

Leadership of COSEN 2015

The shape of leadership

The key challenge in thinking about leadership is that COSEN is a network, not an organization. As such, the Steering Group functions primarily in a coordinating role. The network is diverse representing a wide range of views within the evangelical constituency of the Church of Scotland. It is the job of the steering group to support the network by working with local people in delivering events and supporting each other in prayer.

COSEN's leadership structures must facilitate networking and are intended to remain as structure-light as possible. Other than the requirements to become a confessional member of the Church of Scotland no "membership" or statement of faith is asked for.

Being a network there is no single identified "leader", no voting on policy and no-one will be paid for working for COSEN. The style of leadership is consensual and collaborative.

In looking at what kind of leadership and structure COSEN should have, different models were considered along with their strengths and weaknesses.

A more "committee" structure of leadership was rejected, because:

- it demands too much of fewer people
- it narrows the circle of people who have a say in policy and decision-making
- it feels more like an organisation than a network.

After discussion it was agreed the current structure has many strengths and is the right shape for COSEN at this point. Details are outlined below:

A core group constituting of 3 people that group would include

- a secretary (for minutes, calling and chairing meetings)
- an external liaison person who would be the "go-to" person for external agencies
- a third person recognized for their wisdom/common sense

This group is responsible for day-to-day decisions but any major decisions, especially public statements, require consultation with the steering group.

A steering group with maximum membership 15-16 people all active in ministry

- These people will be appointed for a 4 year period with the option to extend for another 2 years for members with key posts
- People can be re-appointed after being "out" for a year
- It is recognised the post of secretary may require a time commitment better suited to a retired person
- They will represent the best possible balance of age, gender, geographical location and theological views within the modern evangelical spectrum

Meetings should be approx. 4 times yearly and should have a defined agenda and time scale, without unduly inhibiting discussion. The steering group is a vision-casting and decision-making group, a forum for thinking through issues, and a context for building prayerful fellowship.

Changes to the Core/Steering Groups

Over time the Steering Group and Core Group will change with people going on and coming off. It was decided to model this on the Kirk Session which is a self-replicating body that has served the Church of Scotland well since the Reformation.

Anyone on the Steering Group can propose a new member but must do so to the Core Group, not the whole Steering Group. This will allow a smaller body to give prayerful consideration to the suitability of all proposed candidates. If after prayerful consideration the Core Group wish to bring forward a nomination, the proposal will be put from them (not the proposer) to the whole Steering Group for approval.

New members should be chosen intentionally for their unique ability to make a contribution, and/or to balance the 4 criteria (age, gender, geography, theology).

Steering Group members will be asked to commit to:

- serve for 4 years
- attend at least 2 Steering Group meetings per year
- contribute to organizing at least 1 event per year
- be part of a local COSEN "huddle"/prayer group/Preachers Picnic/whatever

On the occasion a member of the Core Group of 3 wishes to retire or stand down, where possible, advance notice should be given. It will then be the Core Groups responsibility to email the Steering Group seeking nominations. These nominations will then be given prayerful consideration by the Core Group before a final nomination is brought to the Steering Group for its prayerful consideration and hopeful acceptance.

Networking with other evangelical groups

COSEN is not an organization but a network. It is fully expected that people who are part of other evangelical organizations such as Forward Together, CLAN, Covenant Fellowship, etc., will also be a part of COSEN.

Given the wide theological range of evangelicalism today is it intended that COSEN can be a place where individuals from right across the spectrum can support each other in prayer and in their life and witness.

Through its events COSEN will actively work towards being such a place.

COSEN Steering Group Feb 2015

