refrain from reporting suspected criminal activity to the police or, in the case of a child at risk of harm from the suspected behaviour of a member, to the appropriate state authorities – on the contrary, the Session will do so without delay in appropriate cases.

2.5.2 The Session may, in the course of their pastoral care and oversight of members of the congregation, exercise careful and loving discipline from time to time with the overall object of the restoration and reconciliation of a member who is being persistently and seriously disobedient to the Lord Jesus Christ without any sign of repentance, and the Session may end the membership of such person by excommunicating them.

2.5.3 In such a case, the Session will generally follow the pattern of Matthew 18 in balance with all other Scripture and in such a situation the Session must have regard to IPC Practice¹² and (so far as they are not inconsistent with IPC Practice) the Rules of Discipline as set out in Part II of the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America.

¹¹ Calvin writes: *“The peculiar government of God is that of His church only, where, by his word and Spirit, he bends the hearts of men to obedience, so that they follow him voluntarily and willingly, being taught inwardly and outwardly – inwardly by the influence of his Spirit; outwardly by the preaching of his word”* (Commentary on Ps 90).

¹² See Jerram Barrs Paper on discipline published in *Koinōnia* (February 2003).

PART 3 – CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS AND VOTING

3.1 The Nature of Congregational Meetings

3.1.1 Attention is drawn to the Overriding Objective which shall apply to Congregational Meetings.

3.1.2 The main objects of Congregational Meetings are for members to have the opportunity of:

- (a) listening to and participating in honest discussion in a spirit of love with a view to reaching substantial agreement¹³ about what may please the Lord on the issues to be decided;
- (b) engaging in silence for contemporaneous prayer and searching the scripture about those issues;
- (c) receiving live reports and commentary on any subject matter of the meeting.

3.1.3 Congregational Meetings shall be -

- (a) open to the public, but no persons other than IPC members may speak or call for proposals without being invited to do so by the chair;
- (b) chaired by an elder or by a person appointed by the Session who may from time to time appoint one of themselves;
- (c) recorded by a note-taker who will prepare a summary of the salient points (“minutes”) which must be sent out to all members of the congregation (whether or not they attended the meeting) within one month after the meeting; such minutes shall be treated as a true and fair record if no objection is taken by anyone within two months of the meeting (or one month of being received if later); if there are objections, the matter shall be dealt with at the next meeting, and the draft minutes shall not be approved except by congregational vote at that meeting or otherwise;
- (d) ineffective for voting purposes unless there is a quorum of at least one third of the congregation’s communing members over the age of 18¹⁴ present.

3.2 The Frequency of Congregational Meetings

The Session will convene not less than 2 Congregational Meetings every year, one of which must be an Annual General Meeting, and will publish an agenda of the meeting at least 14 days in advance, but further items of a supplementary nature may be added, with the approval of the proposed chairman of the meeting, either at the request of any member, or by the Session themselves.

¹³ *“The chief indication of a prosperous condition of the church is when mutual agreement prevails in it, and brotherly harmony.”*
(Calvin’s Commentaries, Phil-Col.51.)

¹⁴ This follows existing practice. It is possible, for example if you are 15, to be a communing member but not qualified to vote. It is felt that voting at 18 should be retained because of the responsibility involved.

3.3 Annual General Meeting

At that congregational meeting which is the Annual General Meeting the business of the meeting shall include:

- (a) the Session's review of the preceding year and outlook for the following year;
- (b) a prayerful reflection of all church activities, seen and unseen, for the preceding year;
- (c) the presentation of the annual accounts and budget of the Congregation by the treasurer;
- (d) any other appropriate matters.

3.4 Voting Procedures

3.4.1 At any Congregational Meeting any member or elder ("the Proposer") may, there and then, call for a proposal to be put to a vote, provided that:

- (a) the meeting has a quorum,
- (b) the proposal directly concerns the subject-matter of the meeting,
- (c) the Session approves with or without conditions (having regard to the fact that Presbyterian government should be distinguished from Congregational government).

3.4.2 If the Session does not approve, or gives conditional approval, of a proposal to be put to a vote, its decision shall be final, but the Session will in any event give reasons either there and then or later.

3.4.3 The Chairman of the meeting will in the meeting advise and assist the Proposer so that his proposal is framed in clear terms, is not inconsistent with the Overriding Objective and is in order.

3.4.4 The Chairman may encourage or, where appropriate, direct a caucus (private meeting) at any stage, and during which time the remaining members will pray and not continue the business of the meeting until the caucus is finished.

3.4.5 The Chairman will then decide (in consultation with the Session if appropriate) the mode of vote, namely whether the nature of the proposal justifies:

- (a) an immediate show of hands ("a Poll"); or
- (b) an immediate show of hands with eyes closed ("a Blind Poll"); or
- (c) an immediate or deferred secret written ballot ("a Secret Ballot").

3.4.6 The members of the congregation will then pray before voting accordingly.

3.4.7 A proposal will not be carried unless there is a two thirds majority vote in favour of it and in accordance with clause 3(c) of the IPC Constitution no votes shall be given by proxy.

3.4.8 If the Chairman decides to hold a deferred secret ballot then all members of the congregation must be given a reasonable opportunity to vote and any two thirds majority will be calculated by reference to the votes actually returned of which there must be at least two thirds actually returned for the vote to be valid.

PART 4 – ELDERS

4.1 Nature of Office and Composition of Session.

Trustee Capacity of Elders

4.1.1 Attention is drawn to the fact the office of elder automatically carries with it the office of trustee, by reason of clause 3(b) of the IPC Constitution, but the office of trustee does not carry with it the office of elder and therefore the provisions of Part 6 cover situations where trustees are appointed who are not elders.

4.1.2 The provisions of §6.3 dealing with the functions duties and powers of Trustees shall apply to Elders in the same way they apply to Trustees.

Plurality of Elders & Corporate Nature of Session

4.1.3 A session of elders shall comprise a body of men numbering at all times not less than three and if the number falls below three the Presbytery shall forthwith arrange to provide another elder or elders from another congregation to serve in that Session to make up at least three men in the session.

4.1.4 An IPC congregation shall at all times be governed by a session of elders acting corporately and appointed by the Presbytery (whether permanently or on an interim basis) to serve as elders of that particular congregation whether functioning as ruling or teaching elders (teaching elders otherwise being known as Pastors).

4.1.5 During any period or periods where either there is no session of elders or only a single elder, and where there are no trustees separate from elders, the Presbytery Moderator and Clerk for the time being shall be acting elders and shall appoint themselves as trustees for the time being of that congregation, acting together with any single elder.

4.1.6 Attention is drawn to section 50 of the Charities Act 1993 and the cost-free ability of a Session of Elders to apply to the Charity Commission for incorporation as a body of trustees and the advantages of incorporated status.

Parity of Elders

4.1.7 There shall be no distinction¹⁵ between the two offices of ruling elder and teaching elder (commonly called pastors) for the purpose of government of the church (as over against function in the church) and the term “elder” in this Code covers both. However, there shall be a distinction in actual function in the church in accordance with IPC Practice.

¹⁵ This accords with the PCA FG which states at 8-8: “Elders being of one class of office, ruling elders possess the same authority and eligibility to office in the courts of the Church as teaching elders. They should, moreover, cultivate zealously their own aptness to teach the Bible and should improve every opportunity of doing so.”

Power of Elders to rule more than one IPC congregation but only temporarily

4.1.8 A session of elders may govern more than one congregation (and an individual elder may serve as an elder in another session in addition to his own) provided that there is a plan in place for such other congregation to work towards having its own session within a reasonable time.¹⁶

Session to have a Moderator and Clerk

4.1.9 A session of elders shall appoint annually¹⁷ one of their number to be a moderator whose function shall include (in addition to any other function designated by the Session) convening and chairing sessions meetings, preparing agendas, and conducting all session business.

4.1.10 A session of elders shall appoint annually one of their number to be the clerk of session whose function shall include (in addition to any other function designated by the Session) keeping a record of all business conducted, being a contact person for communications with the Presbytery, Synod and others, and seeing that all business is conducted lawfully and in accordance with this code.

4.2 Session Meetings

Quorum & Mode of Decision-Making

4.2.1 A session meeting shall not be competent to proceed to business unless there is a quorum¹⁸ of a majority of Session members, with a minimum of two.

4.2.2 In all their ruling and decision-making processes, elders shall have parity.

4.2.3 So far as may be possible in all important matters, the session shall seek a holy unity¹⁹ in their decision-making, but where this is not possible the moderator shall arrange for a vote to be taken in whatever manner he considers appropriate.

4.2.4 Where the session is four or more elders, a three quarters majority vote of all elders present shall be required to carry a motion, and where the session is three in number a two thirds majority of those present shall be capable of carrying a motion.²⁰

¹⁶ This reflects OPC.

¹⁷ This accords with the OPC FG at Chap XIII paragraph 4: “The session...shall choose its own moderator annually from among its members”.

¹⁸ This follows the EPCEW FG which says “A quorum consists of a majority of Session members, with a minimum of two.” Compare OPC FG at Chap XIII paragraph 5: “A quorum of a session is two ruling elders if there are three or more, or one ruling elder if there are fewer than three, together with the pastor or one of the pastors of the local congregation In no case may the session conduct its business with fewer than two present who are entitled to vote.”

¹⁹ This phrase is from Calvin: “*The church can only remain in a state of safety when unanimity prevails in her, and when, being joined together by faith and charity, she cultivates a holy unity.*” Calvin on Ps 122:3. He also writes: “*A holy unity exists amongst us, when, consenting in pure doctrine, we are united to Christ alone.*” (from “The Necessity of Reforming the Church”).

²⁰ On this basis, the margin of allowable dissent is made quite narrow, in all cases whittled down to one man who may be overruled on a vote. A three man session would need two men to carry a motion. A four man session would need three men. A five man session would need four. A six man session would need five. And a seven man session would need six. This to my mind is desirable, to save the prospect of a session splitting itself, or risking substantial resignations in deadlocked situations.

Mode of dealing with Dissent & Appeals to the Presbytery & Synod

4.2.5 Any elder, whether present or not, or voting or not, may not later than 14 days after a session meeting enter his oral dissent²¹ to any decision of the Session and may or may not require his dissent and concise reasons to be recorded in the minutes (such an elder is referred to as “a Dissenting Elder”).

4.2.6 A Dissenting Elder may not later than 14 days after he has entered his dissent request the Presbytery to review the decision of the Session by writing a letter to the Review Board of the Presbytery expressing his full reasoning, and upon receiving such letter the Review Board shall review the decision within 21 days.

4.2.7 The Review Board’s decision shall be final unless within 21 days of the Dissenting Elder and the Session receiving the Board’s decision, he (or the Session as the case may be) requests the Synod Clerk for permission to appeal and if he such permission is granted he (or the Session) may then appeal to the Synod and the Synod Clerk shall without avoidable delay give directions on how the appeal should proceed.

4.2.8 A Dissenting Elder (including any member of his family) shall not discuss the reasons for his dissent with any member of the congregation until after final disposal of his appeal, although the fact of his complaint may be made known.²² The same restrictions shall apply to the remaining elders in the Session.

Transparency

4.2.9 Except where either pastoral business or other business designated as confidential by the Session is being dealt with, any member of any IPC congregation or any Presbytery or Synod member may, by prior arrangement with the Session, attend as an observer, and/or see the minutes of any Session meeting for the previous three years.

4.2.10 Pastoral or other confidential business shall not be recorded in Session minutes, other than by way of discreet outline, but shall be recorded in separate minutes which shall remain strictly confidential to the Session and the Presbytery.

4.2.11 The Session is expected occasionally to encourage the attendance of member -observers and/or deacons, or other appropriate persons either of whom may be invited to participate in the meeting on a limited basis.

4.3 Appointment of Elders

4.3.1 Elders may only be men.

4.3.2 The Presbytery, and only the Presbytery, shall appoint an elder if satisfied of his fitness for office after due examination and following a request to do so made by either the Congregation or the Presbytery (and in either case with the approval of the Session).

²¹ This largely follows EPCEW FG which says “*Any member of the Session may enter his dissent from any part of the proceedings and may require his dissent to be recorded; or he may dissent and complain to the Presbytery*”.

²² Dissenting elders need to exercise great caution not to undermine the authority of the Session. This has been the cause of past problems. The Code for the Presbyterian Church of Ireland is interesting in this respect and puts it well: “*160(2) Dissent relieves of all responsibility for taking of the decision incurred, but does not exempt members from obedience to any law or injunction of the Church, nor from the obligation to implement the decisions of the Church courts, until these may have been reversed or altered by the processes of complaint or appeal, or other due consideration by the court*”.

4.3.3 A request by the Congregation or Presbytery for the appointment of an elder shall only be made following a three-quarters majority vote by secret ballot of all communing members of the Congregation or, as the case may be, members of the Presbytery; such secret ballot shall only be valid if at least two thirds of the ballot papers are returned properly completed within the time stipulated for the return of the ballot papers.

4.3.4 The appointment to the office of elder shall be by way of ordination and installation by the Presbytery in accordance with the IPC Constitution.

4.3.5 The office of Elder shall (in accordance with the IPC Constitution) be perpetual²³ and subject only to removal for misconduct and other reasons as set out below.

4.3.6 Where the need arises, an elder or elders of one IPC congregation may be appointed by the Presbytery (following consultation with the relevant congregation) to serve any other congregation, whether in the IPC or not, in which case such appointment shall be on an interim basis only for a period not exceeding 12 months, but the Presbytery may for good and sufficient reason extend such time by such further period or periods as may be appropriate but not exceeding three years in all from the date of the original appointment.

4.4 Sabbatical Leave

Every elder (which term includes Pastors) shall be expected, by arrangement with his Session and Presbytery, to take sabbatical leave amounting to a period or periods of one year in every seven (or *pro rata* over a smaller period) and during a sabbatical period he shall not participate in the governmental business of the church.

4.5 Continuing Education and Seminary Involvement

4.5.1 Every elder shall seek continually to further his theological or pastoral education and training and shall be expected at least once in every three year period to make himself available whether as attendee, lecturer, researcher, or in some other role in or towards the functioning of an IPC Seminary.

4.5.2 In addition every elder shall be expected at least once in every five year period to attend such theological course as the Presbytery may approve, and the costs of the course shall be reimbursed to him out of IPC funds.

4.6 Accountability

Accountability of Session

4.6.1 The Session shall so far as possible in all its business apart from Pastoral Business act corporately and it shall be corporately accountable and answerable to the Presbytery in all its governmental work.

²³ Compare PCA FG at 24-6: “Ordination to the offices of ruling elder and deacon is perpetual; nor can such offices be laid aside at pleasure; nor can any person be degraded from either office but by deposition at regular trial; yet a ruling elder or deacon may have reasons which he deems valid for being released from the active duties of his office. In such a case the Session, after conference with him, and careful consideration of the matter, may, if it thinks proper, accept his resignation and dissolve the official relationship which exists between him and the church.”

4.6.2 The Session shall report to the Presbytery on any matter and in such manner as may be required by the Presbytery, except that Pastoral Business shall at all times remain confidential to the Session.

4.6.3 The Session shall submit to the authority of the Presbytery subject to a right of appeal to the Synod.

Accountability of Individual Elder

4.6.4 An individual elder including a full time pastor shall be accountable and answerable to the Session of which he is part and in particular:

- (a) he shall report to the Session on any matter and in such manner as may be reasonably required by the Session and this shall include all pastoral business;
- (b) he shall have a duty of self-reporting to the Session, or to his Presbytery Pastoral Carer, any matter capable of bringing his office into disrepute.

Expectation of Advice by and Instruction from Presbytery

4.6.5 The Session may take advice and instruction on any matter within their remit from the Presbytery or any person appointed by the Presbytery for that purpose and the Presbytery may require the Session to take professional advice on any matter.

Arrangements for Pastoral Care for Elders

4.6.6 As soon as possible after an elder is appointed, the Presbytery shall approve arrangements for a line of pastoral care for that elder with another elder in a different Session (“the Presbytery Pastoral Carer”).

Feedback from Congregation on Elder’s performance

4.6.7 The Session shall make proper arrangements for acquiring an informal assessment from members of the congregation on each elder’s performance.

4.7 Retirement of an Elder

4.7.1 An elder may retire from active participation in his session at any time but such retirement shall not annul his office of elder.

4.7.2 A retired elder may not participate in the business of the session of which he was a member without the consent of that session, or their successors, and such consent may be given on any terms and conditions that the session sees fit to make.

4.7.3 A retired, but not a removed, elder may participate in Presbytery or Synod Business and shall for all purposes be considered a Presbytery and Synod Member.

4.8 Removal of an Elder

4.8.1 An elder may be removed from office by a decision of the Presbytery made under §4.8.2 below after careful and timely consideration having regard to the Overriding Objective in any of the following circumstances:

- (a) where there is serious and persistent misconduct by an elder in any area of his life which in the opinion of the Presbytery is capable of bringing the office of elder and the church of Christ into serious disrepute;
- (b) where an elder has clearly and persistently demonstrated that he can no longer abide by the promises that he took upon himself when appointed;
- (c) where an elder has clearly and persistently demonstrated that he seriously lacks the scriptural qualifications for being an elder;
- (d) where at least two-thirds of the voting members of the elder's congregation have requested the Presbytery for his removal and the Presbytery consider it appropriate having regard to the Overriding Objective.

4.8.2 Any Presbytery decision to remove an elder on any of the above grounds shall require a three quarters majority vote cast by secret ballot of all Presbytery Members who shall return at least two-thirds of the ballots properly completed with votes for, against, or abstaining within the time limit laid down for the ballot which shall not be less than seven days.

4.8.3 In all cases of removal, the Presbytery will make themselves (or such other persons as they shall appoint) available for confidential contact with the removed elder with the object of achieving reconciliation or resolving any ongoing pastoral problem.

4.8.4 Where an elder is removed from office his ordination shall be revoked as from the date of removal (and any Ordination Certificate shall be cancelled and handed back to the Presbytery); the Presbytery shall issue an order to this effect and may give notice of the order to any relevant third party.

4.9 Dissolution of Ordination upon Elder's request

4.9.1 An elder may request the Presbytery to dissolve his ordination and the Presbytery may grant such request if satisfied that it is appropriate to do so and in furtherance of the Overriding Objective.

4.9.2 Where an elder's ordination is dissolved any Ordination Certificate shall be cancelled and handed back to the Presbytery; the Presbytery shall issue an order to this effect and may give notice of the order to any relevant third party.

4.10 Transfers of Elders out of and into IPC (outgoing & incoming Elders)

Outgoing Procedure

4.10.1 An elder wishing to transfer out of the IPC shall give not less than two months' written notice to the Presbytery of his intention to transfer his ordination out of the IPC to a different church (and particulars of that church shall be given) in which case the Presbytery shall issue a letter of transfer to that church containing a character reference or recommendation and shall endorse his certificate of ordination with a memorandum of the transfer and the date upon which it takes effect.

Retention of Presbytery Powers of Removal & Dissolution after Transfer

4.10.2 Where an elder has transferred his ordination out of the IPC to a different church, the Presbytery may still exercise its powers of removal from and dissolution of office but such

powers shall not be exercised until the different church has had the opportunity of making representations to the Presbytery on any relevant matter.

Prohibition of outgoing IPC Elder to entice members away from IPC

4.10.3 An elder wishing to transfer out of the IPC to a different church is strictly forbidden whilst he remains in office as an IPC elder from seeking to influence or encourage whether directly or indirectly any member of his congregation to transfer their membership to that or any other church.

Procedure for Incoming Elders (also see §7.8)

4.10.4 An elder or other ordained officer of a different church may apply to the Presbytery for a transfer of his ordination into the IPC in which case a Presbytery Committee shall examine him in accordance with IPC Practice and if satisfied as to his fitness for office shall present him to the Presbytery for admission in accordance with the procedures set out in §7.8.

4.11 Changes of Function by Elders from Ruling Elder to Pastor or vice versa

4.11.1 An elder who is functioning as a Ruling Elder may apply to the Presbytery for permission to change his function to that of Pastor, and similarly an elder who is functioning as a Pastor may apply to the Presbytery for permission to transfer his function to that of Ruling Elder.

4.11.2 A Presbytery Committee shall examine him in accordance with IPC Practice and if satisfied as to his fitness for transferring to the function desired shall present him to the Presbytery for admission to that office in accordance with the procedures set out in §7.9.

4.12 Ordination Certificates, Installation Memoranda and Terms and Conditions

4.12.1 The Presbytery shall issue every elder with a Certificate of Ordination recording the details of his ordination (including whether he is ordained to the office of Ruling Elder or Pastor) and duly sealed with the Presbytery Seal.

4.12.2 Whenever an elder is installed in a particular congregation, the Presbytery shall issue that elder with a Memorandum of Installation which shall record any terms and conditions of the installation agreed between the elder and the congregation in which he is installed.

4.13 Remuneration of Elders

4.13.1 Attention is drawn to:

- (a) the law of trusts and doctrines of equity²⁴ which apply to elders including the principle that with certain exceptions, neither directly or indirectly may a trustee make a profit from his trust; and

²⁴ Snell's Principles of Equity explains it well: "There are canons of the Court of equity which have their foundation not in the actual commission of fraud, but in that hallowed orison, lead us not into temptation (Wormley v Wormley [1823] per Johnson J). With certain exceptions, neither directly or indirectly may a trustee profit from his trust. This rule is part of the wider principle that in order to protect a trustee against the fallibility of human nature he may not put himself in a position where his duty and his interest conflict, or where he may be able to take advantage of knowledge of the property which he acquired while trustee.

- (b) the Trustee Act 2000 section 29(2), the effect of which is to empower a trustee of a charitable trust to receive reasonable remuneration for services he provides to the trust to be paid out of any trust funds over which he is a trustee, but on the condition that all other trustees have agreed in writing that he may be so remunerated; and
- (c) the IPC Constitution which contemplates in clause 3(b) that the Pastor may be remunerated but is silent on remuneration for Ruling Elders.

4.13.2 The Presbytery may permit any elder whether a Ruling Elder or a Pastor to be paid remuneration and/or other benefits by way of a salary or an honorarium either out of congregational funds or presbytery funds or a mix of both, provided that:

- (a) where the remuneration is payable out of congregational funds, the Members of the congregation have approved the level of the remuneration and that remuneration does not exceed the recommended levels of remuneration set by the Presbytery from time to time; and
- (b) where the remuneration is payable out of presbytery funds, or a mix of both funds, the level or aggregate level of such remuneration does not exceed the recommended levels of remuneration set by the Presbytery from time to time; and
- (c) all Installed Members of the Presbytery have approved.

4.14 Church Register

4.14.1 The Session shall maintain preferably in electronic form a Church Register containing a historical record of:

- (a) Communing and non-communing members of the congregation;
- (b) Baptisms, whether by the IPC or in or by other churches;
- (c) Child participants in the Lord's Supper;
- (d) IPC Solemnisation of Marriages;
- (e) Ordinations to IPC Church Office, Transfers and Dissolutions of Ordinations;
- (f) Installations and Dissolutions of Installations;
- (g) Anointings of the Sick in the Congregation;
- (h) Deaths in the Congregation and IPC Funerals.

4.14.2 The Church Register shall be substantially in a form approved by the Presbytery and provided it is certified by the Session as being true to the best of their knowledge, information and belief as up to a particular date shall be conclusive evidence of the facts therein set out, although the Session are at liberty to correct errors where they are so satisfied.

4.14.3 The Church Register, although maintained by the Session, shall be the property of the Presbytery having oversight of that Session and the information it contains shall be kept private and confidential to the Session and Presbytery only, save where disclosure is required by law or custom, or where disclosure has been authorised for good and sufficient reason by the Presbytery Moderator and Clerk.

4.14.4 Information held on the Church Register relating to any person shall be disclosed to that person if they so require.

4.14.5 The Clerk to the Session shall from time to time supply to the Clerk of Presbytery such statistical or other information about membership and other matters in the congregation as he may require.

PART 5 – DEACONS

5.1 Composition of the Diaconate (Board of Deacons)

5.1.1 Every IPC congregation shall form and maintain a Diaconate which shall operate in close partnership with and under the supervision of the Session.

5.1.2 Deacons shall be appointed by the Session in accordance with IPC Practice and the Constitution and may be men or women, but in all cases church members in good standing.

5.1.3 The appointment shall be by way of commission (which shall be permanent) and installation into a congregation (which shall be dissoluble for good reason and only with the permission of the Presbytery).

5.1.4 The Diaconate is free to organise itself along the same lines of the Session, or in such other way as seems appropriate to the needs of the congregation and the resources of the Deacons, except that:

- (a) the same provisions regarding sabbatical leave, accountability, retirement, removal and dissolution shall apply to deacons as they apply to elders (with the necessary changes so that the word “diaconate” is substituted for “session”; “session” for “presbytery” and “commission” for “ordination”); and
- (b) nothing except pastoral business shall be confidential (subject to § 5.3.3 below) and copies of the minutes of Session and Diaconate meetings shall be mutually disclosed; and
- (c) deacons may by prior arrangement attend session meetings and elders may attend deacons meetings (subject to confidentiality of pastoral business or other business designated as confidential).

5.2 Giving effect to the Overriding Objective

The Diaconate must seek to give effect to the Overriding Objective when it exercises any of its powers or otherwise carries out any of its business.

5.3 Scope of Responsibilities for Deacons

5.3.1 The general responsibility of a Board of Deacons is to exhibit the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy towards members and non-members of the congregation and strangers on behalf of the church.²⁵

5.3.2 Deacons are free to manage, or be assigned by the Session, such work as seems appropriate having regard to the Overriding Objective.

²⁵ See OPC FG Chap 11 “*The Scriptures designate the office of deacon as distinct and perpetual in the church. Deacons are called to show forth the compassion of Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy toward the saints and strangers on behalf of the church. To this end they exercise, in the fellowship of the church, a recognised stewardship of care and gifts for those in need or distress. This service is distinct from that of rule in the church, etc.*”

5.3.3 If a deacon undertakes Pastoral Business it shall be kept confidential except that it may, if the Deacon thinks fit, be shared with the Session and the Session only, and shall be so shared if the Session reasonably request it.

5.4 Resolution of conflict between a Diaconate and a Session

5.4.1 Any apparently intractable problem arising between the Diaconate and the Session may be referred by any one deacon or elder for resolution by the Review Board of the Presbytery in such manner and adopting such procedures as the Board thinks appropriate but acting without avoidable delay.

5.4.2 Any Diaconate or Session who considers the decision of the Review Board is erroneous having regard to the Overriding Objective may appeal to the Synod provided that either the Presbytery or the Synod has given permission to appeal.

PART 6 – TRUSTEES

6.1 The Appointment, Removal and Resignation of Trustees

6.1.1 Attention is drawn to the fact the office of elder automatically carries with it the office of trustee, by reason of clause 3(b) of the IPC Constitution, but the office of trustee does not carry with it the office of elder and therefore the following provisions of this Part cover situations where trustees are appointed who are not elders.

6.1.2 The power to appoint and remove trustees of a congregation who are not also elders lies with the Presbytery who may at any time appoint individuals or a trust corporation including new or additional trustees.

6.1.3 No trustees will be appointed unless necessary – for example in cases where land and/or buildings are purchased or leased (“Church Land”) or in cases where monies are given or paid into a special fund with a designated charitable purpose.

6.1.4 If the Presbytery decides to appoint trustees in addition to elders it will normally appoint at least two deacons as trustees of that congregation (with their agreement) but, where that is not practicable, it may appoint other persons provided they are members of the congregation in good standing (i.e. not facing discipline situations – see §2.5).

6.1.5 The Presbytery may at any time and without giving any reason require the trustees or a Session of Elders or other elder in whom the trusts are vested to transfer Church Land to the Official Custodian under section 2 of the Charities Act 1993 in which case all the trustees in that congregation who are not elders shall be removed.

6.1.6 A trustee will immediately offer his resignation to the Presbytery if:

- (a) he no longer remains a member of the congregation for whom he is trustee or faces a discipline situation (see §2.5);
- (b) his personal interests significantly conflict with his functions, duties and powers;
- (c) he is made bankrupt or enters into a voluntary arrangement or composition with his creditors;
- (d) he is convicted of any serious criminal offence.

6.2 Giving Effect to the Overriding Objective

6.2.1 The Trustees must seek to give effect to the Overriding Objective when they exercise any of their powers or otherwise carry out any of its business.

6.2.2 The Presbytery is required to help the Trustees to further the Overriding Objective.

6.3 Functions, Duties and Powers of Trustees (“IPC Model Trusts”)

The functions, duties and powers of the trustees shall be (in addition to those conferred on them by law) all those contained in any IPC Model Trust or set of Trusts adopted by the Presbytery.

PART 7 – THE PRESBYTERY

7.1 Composition of the Presbytery and derivation of its Authority

7.1.1 The Presbytery shall consist of a council comprising the following categories of Presbytery members:

- (a) Elders ordained by Presbytery who are pastors, theologians or church planters until by discipline, dissolution or transfer they have left the Presbytery; and
- (b) Other Elders installed by Presbytery in local congregations until by discipline, dissolution or succession they have left the Session;
- (c) Those co-opted by Presbytery (such as seconded ministers or elders who have previously served in local congregations who have been drawn in for their wisdom and association with the work of IPC).

7.1.2 The authority of the Presbytery shall not derive consensually from the respective Sessions of the congregations under its care but rather the Presbytery shall be deemed to have its own intrinsic authority.

7.2 Administration of Presbytery Work and Conflicts of Interest

7.2.1 Although the provisions of § 4.6.1 make the sessions corporately accountable to the Presbytery in their governmental work, the work of the Presbytery shall be administered by each elder in his capacity as an individual Presbytery member not in his capacity as Session member working corporately within a session.

7.2.2 It shall be presumed unless it is proved to the contrary in any particular situation (for example in a situation involving an individual elders' legal duties as trustee) that no significant conflict of interests arises between the two capacities.

7.2.3 Accordingly each Presbytery member shall be free as far as possible to bring to the Presbytery an objective appraisal of the work and needs of his own Session as well as his own congregation.

7.2.4 Where an issue is raised concerning any reasonable doubt about whether there is a conflict of interests that issue shall be resolved by the Presbytery moderator in favour of the elder claiming a conflict of interest and the Moderator shall give directions on how that elder should proceed.

7.2.5 Attention is drawn to §4.6.3 requiring the Session to submit to the authority of the Presbytery subject to a right of appeal to the Synod.

7.3 Appointment and Function of Moderator

7.3.1 The Presbytery shall appoint annually one of their number to be their Moderator whose function shall include (in addition to any other function designated by the Presbytery):

- (a) convening Presbytery meetings;

- (b) determining the business to be brought before the Presbytery which shall include (in addition to any other business) such items on the Rolling Business List (referred to below) to be brought before the Presbytery as he shall see fit;
- (c) conducting and presiding over all Presbytery business.

7.3.2 The Presbytery may resolve to allow the Moderator an annual sum not exceeding £5,000 (which limit but not the remuneration itself shall be increased annually by reference to the Retail Prices Index) as an honorarium for his services payable in arrears by monthly instalments.

7.4 Appointment and Function of Stated Clerk

7.4.1 The Presbytery shall appoint annually one of their number to be their Stated Clerk whose function shall include (in addition to any other function designated by the Session):

- (a) keeping a record of all business conducted or to be conducted which shall normally be in the form of a cumulative rolling business list (“the Rolling Business List”) made available to all Presbytery members any one of whom may with the approval of the Moderator introduce a relevant item of business to be put on such list for bringing before the Presbytery;
- (b) being a contact person for communications with the Presbytery, Synod and others;
- (c) seeing that all business is conducted lawfully and in accordance with this code;
- (d) making the practical arrangements for the holding of Presbytery meetings and any worship service of the Presbytery;
- (e) the raising of funds to meet Presbytery expenditure and mission giving.

7.4.2 The Presbytery may resolve to allow the Clerk an annual sum not exceeding £5,000 (which limit but not the remuneration itself shall be increased annually by reference to the Retail Prices Index) as an honorarium for his services payable in arrears by monthly instalments.

7.5 Appointment and Function of Treasurer

7.5.1 The Presbytery shall appoint annually one of their number or an outsider to be Treasurer whose function shall include (in addition to any other function designated by the Session):

- (a) the operation of a bank or building society or other account for the funds of the Presbytery;
- (b) the maintenance of all book-keeping and other financial records;
- (c) the recovery of tax under the Inland Revenue Gift Aid Scheme or any other similar scheme under tax law;
- (d) the presentation from time to time of financial statements and budgets for consideration by the Presbytery and in such form as the Presbytery may require.

7.5.2 The Presbytery may resolve to allow the Treasurer an annual sum not exceeding £2,500 (which limit but not the remuneration itself shall be increased annually by reference to the Retail Prices Index) as an honorarium for his services payable in arrears by monthly instalments.

7.6 Missiology of the Presbytery and Effectiveness of the Moderator and Clerk

7.6.1 The Moderator and the Stated Clerk shall be pro-active with the assistance of others or by commissioning or appointing others in developing and implementing a strategy for the missiology of the Presbytery which shall include active steps for the planting of new IPC churches and for the establishment of an IPC seminary or other training organisation.

7.6.2 Where in each year the Presbytery consider the renewal of an existing appointment of the Moderator and Stated Clerk the Presbytery shall appraise the performance of each man and the extent to which each has been effective in furthering the missiology of the Presbytery under § 7.6.1 having regard to all his circumstances.

7.7 Presbytery Meetings & Special Meetings

7.7.1 The same provisions (except that relating to a quorum) for Session Meetings as set out in § 4.2 shall apply to Presbytery Meetings with the necessary changes so that the word “Presbytery” is substituted for “Session” and “Presbytery Review Board” for “Session Review Board”.

7.7.2 A presbytery meeting shall not be competent to proceed to business unless there is a quorum of at least three installed members, but any presbytery, by a majority vote of those present at a stated meeting, may fix its own quorum provided it is not smaller than the quorum of at least three installed members.

7.7.3 The Presbytery shall meet not less than twice per year at such times and venues as the moderator shall decide.

Special Meetings of the Presbytery

7.7.4 The moderator shall call a special meeting at the request or with the concurrence of one pastor and two ruling elders from at least two different churches. Should the moderator be for any reason unable to act, the stated clerk shall, under the same requirements, issue the call. If both moderator and stated clerk are unable to act, any two pastors and two ruling elders of at least three different churches shall have power to call a meeting.

7.7.5 Notice of the special meeting shall be sent not less than ten days in advance to each minister and to the Session of every church without a pastor. In the notice, the purpose of the meeting shall be stated, and no business other than that named in the notice is to be transacted. The Presbytery also shall convene when directed to do so by the Synod for the transaction of designated business only.

7.8 Admission Procedure for Elder from another church or denomination transferring into IPC

Where pursuant to §4.10.4, an elder or other ordained officer of a different denomination is presented for admission to the Presbytery by a Presbytery examining committee, the Presbytery shall only admit him following a three-quarters majority vote by secret ballot of all Presbytery members; such secret ballot shall only be valid if at least two thirds of the ballot papers are returned properly completed within the time stipulated for the return of the ballot papers.

7.9 Admission procedure for transfers between elder offices

Where pursuant to §4.11.2, a ruling elder is presented for admission to the function of Pastor (or vice versa) the Presbytery shall only admit him to that office following a three quarters majority vote of all those members present at the meeting (provided the meeting has a quorum).

7.10 Admission Procedure for a Congregation becoming part of IPC

7.10.1 The Presbytery may receive into its care a congregation wishing to become an IPC congregation either for fully organised status or mission status (“the New Congregation”) provided that:

- (a) All of the elders or other leaders of that congregation are IPC Elders or have transferred their ordinations into IPC;
- (b) The Presbytery is satisfied that at least two thirds of people in the New Congregation consent to becoming IPC members in accordance with Part 2 of this Code.
- (c) The Synod has given its approval after appropriate independent enquiry and a report to the Presbytery covering all relevant factors and recommendations including:
 - i. Any historical factors or traditions which could effect the relationship with the IPC;
 - ii. Any practices the congregation wishes to retain which are not part of IPC regular practices;
 - iii. Whether the church should be considered for fully organised status or mission status, and if the latter what steps the Synod would recommend for gaining a fully organised status.
- (d) The Presbytery shall be bound to follow any recommendations of the Synod but may ask the Synod to reconsider such recommendations not less than 6 months after receiving the same.

7.10.2 Upon such joining, the Presbytery Clerk shall take such steps as may be appropriate to ensure that the New Congregation:

- (a) identifies itself by name or other description as an IPC church; and
- (b) complies with all charity law and other relevant legal requirements for entry into the IPC.

7.10.3 An IPC congregation which has mission status shall take such steps as the Presbytery and Synod consider necessary to become a fully organised IPC congregation.

7.11 Procedure for effecting a separation of a Congregation from IPC

7.11.1 Where a Session of Elders of a congregation considers that the Presbytery as a whole has departed from the Book of Church Order (which includes not only this code but also the Constitution of IPC and all of its Doctrinal and Practice Statements) to such an extent that they can no longer remain in the Presbytery; or where the Presbytery considers that a congregation and its Session have departed from the Book of Church Order to such an extent that such elders

may no longer remain in meaningful fellowship; and where attempts at reconciliation have been exhausted; then separation may be effected by the Presbytery provided that:

- (a) All of the separating congregation's elders have transferred out of the IPC or otherwise have ceased to be IPC Elders installed in that congregation (thereby leaving either separate trustees or the Presbytery Moderator and Clerk as trustees of any property of that congregation – see §4.1.3 and §4.1.5);
- (b) The Presbytery (or, where any serious conflict of interest arises, any independent commission appointed to act jointly by the Presbytery and by the separating congregation) has granted a Certificate of Satisfaction that any property of the Retiring Congregation held on trust for the IPC has been (or will be under legally binding arrangements) fairly and justly dealt with, having first regard to the Overriding Objective and then all relevant circumstances including in particular the following factors:
 - i. the nature and terms of the trusts (implied or express) to which the property is or may be subject;
 - ii. the views and desires of any members of the Retiring Congregation who wish to remain as members of IPC and the likelihood of a continuing IPC congregation being viable;
 - iii. the views and desires of any members of the Retiring Congregation who do not wish to remain as IPC members;
 - iv. whether any property of the Retiring Congregation can properly be split between any continuing members and any new or different organisation which departing members are aspiring to join, and if so in what proportions;
 - v. in the event that a continuing IPC congregation is unlikely to be viable, whether the property can properly be given in its entirety to any new or different organisation or organisations which departing members are aspiring to join, and in what proportions if more than one.

7.11.2 The Presbytery (or, where any serious conflict of interest arises, any independent commission appointed to act jointly by the Presbytery and by the separating congregation) may direct that a pre-separation protocol be followed in accordance with IPC Practice before a separation is effected. The terms of the protocol shall include a timetable and giving a fair hearing by and to all those affected by the potential separation, as well as measures designed to avert such a separation.

7.12 Procedure for Planting or Winding Up an IPC Church Plant

7.12.1 The Presbytery shall initiate and oversee for all steps involving the planting, nurture and particularising of an IPC congregation or the winding up of an IPC congregation.

7.12.2 No step shall be taken by the Presbytery which is against the wishes of the Synod, and all steps which are taken shall so far as possible include involvement of and consultation with a congregation which is reasonably local to the church plant.

7.12.3 Such steps in relation to IPC church planters shall ordinarily be as follows:

- (a) The recruitment and training of potential church planters for IPC churches;
- (b) Their appointment and commissioning with specific missions over a specific time period;
- (c) Arranging their prayer, financial and pastoral support during such time period;
- (d) Monitoring and reviewing such arrangements;
- (e) Assessing the growth and health of a church plant and its prognosis;
- (f) Dealing with the transitional stages for bringing a church plant into a fully fledged particularised IPC church including all its legal requirements such as charity registration.
- (g) Winding up the church plant if it is not viable and assessing its pathology for the purpose of learning future lessons and nurturing hurting relationships and seeking to bring about reconciliation.

7.12.4 The Presbytery shall so far as possible encourage and review, and if necessary give directions for the planting of a daughter congregation by a local congregation.

7.13 General Powers of the Presbytery

The Presbytery shall have the following general powers²⁶ in addition to all other powers in common law or equity (and in this respect attention is drawn to §1.2 requiring the Presbytery to seek to give effect to the Overriding Objective when it exercises any power or otherwise carries out any business):

- (a) To receive and issue appeals, complaints, and references brought before it in an orderly manner. In cases in which the Session cannot exercise its authority, it shall have power to assume original jurisdiction.
- (b) To receive under its care candidates for the ministry; to examine and license candidates for the holy ministry; to receive, dismiss, ordain, install, remove and judge ministers;
- (c) To review the records of church Sessions, redress whatever they may have done contrary to order and take effectual care that they observe the Constitution of the Church;
- (d) To establish the pastoral relation by installation and to dissolve it at the request of one or both of the parties, or where the interest of religion imperatively demands it, in accordance with this Code;
- (e) To set apart evangelists to their proper work; to require ministers to devote themselves diligently to their sacred calling and to censure the delinquent;
- (f) To see that the lawful injunctions of the higher courts are obeyed;
- (g) To condemn erroneous opinions which injure the purity or peace of the Church; to visit churches for the purpose of inquiring into and redressing the evils that may have arisen in them; to unite or divide churches, at the request of the members thereof; to

²⁶ Most of these are taken from and follow the PCA, with modifications and further additions suitable for UK law.

- form and receive new churches; to take special oversight of churches without pastors; to dissolve churches; to dismiss churches with their consent;
- (h) To devise measures for the enlargement of the Church within its bounds; in general, to order whatever pertains to the spiritual welfare of the churches under its care;
 - (i) To appoint trustees, create its own trusts or form corporations (including forming itself into any kind of corporation) either for the better administration of its business or for furtherance of any of its objectives or both;
 - (j) To purchase, lease, let, mortgage, charge, license and generally manage and deal with any property (whether movable or immovable);
 - (k) To put or leave any shares stocks securities insurance policies or other property whatever (including money) in the name or names of any nominee or nominees for the Presbytery;
 - (l) to delegate all or any of their powers to any person or committee;
 - (m) Any of member of Presbytery for the time being a solicitor, accountant or other person engaged in any profession or business shall be entitled to charge and be paid all usual professional or other reasonable and proper charges for business done or services rendered or time spent by him or his firm on the instructions of the Presbytery;
 - (n) To propose to the Synod such measures as may be of common advantage to the Church at large;
 - (o) To extend or abridge any time limit in this Code.
 - (p) To convene any meeting at short notice
 - (q) To form a seminary or any other educational establishment and transfer funds thereto.

GLOSSARY OF WORDS & PHRASES

WORD OR PHRASE	MEANING
Accountability	Line of responsibility
Book of Church Order	Collection of documents forming the government or polity of the church and specifying its practices and doctrines.
Caucus	A private meeting typically in the middle of another public meeting
Congregational Government	Government or rule primarily by the Congregation as over against elected elders.
Deacon	An office in the church carrying under this code the responsibility to exhibit the compassion of the Lord Jesus Christ in a manifold ministry of mercy towards members and non-members of the congregation and strangers on behalf of the church. See § 5.3.1

Diaconate	The body of Deacons
Elder or Pastor	An office in the church carrying under this code the powers of a trustee as well as the spiritual calling of an under-shepherd of Christ.
General Assembly	Meeting of synods
Installation	Process whereby an elder or deacon is attached to a congregation.
IPC Constitution	The Constitution drawn up in 1978 and containing earlier material drawn up by Francis Schaeffer as the constitution of the International Church Presbyterian Reformée.
IPC Practice	The body of Practice adopted and drawn up from time to time in the IPC (e.g. questions to be asked of church officers or members, or parents of infants being baptised.)
Missiology	Mission, and mission policy.
Ordination	The setting apart of a person in a church office to follow a calling in the church, which is generally recognised by the church.
Parity	Equality in governmental power
Pastoral Business	The work that a pastor usually does on an individual one to one basis, and which by its nature is confidential.
Presbyterian Government	A type of church government by presbyters or elders.
Presbytery	A council comprising all elders within a certain geographic or other designated area. Under this code it is made up of three categories of ordained men : (a) Pastors, Theologians and Church Planters; (b) Ruling Elders; and (c) Co-opted men.
Pre-separation Protocol	An agreed procedure tailor-made to fit any given situation the purpose of which is to achieve fairness and orderliness before any congregation separates from IPC.
Retail Prices Index	A government table of statistics for evaluating inflation, by giving the annual percentage rate of inflation for each given year.
Session	A council of elders who rule the local church.
Quorum	Minimum number of people at a meeting to make it valid for conducting business.
Session	A council of elders.
Sea Kayak	A boat for invigorating tired elders and their wives with sea air, and life on the ocean wave.
Synod	Meeting of Presbyteries, involving a council superior to the Presbyteries.
Trustee	A person in whom property or other things (such as adherence to a certain theological doctrine) is vested on behalf of a body of other persons.
Westminster Confession of Faith	The confession of faith and the larger and shorter catechisms have been rightly said to be the finest creedal formulations of the Christian Faith that the church of Christ has yet produced (John Murray). They were drawn up by order of Parliament in the 17 th century, and have since been used by thousands of churches all over the world as the statements of central faith.