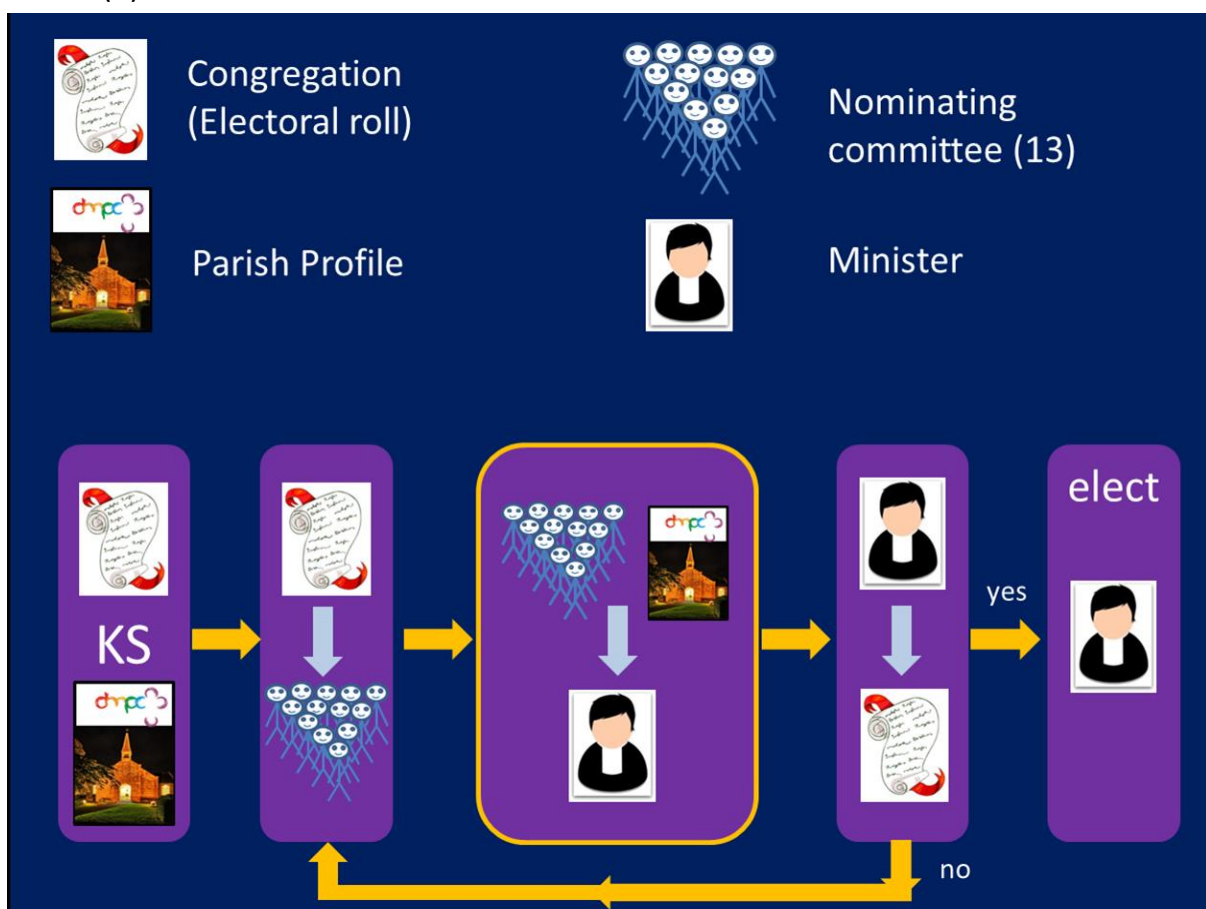


## Vacancy Procedure

The diagram below illustrates the main stages in the process –

1. the Kirk Session prepares an Electoral Register and the Parish Profile - **complete**
2. the congregation appoint a Nominating Committee - **complete**
3. the Nominating Committee, helped by the Parish Profile, propose a 'Sole Nominee'
4. the 'Sole Nominee' preaches before the whole congregation, who then vote for or against
5. if 'for' the call to the new minister is then prepared: of 'no', it's back to stage (2)



The right of a congregation to choose and call their own minister is firmly entrenched in the regulations of the Church of Scotland. The rather complicated rules are designed to ensure, therefore, that the appointment of a new minister is a decision of the congregation.

The congregation begins this process by selecting a **Nominating Committee** [in our case comprising 13 people] to act on their behalf: the task of the Nominating Committee is to bring forward a sole 'nominee', on whom the whole congregation then has the chance to vote. It'll be important that as a congregation we uphold the

Nominating Committee in their task by prayerfully seeking the Lord's leading for them.

Prior to the selection of a Nominating Committee, however, there are a couple of important steps which require to be taken – and these are now in progress.

The first is the task of drawing up an **Electoral Register** – that's to say, a list of all those who are entitled, either as a member or as an 'adherent', to exercise a vote in both selecting the Nominating Committee, and then later approving (or not) the sole nominee: this register (as you'll see from the terms of the 'Edict' below) is now being prepared by the Kirk Session and will be available for inspection to ensure that any omissions can be rectified. Once this register has been prepared and agreed, a date will be set (probably some time in March) for the selection of the Nominating Committee, and due notice will be given about that.

The Kirk Session is also required to prepare a **Parish Profile**: this provides not only a description of the parish and the congregation, but also sets out the sort of ministry which the Kirk Session believes is now needed to take forward all that the Lord calls us to here. This important document can be a great help to those considering whether this is a congregation to which the Lord may be calling them – and it also, of course, informs and directs the thinking of the Nominating Committee. Please pray for the Kirk Session as they prepare this Parish Profile.

As part of the process, the Presbytery appoint an **Advisory Committee**: the Kirk Session met with the Advisory Committee on Tuesday of this past week (27<sup>th</sup> Jan). The role of the Advisory Committee is (a) to provide guidance at the outset of the whole vacancy process, (b) at the end of the process, before a sole nominee is presented to the congregation, to confirm that the procedures have been followed and to provide an objective assessment of the suitability of the nomination, and (c) to be available throughout the process, if required, to offer external guidance and help.

Please be praying, then –

- for **Mike Frew** in his responsibilities as Interim Moderator: pray that he would be given the stamina, wisdom and grace which he needs as, increasingly, different tasks fall to him in relation to the forthcoming vacancy; and that he would be richly blessed himself through his involvement with us here:
- for the **Kirk Session** as they prepare the Parish Profile: pray that they would be enabled to provide good leadership at this time, ensuring a steady continuation of the ministry and ministries we exercise as a fellowship of God's people: in that connection pray for the appointment of a 'locum' minister to help cover the Sunday worship and pastoral needs.
- that the Lord would guide and over-rule in the composition of the **Nominating Committee** and in the appointment by that committee of a convener:
- that through the whole process the Lord would sovereignly put in place the ministry which will move forward His purposes among and through us.

