



CHAIRPERSON'S ROLE

Key Points

presiding at meetings in a manner which:

- *assists the council to discern the will of God as far as possible*
- *meets the needs and purposes of the council and its members.*

4.6

The procedures in this Manual make many demands on the person chairing a meeting. It is essential that the chairperson has a thorough knowledge of the whole of the Manual, including the understandings detailed in Chapters 1 and 2 which underpin the principles involved. Careful training for any person appointed to chair a council of the Church should be expected by that council. Each Synod has provision for such equipping in the necessary skills.

The chairperson's role can be summarised as presiding at meetings in a manner which assists the council to discern the will of God as far as possible, and meets the needs and purposes of the council and its members.

The chairperson has considerable discretion and responsibility in any meeting, including:

- reminding the council of its responsibilities and powers, and the purpose of that particular meeting;
- inviting the council to review its agenda;
- checking that council members agree to work together through a particular model of decision-making;
- declaring the method of voting on recommendation from the Business Committee;
- calling speakers, ensuring those both for and against the proposal are heard;
- calling for times of prayer or reflective silence as appropriate;
- ruling on matters of procedure;
- assessing whether it is time for the council to consider moving from one method of decision-making to another.
- Under consensus procedures, additional responsibilities include:
 - seeking response to speeches and advising the council of the mood of the meeting as it becomes apparent;
 - summarising main themes of a discussion and suggesting a particular focus for the next stage;
 - posing questions to check if consensus has been reached (sample questions in chapter 6, paragraphs 6.6 and 6.9);
 - encouraging decisions step by step rather than only at the end of the consensus procedures.

The chairperson may be advised by a Business Committee and/or a Facilitation Group, but will certainly need to follow closely the content of the council's discussion as well as to preside over the process of discussion.