

The Presbytery of Lanark

Congregational Records Guidance Notes

Guidance notes for congregational record keepers.

The following notes are provided in order to assist Session Clerks, Clerks to Congregational Boards, Safeguarding Co-ordinators, Roll Keepers and others who keep Congregational Records to ensure that these records are kept in the proper manner and are properly presented for attestation by Presbytery.

The following applies to all records:

1. All books should be in good physical condition
2. Pages should not be stuck into books
3. Loose leaf records are acceptable when pages are consecutively numbered and are kept securely together until being permanently bound
4. Any large blank spaces at the end of typed minutes should be scored through
5. All entries should be legible and written in permanent ink

Kirk Session Minutes

The form of Kirk Session Minutes

The following are extracts from the booklet 'The Office of Session Clerk' available on line at http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/3133/session_clerk.pdf : -

'.....Until comparatively recently the Minutes of Kirk Session meetings were recorded by the Session Clerk in long hand in a bound volume. Increasingly Minutes are now recorded in loose-leaf form.' (Page 6)

'The General Assembly has approved the keeping of Minutes in loose-leaf form provided certain precautions are taken. One copy should be printed on heavier paper for eventual binding. Each page should be numbered consecutively. Each page should begin with the last word of the preceding page. When the Minutes are submitted for approval, each page should be initialled by the Moderator, and the Minute as a whole should be signed by both the Moderator and the Clerk. From time to time the signed pages are to be bound together into a conveniently-sized volume.' (Page 6)

The minute of each meeting should contain all of the following:

- a) The place and date of all meetings should be shown
- b) Meetings should be opened and closed with prayer
- c) A sederunt should be included
- d) There should be marginal references or headings
- e) There should be no blank spaces between entries (or these should be ruled off)
- f) Blank spaces at the end of typed minutes should be ruled off.
- g) All minutes signed by the Moderator/Chairman and the Clerk and dated with the date of signing.
- h) Alterations should be signed and dated by the Moderator/Chairman and the Clerk.
- i) No papers should be pasted or clipped into the minute.
- j) If loose-leaf, there should be evidence that the minutes are bound from time to time.
- k) The Clerk should ensure that, prior to the annual inspection by Presbytery, sufficient space is left after the last signed Minute in the Kirk Session Minute Book to allow for the Presbytery's attestation to be inserted.

The following items of business must be dealt with each year and recorded in Kirk Session Minutes:

1. The attestation of the Communion Roll
2. The election of a Presbytery elder
3. The appointment of a Safeguarding Co-ordinator
4. The appointment of a Safeguarding Panel

In addition, any changes in those persons recorded in the Safeguarding Register must be approved by Session and those approved changes recorded in the minutes. It is therefore recommended that Safeguarding be a standing item on the agenda of all ordinary Kirk Session meetings.

Also, if Unitary/Quoad Omnia Constitution:

5. The approval of annual accounts and budget
6. A minute of the Stated Annual Meeting of the congregation (which must be held between 1 January and 31 March)

Congregational Board Minutes (where applicable)

The form of Congregational Board Minutes

The comments with regard to the form of Kirk Session Minutes also apply to Congregational Board Minutes as do items a) – j) and 5. & 6. above.

Safeguarding Register

The Safeguarding Register, the list of those who have completed Safeguarding/Disclosure checks, must be on the form provided by The Church of Scotland, available at: http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/word_doc/0009/3240/congregational_register.doc

or in pdf form at: http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/3241/congregational_register.pdf.

Guidance on this can be found at:

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/8925/congregational_register_guidance.pdf.

As outlined above, all changes to the Register must be approved by the Kirk Session.

From 2013 Kirk Sessions will be required to present two hard copies of the Register for the immediate past year, along with the Presbytery endorsed Register from the year preceding, to Presbytery during the Annual Attestation of Records.

Communion Roll and Supplementary Roll

The General Assembly of 1995 agreed that *"only one roll [need] be kept, but in such a way that names can be coded or annotated so as to identify members, adherents, children attending communion, children not attending communion, persons on the supplementary roll, and any other categories a Kirk Session may choose."* (Office of The Session Clerk Page 9)

Communion roll should have a list of names of those removed during the year, along with the date, reason and means of removal.

Computerised Rolls

"The printout shall contain the names and addresses, with date and manner of admission, of all members as at 31st December of the year under inspection. It shall also contain an appendix recording the names and addresses of people who have been removed from the Roll during the year, along with the date, reason and means of removal. The form and style of the printout shall be approved by the Superintendence Committee, or other committee appointed by the Presbytery for this purpose, before it first comes into use, and the committee shall report such approval to the Presbytery." (2000 Act 06)

"After attestation by the Presbytery, annual printouts shall be kept as historical records, and shall be preserved in a substantial loose-leaf binder, or permanently bound at intervals not exceeding ten years." (2000 Act 06)

The Roll should be printed out in alphabetical order of surname and not geographically or in elder's districts.

Property and Financial Records

Guidance for Property Conveners and Treasurers is available from the Presbytery Property and Finance Committees respectively.

Annual Attestation of Records

The Annual Attestation of Records will take place on the April Committee evening. Congregational office bearers (or Kirk Session appointed deputies) are asked to bring the records to Greyfriars Parish Church, Lanark at a specified time. Those expected to be in attendance will be the Session Clerk, Clerk to Financial Court, Property Convener and Safeguarding Co-ordinator from each congregation. They will be able to have contact with the Presbytery committee responsible for their work.

Once the records have been inspected the member of the committee will stamp the records and pass them to the Moderator, Clerk or Depute Clerk for signing. Records will then be returned immediately to the congregation.

Tea and Coffee will be available in the hall for the office bearers who are in attendance.

Congregations are asked to attend in areas to ensure a fair split of those arriving with records to be attested at the following times :-

Area 1: 6:30pm: Carnwath, Forth: St. Paul's, Lanark: Greyfriars, Lanark: St. Nicholas, United Parish of Carstairs and Carstairs Junction

Area 2: 7pm: Coalburn, Douglas Valley, Kirkmuirhill, Lesmahagow: Abbeygreen, Lesmahagow: Old

Area 3: 7:30pm: Biggar, Black Mount, Cairngryffe, Libberton & Quothquan, Symington, Upper Clyde

Area 4: 8pm: Carluke: Kirkton, Carluke: St. John's, Carluke: St. Andrew's, Crossford, Kirkfieldbank, Law

The Ministers of the charges should also attend at the appropriate time to allow their mileage log books to be inspected by the Ministries Committee

We extend our grateful thanks to all who maintain our official records and offer the undernoted checklist to assist Kirk Sessions who are responsible for ensuring that all the rolls and records of their congregation are correct and properly kept.

Please submit for inspection

- Congregational Roll and Supplementary Roll
- Kirk Session Minute Book/s
- a form listing the names of all approved children's workers within the congregation (ie those who have completed Safeguarding/Disclosure checks)
- Congregational Board Minute Book/s
- Baptismal Register
- Risk Assessment - DATA/IT Security Policy
- Property Information as required by the Resources Committee including an up-to-date RAMS document.
- Accounts – if they are ready for presentation please bring one set – if not please forward a copy to the Finance Convener for transmission to the Accounts Inspection Committee no later than 31st March.

The following appointments must be marked with a slip of paper as this will greatly assist the Committee and save us reading through lots of pages. Note that minute books which are not so marked will be returned, unattested, for resubmission once so marked :-

In Kirk Session minutes

- A minute recording the annual attestation of the Communion Roll
- A minute recording the annual appointment of a Safeguarding Co-ordinator
- A minute recording the annual appointment of the Safeguarding Panel
- Minutes recording changes in the Safeguarding Register
- A minute recording the election of a Presbytery elder

In Congregational Board minutes (or, if Unitary/ quoad omnia, Kirk Session minutes)

- A minute recording the approval of the annual accounts and budget
- A minute of the Stated Annual Meeting (which must be held between 1 January and 31 March)

*Guidance Notes adopted by the Presbytery of Lanark, 1st May 2012
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