

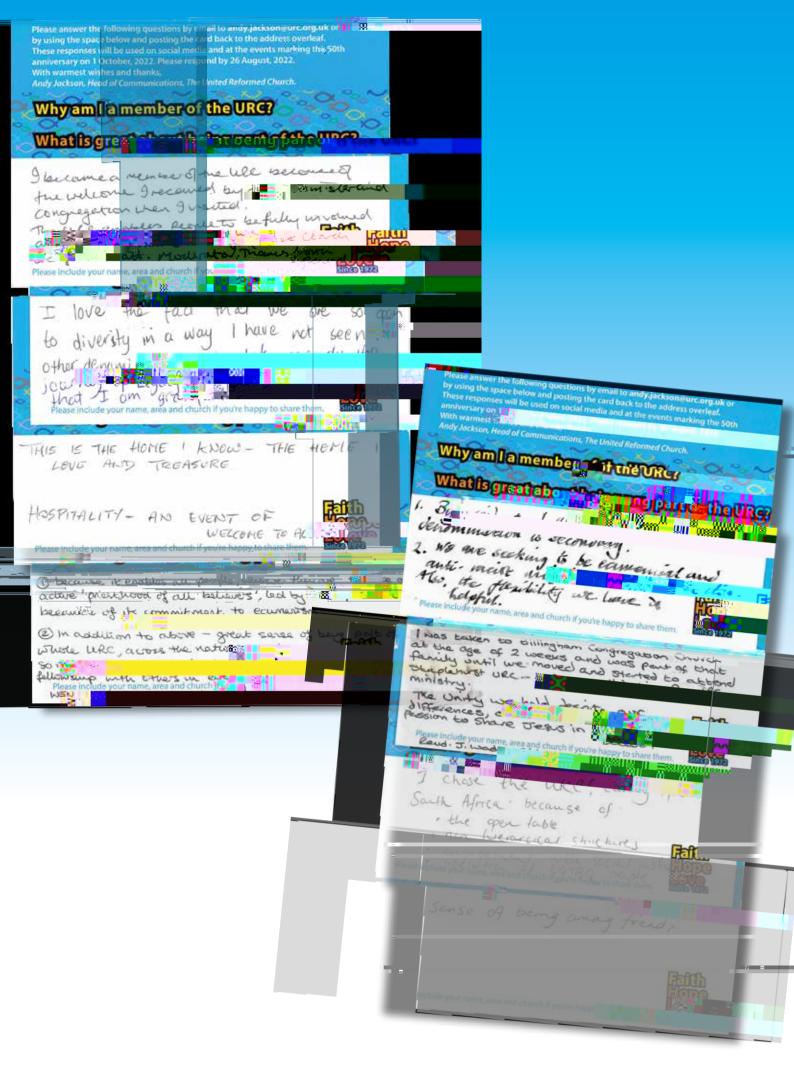
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Produced by the Communications Team, on behalf of the Business Committee The United Reformed Church, Church House, 86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT.

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2 of 283 United Reformed Church – General Assembly, July 2022

United Reformed Church – General Assembly, July 2022

As you prepare for Assembly, I trust that you will do so prayerfully. The words in this book represent a great deal of work done on behalf of the Church, and as you read

Assembly Executive

The Clerk moved Resolution 3:

3. Assembly Executive resolves to add the Rules of Procedure 1.3: unless they resolve to use the Standing Orders of the 2018 General Assembly.

Assembly Executive agreed.

The Clerk moved the amended Resolution 1:

1. Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Assembly Executive agrees the revised Standing Orders as set out in the amended paper A1 of Assembly Executive November 2021 with immediate effect.

Assembly Executive agreed.

The Clerk moved Resolution 2:

2. Assembly Executive reminds committees, synods, and District Councils of rule 1.3 of the Rules of Procedure: The Standing Orders...shall apply to all meetings of the Assembly and the Assembly Executive and, in so far as they are applicable, to meetings of synods, District Councils and their committees, unless they resolve to use the Standing Orders of the 2018 General Assembly.

Assembly Executive agreed.

During consideration of the resolutions, considerable discussion took place regarding the requirement (at 12.13) for a two-thirds majority when a vote is taken. Mr Alan Yates suggested a threshold of more than two thirds and suggested increasing from 67% to 80%. The Clerk undertook to take up this issuemt Reasihe r and sug (s)4 55The C4 5512.9 (i)1.9]TJ(

21/22

Paper N2Church Life ReviewThe General Secretary presented an initial update from the Church Life Review Group,
and responded to a number of questions and comments. The Moderator noted that
Assembly Executive would have further opportunity to address the Church Life Review
in a later session.

The Chaplain led the meeting in wo[24.3344 Tmseoh(ng i)6 The09 Tc -0.004 Tw 1 -1.16.891(T)-5 (r)1

Assembly Executive

Assembly Executive

21/29	
Paper R1	MIND
The General Secretary presented paper R1	expressed thanks to the Revd Sarah Moo

The General Secretary presented paper R1, expressed thanks to the Revd Sarah Moore for extensive work on the drafting for this paper, and moved the Resolution:

- 1. Acting on behalf of the General Assembly, Assembly Executive rescinds resolution 40 2021.
- 2. Acting on behalf of the General Assembly, Assembly Executive adopts the 'Process for dealing with cases of discipline involving ministers and Church Related Community Workers' ('Disciplinary Process') detailed in Paper R1 of the General Assembly Book of Reports 2021 as amended in the document accompanying this resolution.
- 3. Acting on behalf of the General Assembly, Assembly Executive rescinds resolution 42 (a) and (b) 2021.
- 4. Instructs the General Secretary to make any necessary consequent changes to lettering/number necessary in the light of these changes.
 - a) The provisions of the new Disciplinary Process concerning appointments to the Assembly Standing Panels for Discipline, the Disciplinary Investigation and Commission Panels, the Appeal Commissions List and the posts of Assembly Representative for Discipline, Secretary to Assembly Commissions for Discipline and to Disciplinary Appeal Commissions are to come into force at the close of this session of the Assembly Executive meeting at High Leigh on 22-24 November 2021.
 - b) The Assembly Executive thanks those who had indicated a willingness to serve on Synod Standing Panels for Discipline and asks synods to release them from this commitment.

It was noted that the Moderator, Clerk and General Secretary have deemed that changed circumstances justify this Resolution under 7.6.4 of the Standing Orders.

The Resolution was put, and Assembly Executive agreed.

Session six

21/30Church Life ReviewPaper N2Church Life ReviewAssembly Executive met in groups before convening in plenary session.

The Resolutions were put for discussion:

- 1. Assembly Executive welcomes the initial report of the Church Life Review Group, and affirms its direction of travel.
- 2. Assembly Executive affirms the proposal to engage in partnership with Theos to undertake research into the identity, hopes, dreams and expectations of local congregations within the United Reformed Church.

- 3. Assembly Executive affirms the proposal to work with Moore Kingston Smith to analyse income, expenditure and capital across the family of the General Assembly and the synods. It encourages all parts of the United Reformed Church to engage positively in this process.
- 4. Assembly Executive requests the General Secretariat to engage in a quick and thoughtful review of present structures and bring proposals to General Assembly 2022 for any immediate rationalisation that might be possible.

Mr Rueben Watt proposed an amendment that the words 'and thoughtful' be added after 'quick' in Resolution 4. This was seconded by the Revd Paul Robinson

The amendment was carried.

The Resolutions were put simultaneously.

Assembly Executive agreed

Worship was led by the Chaplain, and the meeting adjourned at 20:55.

Wednesday 25 November 2021

Session seven

21/31

The Session was opened in worship led by the Chaplain.

The Convenor of the Education and Learning Committee, Mr Alan Yates, reported with sadness that the Revd Samantha White has given notice that she will be demitting office as Principal of Westminster College. Mr Yates expressed appreciation for her service to the college, and sought Assembly Executive's prayers for the governors and staff.

The General Secretary reported that Ms Francis Brienen will be leaving her post as Deputy General Secretary (Mission) in spring 2022. He noted that in the midst of a review making a permanent appointment would not be appropriate. A suitable solution is being sought by the General Secretariat, who sought Assembly Executive's approval to make appropriate interim arrangements, to be agreed by the Assembly Officers. No formal resolution was put, but Assembly Executive clearly indicated its approval.

21/32

Paper N1

Jubilee Planning Group

Mr Andy Jackson and Dr Sam Richards presented Paper N1, which was discussed informally.

21/33

Paper H1 (from 21/26)

Confidentiality Policy

The Revd Paul Whittle, having consulted with the Legal Adviser, proposed the following amendments:

2.1: Add to the end of para "(hereafter termed as workers)"

5.3: Add at the beginning, under the heading:

"Elders, church members and volunteers will operate this policy in line with the Data Privacy Notices of their church."

5.5: First sentence, amend end of sentence after 'open prayers' to read "unless express consent and permission has been given by the individual or is a legitimate interest as outlined in the Data Privacy Notices of the local church."

Following brief discussion, the amendments were put. Assembly Executive agreed.

Mr Whittle moved the amended Resolution H1. Assembly Executive agreed.

The session closed at 10:40, and the meeting was concluded with the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, led by the Chaplain.

Standing Orders

- 4.6 The Moderator has absolute discretion to pause or adjourn the meeting at any time, and to remove any attendees from the meeting if their conduct falls short of the standards expected in church.
- 4.7 In all but the smallest meetings, it is helpful if the Moderator is not also the online host. The host may be a staff member(s) or volunteer(s) who are not a member of the meeting in the same way that such people may assist with stewarding meetings.
- 4.8 In any event, no technical failure shall invalidate any decisions made.

5. Attendance

5.1 All meetings are required to meet any previously agreed quorum, where such a quorum has been specified.

6. Interpretation of Sta

nThe host m

7.6

back shall be debated and voted upon before the relevant report is itself debated. To carry such a motion **two-thirds** of the votes cast must be given in its favour. When a report has been received for debate, and before any motions consequent upon it are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion.

- 12.3 During the meeting of the Assembly and on the report of a committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the Clerk of any new motions which arise from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of motions already presented. During the course of the debate a new motion or amendment may be stated orally without supporting speech in order to ascertain whether a member is willing to second it.
- 12.4 No motion or amendment shall be spoken to by its proposer, debated, or put to the Assembly unless it is known that there is a seconder. The only exceptions to this are motions presented on behalf of a committee, of which printed notice has been given, and the procedural motions in Standing Orders 12.12, 12.13, and 12.14. The procedural motions in Standing Orders 12.12, 12.13, and 12.14 may be moved and spoken to without the proposer having first obtained and announced the consent of a seconder. They must, however, be seconded before being put to the vote, and precedence as between the procedural motions is determined by the fact that after one of them is before the Assembly no other motion c1 (a si)6 (ow)6 (fd[(t)al)6 (u)2 (m)-3 (6 (l)6 (i) 3 (i)6 (se4 (i)6 (m)-fec)4 (o)26 (y)4 (not set the construction of the construction of

an unfair use is being made of this rule or that deferral would have the effect of annulling the motion. To carry this motion, **two-thirds** of the votes cast must be given in its favour. At the discretion of the Moderator, the General Secretary may be instructed by a further motion, duly seconded, to refer the matter for consideration by other councils and/or by one or more committees of the Assembly. The General Secretary shall provide for the deferred motion to be presented again at the next Meeting of the General Assembly.

13. Timing of speeches and of other business

- 13.1 Save by prior agreement of the Business Committee, speeches made in the presentation of reports concerning past work of Assembly committees which are to be open to question, comment or discussion shall not exceed five minutes.
- 13.2 The Assembly may meet in parallel sessions or breakout rooms to consider the past work of Assembly committees for questions and comments. Any draft motions arising therefrom must be dealt with in a plenary session of the Assembly.
- 13.3 Save by the prior agreement of the Business Committee, speeches made in support of the motions from any Assembly committee, including the Assembly Executive, or from any Synod shall not in aggregate exceed 15 minutes, nor shall speeches in support of any particular committee or Synod motion exceed five minutes, (eg a committee with four motions may not exceed 15 minutes), unless a longer period be recommended by the Business Committee or determined by the Moderator.
- 13.4 Each subsequent speaker in any debate shall be allowed five minutes unless the Moderator shall determine otherwise; it shall, in particular, be open to the Moderator to determine that all speeches in a debate or from a particular point in a debate shall be of not more than a different specified number of minutes.
- 13.5 When a speech is made on behalf of a committee, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by giving name and accreditation to the Assembly.
- 13.6 Secretaries of committees and members of staff who are not members of Assembly may speak on the report of a committee for which they have responsibility at the request of the Convenor concerned. They may speak on other reports with the consent of the Moderator. Staff should not normally seek permission from the Moderator to speak outside there are of responsibility.
- 13.7 In each debate, no one shall address the Assembly more than once without the permission of the Moderator, except that at the close of each debate the proposer of the motion or the amendment, as the case may be, shall have the right to reply, but must strictly confine the reply to answering previous speakers and must not introduce new matters. Such reply shall close the debate on the motion or the amendment.
- 13.8 The foregoing Standing Order (13.7) shall not prevent the asking or answering of a question which arises from the matter before the Assembly or from a speech made in the debate upon it.

13.9 An invited speaker, whether speaking to a draft motion or not, may address the Assembly for such period of time as may be agreed by the Business Committee.

14. Questions

- 14.1 A member may, if two days' notice in writing has been given to the General Secretary, ask the Moderator or the Convenor of any committee any question on any matter relating to the business of the Assembly to which no reference is made in any report before the Assembly.
- 14.2 A member may, when given opportunity by the Moderator, ask the presenter of any report before the Assembly a question seeking additional information or explanation relating to matters contained within the report.
- 14.3 Questions asked under Standing Order 14 shall be put and answered without discussion.
- 15. Points of order, personal explanatiexnoP5.7 (a3.1 (o)36n)4 ()20 (is ex)-1e8

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- 16.3 A closed session may be called for at any time in any decision-making mode, and voted upon by the Assembly, requiring a simple majority. This motion takes precedence over every motion before the Assembly. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded, and the proposer of the motion or amendment under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule. Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately pause while non-members leave the meeting.
- 16.4 If a matter is known to be highly sensitive in advance, then the Assembly Officers, consulting the Legal Adviser if necessary, may announce in advance that a certain piece of business will be conducted in a closed session giving their reasons.
- 16.5 Members of Assembly who leave during a closed session may not be re- admitted.

17. Communications during the course of debate

17.1 The primary responsibility of members is to attend to the business and participate in the decision making. Those present must refrain both from posting on social media sites during business sessions and from commenting upon partially completed business. It is the responsibility of the communications committee's staff to make official announcements. This restriction is only in place when in session; those attending are free to join in the online debates during breaks and after the close of business in respect of business that the Assembly has completed. Everything written and shared on social media sites at any time is the sole responsibility of the author, and is subject to the same defamation laws as any other form of written communication.

18. Record of the Assembly

18.1 A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such a The p fterit(danc)ues du ato de(u'he p) duri(i)6 (eedi)6 (ng ar)1 sub2haaw(ay)4 (di)6 (e ae

19. Suspension and amendment of Standing Orders

- 19.1 In any case of urgency or upon proposal of a motion of which due notice has been given, any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of the Assembly present and voting shall so decide.
- 19.2 Motions to amend the Standing Orders shall be referred to the Clerk of the Assembly for report before being voted on by the Assembly (or, in case of urgency, by the Assembly Executive). The Clerk of the Assembly may from time to time suggest amendments.

Synod Moderators' report

Synod Moderators

Basic information

Contact name and	The Revd Steve Faber
email address	moderator@urcwestmidlands.org.uk

Introduction

In our report to last year's General Assembly, we spoke of the changing season for life – we were in the midst of a global pandemic that had shaken our practice and selfunderstanding deeply. We were in the midst of it – living it – but we could not know if we were in the middle of it – halfway through, with the dawn of the new day emerging at the horizon. We spoke of being in a time of liminality, an inbetween time of change.

We might make many of the same points. At the time of writing, even in these islands with the privilege of easy access to vaccines and a high uptake rate, the pandemic is not over.

An ecumenical colleague observed that the Church has 'long Covid'. We know how many of our members, friends and family members are living with that syndrome, and despite having been clear of infection for many months, they are still living with the sense of exhaustion. The same is true in our churches, where the stresses of living with and/or in fear of the potentially deadly virus has left many wrung out. This is both an emotional and a spiritual malaise. Many of our congregations have had key people die, dearly loved members and adherents, and a great many others find that they are not yet ready, willing or able to return to the areas of service they had been involved with previously, for a whole variety of reasons. Some never will: they have found a break point for service that they were already tired of before Covid-19, or they hadn't realised how tired they were and now, having stopped, find they simply don't have the energy to resume. The landscape has changed forever, and we find ourselves more deeply embedded in an unfamiliar land.

We are in our Golden Jubilee year, and in many other walks of life, a 50th anniversary might be time to slow down, reflect with thanksgiving on what has been, and glide into a peaceful existence. We must certainly give thanks and appreciate what has brought us thus far, but there is no retirement plan in mind here. It may be just one of those stories we like to tell ourselves that the URC was born to die, but our conviction is that God still wants us to live.

On the move

God who sets us on a journey to discover, dream and grow, lead us as you led your people in the desert long ago; journey inward, journey outward stir the spirit, stretch the mind, love for God and self and neighbour marks the way that Christ defined.

We are called to be a people on the move. The Bible is full of accounts of people moving on. Some do so willingly, some very reluctantly with a huge burden for what they are called to leave behind. Some travel knowing where they are headed, others told to set cherish only what's essential, choosing treasure that will last.

As we learn to appreciate what we have Aappr (hnd fhav)3r (o)r (om (o)r ((w)6 (e(ec)4r (o)r ((w))6 (

Our structures have been changed within our history, as our union grew and as we ended the role of the District Councils (except for very specific and occasional purposes). This is undoubtedly a point where we need to review and simplify our structures.

Taking risks

We are convinced that the denomination now needs to take risks. We don't have the resources, particularly the most valuable ones – people – to do all that we once did or that we would like to do. We are being forced, or at least very firmly guided, into looking at how we can and how we should do things differently, to suit a new age and new circumstances.

General Assembly has recognised this in commissioning the Church Life Review. The Synod Moderators are perhaps better placed than anyone else to see this need lived out in the life of a variety of local churches, needs that are deep and real.

Some churches have struggled more than others, and many have reached the conclusion that their particular fellowship has reached the end of its life and witness. We give thanks to God for all that has been achieved in Christ's name through the faithful service in these places.

Others, by God's grace, have been able to show the most remarkable resilience, not only through the pandemic but through coping with changing patterns of ministry, decreased income and increased expenses, and (we might argue most importantly) with an ageing and declining membership. We have been heartened beyond measure as we have seen so many ministers, elders and members step up in sacrificial service of church and community, especially in these months and years of Covid-19. In the face of increasing challenge, the Church has done what she must, and responded wonderfully. It has not been easy for anyone, but to all who have gone the extra mile in pastoral care, providing worship online, meeting local needs to alleviate loneliness and poverty and generally to be Christ in your neighbourhoods – we see you, and God sees you. Thank you.

Covid-19 is likely to be with us always, and continue to mutate and produce new varian

Personalia

Despite all the challenges and changes of this season, the Moderators' Meeting

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Ministries, Children's and Youth Work,	

Paper A1 Business Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Mark Robinson mark.robinson@urc.org.uk
Action required	To be noted.

1. Arrangements for the General Assembly

This is the first Assembly taking place at the Hayes Conference Centre. The hope had been that all members of Assembly would be able to be resident at the Hayes, and that the capacity of the Hayes would act as something of a limitation on the size of the Assembly.

Unfortunately, the Assembly is already beyond the capacity of the Hayes, and it is likely that some will need to stay in nearby accommodation. This to some extent undermines one of the key reasons that the Hayes was selected as a venue. Along with concerns about the lack of flexibility from the venue, the Committee has agreed to explore possible alternative venues that would allow Assembly to be contained on a compact site but may provide more appropriate accommodation for our needs.

If proposals are brought to change the venue of Assembly, it is unlikely this would take effect for a number of years because of provisional bookings already having been made.

2. Standing Orders

New Standing Orders, that can function for hybrid meetings, were adopted at Assembly Executive in November 2021. The Standing Orders are designed to keep the key elements of consensus decision making, whilst allowing the decision making part of the process to proceed on a 'supermajority' principle.

Where the Moderator feels that Assembly is too divided in the course of debate, it is within their gift to determine that Assembly will not proceed to a formal vote to allow for more reflection across the family of the United Reformed Church. Where votes are taken, the required majority is two-thirds. The Committee invited Mr Alan Yates, who had articulated particular concerns, to a meeting to allow for further conversation on the topic.

Following careful deliberation, the Committee has decided not to bring revised Standing Orders to General Assembly. The primary reasoning for this is that constitutional changes require a two-thirds majority. This is determined in the Rules of Procedure and is clearly to prevent major changes within the life of the church from happening on a very slender majority.

It seems illogical to require a higher level of percentage for matters which don't have constitutional weight, than those that do. Therefore, we are minded that for the time being, we will continue with the Standing Orders as adopted in November 2021. This will be the first time they have been used in a General

Paper B1

Children's and Youth Work Committee

Basic information	
Contact name and email address	Samantha Sheehan (acting Convenor) rev.s.sheehan@gmail.com Sam Richards (Head of Children's and Youth Work) sam.richards@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	From Youth Assembly:
	 a) General Assembly resolves that nominations for Moderator of the General Assembly may be received from Youth Assembly in addition to Synods. b) General Assembly instructs the Business Committee to work with representatives of URC Youth to establish a proper process for these nominations.
	2. URC Youth Assembly reaffirms its commitment to tackle the stigma surrounding mental ill health. Youth Assembly strongly encourages individuals to take part in Mental Health First Aid training and for local churches, Synods and General Assembly to look into ways to help individuals access this training. Youth Assembly asks General Assembly to join it in recommending that local churches strive to ensure that at least one member of the leadership team has undertaken this training.
	From CYWC:
	3. Children's and Youth Work Committee asks General Assembly to dissolve the Pilots Subcommittee as a formal structure in recognition of the changes within Pilots following General Assembly 2021. Children's and Youth Work Committee will continue to engage with and support Pilots through their network of companies and informal gathering, alongside other such networks for Children's and Youth Work.
	4. To mark the launch of URC Children at General Assembly this year, the United Reformed Church resolves afresh to ensure that all structures and

Pilots

Pilots were supported with online gatherings for Synod Pilots Officers and FOFA@home resources sent directly to Pilots Captains during lockdown. A recorded Pilots Sunday service was created in 2020. An online training session was offered to Pilots Officers in 2021. A special badge for all Pilots, bunting, and a video of the prayer was created to mark the 85th

creation and the whole of life, providing resources (FOFA@home, Holiday Club, annual theme etc), and offer training to build confidence.

Community – support local churches in building intergenerational relationships and offering care to children and young people – Mental Health First Aid training, emotional resilience, pastoral care, doing things together (worship, service) – and re-focus on relationships rather than programmes and rotas.

Be an umbrella organisation that, in partnership with URC Children's and Youth Work team, ensures different local groups, households and schools have support and resources

Be a family who care and love for each other as they discover God together locally, regionally and denominationally

Be a prophetic voice for the world to hear

Be people on a mission to serve Christ and build the Kingdom as part of an Intergenerational Church

Enable children to step into God's call through support and opportunities, valuing gifts, skills and passions

Be child-led

Provide a sense of identity within the whole URC

Provide opportunities for participating, serving, training and development

Be enabled by children's workers (voluntary/paid), local/Synod/CYWC, and URC structures.

CYWC has identified four keyasftor development

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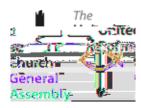
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4. **Theology of children** – revisiting and promoting the URC's theology of children to underpin all our work in this area.

We will review all previous theological material pertaining to children, including the Charter for Children in the Church and the series of theological reflection booklets, and seek to work with URC theologians to develop an accessible resource to inform practice across the URC.

CYWC are excited to be launching URC Children at General Assembly in the URC's jubilee year:

To mark the launch of URC Children at General Assembly this year, the United Reformed Church resolves afresh to ensure that all structures and councils of the church (local church meeting, Synod and General Assembly) are consistently mindful of the voice of children and of the impact of their decisions on children and future generations. To enable this, all councils of the church are encouraged to review how they are able to hear and respond to children.



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Summary of impact

Financial	To be funded from existing Ministries budget.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Planning involvement of, and possible partnership with, the

Mission Council through the work of the church's Fresh Expressions and Pioneering Enabling Group.

2. The background

- 2.1 Ministries Committee, in collaboration with the Fresh Expressions and Pioneering Steering Group (Mission Committee), has been considering ways to facilitate the ministry of the whole people of God within the United Reformed Church, in accordance with its remit.
- 2.2 Previous Ministries Committee reports⁴ to General Assembly have encouraged Synods and local pastorates to consider alternative ministries alongside Ministers of Word and Sacraments and CRCWs. Although progress has been made with regard to this, there is still a recognition that opportunity is limited in many places by the lack of resources.
- 2.3 In 2015, 'What is the Spirit saying to the Churches?: the future of the United Reformed Church' challenged the URC:

The affirmation the Faith and Order Committee feels led to make is that the future of the United Reformed Church is not about dying, but about living more fruitfully, prophetically and adventurously, being re-energised by the power of the Holy Spirit in faithfulness to Jesus Christ... An invitation went out on the United Reformed Church website and through the synods to contribute papers... 30 papers were received covering a range of fruitful areas... including an interesting proposal that the United Reformed Church should become a pioneer missional movement or a Reformed order within another church.⁵

- 2.4 In November 2017, Mission Council agreed to fund additional ministries. While some individual churches or group pastorates may have the funds to pay for alternative ministry and leadership on a part-time, or even full-time, basis, this is beyond the reach of most churches, for whom the first call on their financial resources rightly remains the M&M fund. Yet in some places lay people can be identified to exercise such ministries in a voluntary capacity, but very often the lack of available volunteers thwarts such enterprises.
- 2.5 As a result, in 2019 Ministries Committee set aside £75K for three years to fund such ministries, and set out the criteria for Synods to make 'bids' for the finance. However, by 2021 it was clear that all the pilot ministries had faltered or ceased because of the pandemic.

- 2.7 However, in discussions in the FX Enabling Group, it became apparent that lay ministries were moving in a new direction with pioneering at the forefront. While new ministries of NSM Model 4 (ordained) and NS CRCW (commissioned) had been established with a module on pioneering available at one of the RCLs, there was still the gap of supporting and training lay ministries in this ministry.
- 2.8 In May 2021, the FX Enabling Group collaborated with Jonny Baker from the Church Mission Society (CMS), whicdl30.7 (B)214.44 T 0.978 0 Td[(w)13[(c)9 -22.71(wh)8d3nDd(dl30.d3nDd(d)

provides ongoing encouragement, connection, support and communication. Training brings a level of accountability, denominational recognition, and access to wider resourcing.

- 4.7 The cost of the course for six modules will total £600, or £300 for URC approved participants. It is anticipated that the CMS Certificate course will be open to lay persons of other Free Churches, creating a potential income stream to support the community.
- 4.8. The curriculum will consist of: What is Pioneering mission? Mission spirituality Reading the Bible for context Missional community engagement Church in mission Missional entrepreneurship.

Other modules are available, such as: Missional leadership Rural pioneer ministry Justice and reconciliation Doing theology Reflective practice.

4.9 Delivery of the course will be in hybrid form

Three residential weekends at Greenhouse, near Bromsgrove Three Saturdays it bTf0.07/ii(e)296 (heerod(1816) and 1838)/1892 (heerod(1816) and 1838)/ 4.14 We perhaps need to remind ourselves that, given the Church at best is relational, it can only flourish by relating deeply to the variety of people within and around it. Church at best is flexible, and patterns of church life that have worked in the past may not serve the future.⁷ It is our hope that a newly accredited ministry of lay pioneering will enable others to flourish in God's love and shalom.

⁷ Mission Council Appendix five Report from the 20-40 task group from GA2018 Book of Reports page 22

Paper E1 Affirmative action towards an anti-racist Church

Equalities Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address

Anne Lewitt, Convenor of Equalities Committee aelewitt@gmail.com }00435 207.7.5191 5938473626m[(A)11]Tw 523[(C)6 (o)-5 70.9455 611 8. Ecumenical Partners – including the Methodist Church and Baptist Union of Great Britain.

2.3 The group met four

disadvantage specifically relating to any one of a number of protected characteristics, including race. Such action might include encouragement for such individuals to apply for management positions, or providing specific training to equip those individuals. Even so, the decision of who to select must be made on merit alone.

4.2

6.2 Anti-racism training

- a) Anti-racism training (including 'white privilege') should be mandatory for the following people/groups, and should be revisited periodically:
 - All members of appointment panels
 - All members of Assembly committees
 - All Church House staff, including the General Secretariat
 - Synod Moderators; we are encouraged that the current Moderators' Meeting has voluntarily implemented such training.

The above list should not be regarded as exhaustive, and should remain under constant review.

- b) Governing Bodies should be strongly urged to ensure anti-racism training for Resource Centres for Learning (RCL) staff if this is not already taking place.
- c) An anti-racism thread should be incorporated into the curriculum throughout the period of training for RCL students, so that anti-racism becomes a default approach rather than something to be explored at specific times.
- d) The task group is conscious that there are various questions to be addressed regarding how the programme of anti-racism training will be implemented in practice. Focused thought will be given to this before General Assembly 2023, with further refinement as the training is implemented.

6.3 Mentoring and support

- a) An offer of mentoring should be made available to all individuals who wish to explore Assembly posts.
- b) In addition, there should be an emphasis on peer mentoring available for all individuals who come to serve the URC from overseas, giving practical guidance regarding UK life in general, and negotiating the URC specifically.

6.4 Accountability

The URC should be called upon to revisit and consciously seek to implement its past commitments to racial justice – including but not limited to the commitment for Synods to include at least one black/ethnic minority member in its delegation to General Assembly. If black and ethnic minority members are not involved in the structures and processes of the Church, how will they become known in order to be nominated? And how will they become familiar enough with the structures to be able to imagine themselves in Assembly appointed roles?

7. Endorsements

The thoughts and recommendations outlined in this paper have been drafted in consultation with the Secretary for Education and Learning and the Secretary for Ministries. They have been endorsed by the Mission committee, Cascades of Grace, and URC Youth representatives to the Equalities committee.

8. Conclusion

This paper is offered by way of an update and indication of the direction of travel thus far. Conversations will continue within and between the URC departments, and with our

ecumenical partners. The Affirmative Action Task Group – now to be known as the 'Positive Action Task Group' – commits to bringing concrete proposals to General Assembly 2023.

Paper E2 General report

Education and Learning Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Mr Alan Yates alan.yates@urc.org.uk The Revd Jenny Mills jenny.mills@urc.org.uk
Action required	None.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update on the work of Education and Learning.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	

The Education and Learning (E and L) Committee aims to endorse, inspire and encourage lifelong Learning for all God's people. Our aspiration is that learning opportunities are accessible, inclusive, integrated and involve cooperation and collaboration across the whole URC. The committee supports the initial and ongoing professional development of ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers, Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers, Elders and other lay ministries.

Introduction

 The past two years have seen a great deal of change, some expected, and some not expected. We take this opportunity to thank Revd Fiona Thomas for her stalwart service since September 2008, and we welcome the Revd Jenny Mills who joined the team as Secretary in October 2020. We were already on a journey towards a reduced carbon footprint using video conferencing, albeit at a careful p0 0 13odTJ3.7 (enc)4 ung (ayx5 (h)o20 (m)-3 (e andWigo12ket(m)-3 (e m)16.9 (uc)4 (h m)-3 (o)2

extremely hard to keep things going both ab Wdemically and pastorally

The area of E& L that thrived in the past two years has betepwise, as a programme .ie.(d br)-3.(at)2 hibed[sundd0 Td[(an)-34[(]TJ0.007 Tem)-3 (b2 T '(t)-221ar bo)2gh)19.9 (em)-3

/02/mission-council-march-2021-papers.pdf p.29) preliminary feedback was presented to Mission Council. The feedback provided many useful insights. One of the outcomes was an attempt to define what is meant by integration –

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The College is grateful to placement supervisors, mentors and associated placement sites for their contribution to Education for Ministry Phase 1. There was, in the latter part of the year a real and joyful sense of returning to in-person contextual learning.

Staff changes

The past year has seen changes among the tutorial staff of the College. The Revd Lindsey Sanderson finished in her role as college tutor in July 2021 following seven years' service. The College is grateful to Lindsey for her service as tutor, for her continuing contribution to our teaching and for serving as an NSM4 mentor and as a Trustee of the College. Professor Scott Spurlock continues continued to support the College as tutor. The Revd Fiona Bennett was elected to serve as Moderator of the United Reformed Church's General Assembly for 2022-2023. Fortuitously perhaps, before her election the College had already asked her to serve as a tutor (and Fional agreed). Fiona has engaged actively with the ordinand students and travelled widely to attend College events and learning meetings. We are proud that the General Assembly has called Fiona to be its Moderator and offer our support during her year of office. Over the past few years of pandemic colleagues and students have appreciated the involvement of the Revd Andy Braunston in College life. Andy has agreed to join the tutorial team as locum tutor to cover Fiona Bennett's reduced availability during her moderatorial year. The College is grateful to Andy for agreeing to support our teaching in this way.

John McNeill-Scott (Principal)

3.2.3 Westminster College

After delivering all learning events online in 2020-2021, classroom teaching resumed in autumn 2021. This included a Lay Preachers' event which was, given the circumstances, remarkably well-attended, as well as the block-week and term-time provision made for EM1 and independent students. After an extended period where placements were difficult if not impossible to arrange, from autumn 2021, it is pleasing to report that all EM1 students have been actively engaged in physical as opposed to online placements.

Staff and students familiarized themselves with hybrid teaching and community life. Some activities remained online, others occurred in the building and still others took place with some participants in the room and others joining remotely. We have invested in new equipment which, through a generous gift, has enabled us to equip the Lewis Room to offer live-streaming. We have purchased a portable camera and streaming device which should be able to stream from any part of the College. Just before Christmas 2021, we installed equipment in the College chapel so that our worship – so very much at the heart of what we are and do – can be streamed to members of our community who are off-site and who can now join 'remotely'. This has enabled us to continue to pray together, as we did throughout lockdown, and build the sense that whether on block or term-time teaching we belong to the one community. The Healey Room will shortly be equipped for live-streaming as well. We are entering a new epoch of greater flexibility and we are excited at the possibilities such technology offers us in reaching the whole United Reformed Church with learning events and to be available to all who wish to deepen their discipleship.

The Principal, the Revd Samantha White, indicated her intention to stand down with effect from 24 March. Since 3 December, the Governors have designated the Revd Dr Robert Pope as Acting Principal. Further thought is being given to what arrangements

should be in place in 2022-2023. For a variety of reasons, the post of Director of Ministerial Formation was withdrawn. The College is grateful to the Revd Dr Rick Mearkle for his willingness to continue as interim Director of Pastoral Studies in 2022-2023.

The resignation of the College Bursar with effect from 3 January 2022 necessitated a further interim appointment and the College is fortunate that Mr John Ellis has agreed to fill that position in the short term. The post has now been advertised and it is hoped an appointment can be made in the near future.

Working with students in ministerial formation, high points have included the following: All candidates for stipendiary ministry who are leaving EM1 in summer 2022 have been called to pastorates. Furthermore, the first candidate for NSM model 4 will be ordained having been trained through Westminster

Three joint RCL community evenings have occurred during the academic year on Zoom exploring race and class, sharing faith journeys and asking theological questions

Easter Term 2022 has seen the return of ministers from the world church to the Cheshunt sabbatical programme.

In seeking to fulfil its remit as a Resource Centre for Learning providing integrated, lifelong learning for the whole people of God, highpoints have included the following:

Events in West and East Midlands and Eastern Synods exploring the Bible and being missional post-Covid-19

Helping to coordinate a day for ethnically-minoritised women in the URC in Thames North Synod

Beginning to host training for pastoral supervisors in conjunction with Wesley House and Ministries Department

An online conference on Meeting Dementia with Spiritual and Pastoral Care in partnership with the Faraday Institute

'Roadshow' taking Westminster to the Synod of Wales

Hosting the URC's 'You're Welcome' course, a conference for CYDOs, an event for the Eastern Synod's young people and the online Synod meeting

Housing the Cambridge Theological Institute for Prisons as it seeks to achieve charitable status.

Despite the challenges we all face, the College community is generally in good heart. There is a good atmosphere with dedicated staff committed to the College's future as an RCL for the United Reformed Church, a place of theological education and also of retreat and spiritual renewal.

Robert Pope. (Principal)

We thank the Revd Samantha White for her service in the role of Principal and wish her well in her future ministries.

Jenny Mills (Secretary for E and L)

3.3 Education for Ministry 1 (EM1)

The initial training of students for Ministry has continued through our RCLs and their hard work, adapting to online and hybrid and their support for the students has been amazing. The increased collaboration with Ministries has meant changes to the

Enquirers' Conference, which is now online and attracts around 20+ people looking into different lay and ordained ministries. The requirement to complete a Synod Welcome to the URC course is now optional as the course offered through Westminster College with E and L, Ministries, Children and Youth and Global and Intercultural Ministries has been revamped and is now offered online in June and in person in October. It is You're Welcome: Exploring the Ethos and History of the URC'. The grant payment system, which involved termly payments and a summer payment will change for the academic year 2022-23 to being four equal payments (mid-August, mid-November, mid-February and mid-May, with a possible reduction for final year students depending on circumstances of call). We hope this will aid budgeting and enable students to manage regular payments more easily.

3.4 Education for Ministry 2 (EM2)

The Revd Elizabeth Gray-King retired from her role as Programme Officer for Education and Learning in August 2021. She had worked hard to implement a programme that was thorough and relevant to those who were in their first three years of ministry. It includes induction at Church House in year one, support from a Chaplain and a Pastoral Adviser, synod support, an annual Summer retreat, webinars and required reflection on the Marks of Ministry or CRCW Core Competencies. Each EM2 Minister also has access to a £350 grant for continuing Education for Ministry.

3.5 Education for Ministry 3 (EM3)

The focus for E and L is around lifelong learning for all and this extends to those serving our churches as Ministers of the Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers. For 2021 the EM3 grant was increased to £700, the amount it had been before it was reduced in 2013 due to budgetary constraints. This decision was made to support Ministers and CRCWs and to enable them to access more learning opportunities to help them in this 'new normal'. The Education and Learning Committee agreed to continue this increase for EM2 and 3 for the foreseeable future.

3.6 TD+ Network

The Training and Development Officers' Network is a gathering of those in synod training roles. This network brings together those in training roles and is supported by E and L. It was the role of the Revd Elizabeth Gray-King when she was Programme Officer to support them and now the Secretary and Administrator for E and L both support this group. The group meets regularly to share practice, learning, information and to offer help and advice to each other. In the past it has been for TDOs but as Synods are increasingly appointing people with different titles or choosing not to appoint a training officer, it has become a gathering of those responsible for training or those who are synod training contacts, in the 13 Synods. The title of the gathering has now been changed to reflect this altered group make-up and will be known as the Training and Development+ Network (reflecting the CYDO+ team within Children and Youth Work). For Education and Learning, the hardest part of this variety of provision is ensuring effective communication with each Synod and getting information to the correct person so it can be shared or responded to.

4. Accessible, inclusive and integrated

'With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it;' Luke 19: 33-35a 'As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, 'Why are you

'For just as the body is one and has many members, and all of the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ'. 1 Corinthians 12: 12

4.1 Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers, Locally Recognised Worship Leaders

At Mission Council in March 2021, a resolution was passed: 'Mission Council adopts the process for becoming a Worship Leader or Lay Preacher as detailed in this paper (D/H2)'. At General Assembly 2021, the pathways for the training of Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers and Locally Recognised Worship Leaders were presented. In September 2021, the first tranche of students began the Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers' Course being offered through Northern College. This course has been particularly well received and is proving a valuable pathway for those wishing to gain Assembly Accreditation.

"As well as the inspiring and supportive online and face-to -face teaching and the discussions with the other students from all around the cog.(he).nd tralo (or)-3 (t)oLocua(e t)24 Td[(patterna)

Education and Learning welcomes suggestions for future programmes.

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We will continue to promote Stepwise and CLP as learning programmes. We will keep seeking opportunities and possibilities to promote and support lifelong learning and discipleship development,

Appendix 1 Stepwise number chart

Number of people engaged with Stepwise – April 2022			
Faith-filled Life			
Active Groups – 10	Participants - 77		

Paper F1

Report from the Faith and Order Committee

Faith and Order Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Robert Pope, Convenor rpp20@cam.ac.uk Philip Brooks, Deputy General Secretary (Mission) and Faith and Order Secretary philip.brooks@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information.

documents outline historic Christian doctrines, emphasise a Reformed perspective, and hono

4. At the request of the denomination, a Worship Reference Group was established, reporting to the Faith and Order Committee. Its work is currently under review, and it is hoped that the Minister for Digital

Paper G1 General Report 2021 to 2022

Financial results

The appendix to this paper sets out the 2021 income and expenditure statement for the URC M&M fund, and the 2022 budget agreed at the November 2021 Assembly Executive.

As explained in last year's report, because of the uncertainties caused by the pandemic and its aftermath, the committee had less confidence than usual in the reliability of its 2021 budget forecast. In fact, M&M contributions from local churches and Synods were about £500k below budget, and donation income had been overestimated by £180k.

However, all other income categories (especially investment income) were above budget. This left our total income at £18.857 million – which was £588k below budget.

Expenditure on Discipleship, Mission, Admin and Resources and Governance was below budget in each case, despite some overspends in certain areas within those departments. Of those, the largest was an unavoidable overspend on professional fees of almost £200k, caused in large measure by the cost of successfully defending a complex Employment Tribunal case.

As a result, total expenditure of £18.937 million was £866k under budget: giving a deficit for the year of £80k (£278k less than budget).

The 2022 budget anticipates a drop of over £1 million in M&M giving compared to actual 2021 contributions. Expenditure is forecast to be around £1.5million up on 2021 actuals: giving a projected deficit for the year of £2.681 million. Continuing uncertainties about the financial future of the church are reflected in this budget. However, a large part of the deficit relates to the additional costs of meeting the future service benefit contributions to the Ministers' Pension Fund (MPF). Last year's General Assembly was warned about this cost rise in paper G4, which argued for closure of the current scheme to future accruals as soon as possible. (See an update in the separate paper re URC futui(s)4 (e)20.1 ei

the involvement of the Deputy General Secretary (Mission). Currently, the fund is a

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH URC M&M FUND For the year ended 31 December 2021

APPENDIX

TOTAL	Actual 2021 £	Budget 2021 £	Budget 2022 £
Income			
Income from Churches & Synods	17,203,003	17,742,285	16,148,127
Donations, Legacies & Grants	210,077	390,000	109,950
Income from training & academic activities	1,426	1,000	1,000
Other income	2,489	0	12,000
Income from Investments	1,040,294	934,000	1,199,000
Income from Trading Activies	225,940	210,400	219,500
Property income	173,979	167,300	163,770
Total Income	18,857,208	19,444,985	17,853,347
Expenditure			
Discipleship			
- Ministries	13,447,585	14,101,500	14,421,107
- E&L	1,587,670	1,631,785	1,585,794
- Children & Youth Work	251,778	323,800 197,800	339,775
- Safeguarding - Secretariat	130,851 49,163	197,800	228,262
- Digital	49,103	12,125	84,120 0
- Digitai			
	15,467,554	16,267,010	16,659,058
Mission			
- Church & Society	1,315	9,000	10,500
- Ecumenical & Interfaith	93,043	96,200	156,600
- Global & Intercultural	117,365		81,800
- Mission & Evangelism	16,941	64,200	40,500
- Staff, Committees & Secretariat	454,758	526,900	597,241
- Walking The Way	55,598	73,350	76,086
	739,020	900,650	962,726
Admin & Resources	245.002	201 700	240 211
- Secretariat - Communcations	345,002 689,652	291,700 687,600	349,211 721,020
- Facilities	309,408		
- Finance	348,435	377,900	383,612
- Human Resources	93,228	86,800	104,023
- Information technology	223,282	232,000	272,733
	2,009,007	2,033,700	2,345,600
Governance			
- General Assembly (incl Task Groups)	57,357	135,500	121,824
- Assembly Executive (incl Task Groups)	19,528		
- Professional Fees	317,103		
- Section O	48,577	30,000	55,000
- Trust & other Committees	50,995	51,600	34,694
	493,560	402,600	389,018
Overheads	228,008	199,000	178,000
o controlado	220,000	177,000	170,000
Total expenditure	18,937,149	19,802,960	20,534,402
Net expenditure	79,941	357,975	2,681,056

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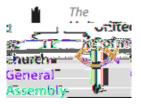
Paper G2 Possible one-off payments to ministers and lay staff

Finance Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Ian Hardie, Treasurer ianzhardie@googlemail.com
Action required	Decision.

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- 8. However, the Pensions Review Group does feel that there may be a case for the Church considering the creation of some process or mechanism for addressing the situations of individual retired ministers who find themselves in particular financial difficulty. In the Group's view, such instances are much more likely to be a result of the personal circumstances of the minister, or their history before becoming URC office holders, than to any inadequacies of the proposed new pension arrangements, which the Group regards as more than generous. This led the Group to conclude that some form of welfare or benevolent fund might be required to address such exceptional circumstances.
- 9. The Pensions Review Group has not explored this idea in any depth, nor considered what alternatives might be developed or already exist. We have undertaken no work to establish how such a fund might be resourced and how it might operate. We did not see that as our task which has been quite demanding and time-consuming enough.
- 10. The possibility of setting up a welfare or benevolent fund needs to be explored by those responsible for the assets that might be drawn on to resource such a fund, and those who would be responsible for administering it.
- 11. What this paper does is ask whether General Assembly considers it is appropriate for a separate group to be set up to explore these issues, and to report back to next year's Assembly with its findings. That is what the resolution is intended to achieve.

Paper G4 URC Trust Accounts 2021

Finance Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Ian Hardie, Treasurer ianzhardie@googlemail.com	
Action required	None – for information.	
Draft resolution(s)	10. General Assembly notes the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2021.	

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To draw to General Assembly's attention the availability of the audited accounts for 2021 and accompanying Trustees' report.
Main points	The United Reformed Church's central activities are legally accounted for in the name of the URC Trust. With advice from the URC Finance Committee, the Trust directors have received and approved the audited accounts for 2021. Copies of the audited accounts and trustees' report are expected to be available online from early June 2022: www.urc.org.uk/trustees-report-and-financial-statements/. Anyone requiring a hard copy should contact Bea Minta at Church House (beatrice.minta@urc.org.uk).
Previous relevant documents	Audited accounts for 2020 are available on the website.
Consultation has taken place with	The URC Trust.

Summary of impact

Financial	Simply noting the availability of the accounts has no financial impact.
External (eg ecumenical)	The report provides a publicly available summary of the Church's activities and financial state.

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	authorise the required consultation with members of the existing pension schemes about the proposals in this paper; and make arrangements for considering the outcome of the consultation and bringing the new pension arrangements into effect as presently outlined, or as amended following the consultation.
Main points	General Assembly 2021 agreed in principle to the closure of the existing URC pension schemes to future accrual, which

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investment choices to meet their own wishes and/or take account of the Church's ethical investment guidelines.

- 7. Aon is able to support our members with appropriate information and guidance via phone and face-to-face channels, as well as online. Moreover, it has indicated that its phone operators would know about the specifics of the URC scheme which some other Master Trust providers were not able or willing to undertake.
- 8. All master trusts will have default funds into which member's money goes, unless the member self-selects a different fund. No master trust offers a totally 'fossil fuel free' default fund: but Aon's Managed Retirement Pathway Funds comes as close as any. (See section 9.3 of the briefing paper.)
- 9. The Aon Managed Global Impact Fund cannot be a default fund in a master trust because of its cost structure, but it is available as a member self-select fund. It is designed to invest in sustainable businesses, therefore effectively excluding fossil fuel companies but without explicitly naming them, and instead investing in renewable and carbon reduction technology ventures. The fees charged for investing in this self-select fund will be higher than for the default fund.

10. A at

between 6% and 10%. (This fits with the PLSA quality standards set out in section 11.7 of the briefing note.)

15. Currently, both death-in-service and ill-health early retirement arrangements are dealt with within the pension schemes. This is not possible within the DC scheme. Sections 12 and 13 of the briefing note set out in some detail the proposals for dealing with these matters going forward. Initially, the interaction of the current ealademe rules aind Td(,)Tjurosrr herrit(til)e6 ()]TJ0.004 Tc -0.002 Tatto, 2)0 (4c)4 (to 20 (fre) fe(rafe) 3h(a))

22.

A briefing document on the proposals to be made to General Assembly 2022 regarding new pension arrangements for the Church's office holders and staff

This briefing document has two purposes:

- i) to provide detail in support of the related Assembly paper; and
- ii) to support online briefing sessions for Assembly representatives that should improve understanding of tgng ses(s)

between an annuity and drawdown. Drawdown typically means agreeing once a year on an amount to be withdrawn, leaving the rest of the pension pot invested. The alternative is to use the pension pot to purchase an annuity from an insurance company. The member in effect sells their pension pot but, in exchange, they (and possibly their spouse in the event of the prior death of the member) are guaranteed a monthly income for life. It is possible to use drawdown for a period after retirement and then, later, change to an annuity.

- 2.3 **Office holders and staff**. In this note, 'office-holders' are defined as ministers and Church-Related Community Workers who are working under the terms of the URC Plan for Partnership. Almost all office-holders are currently members of the MPF. 'Staff' are those who have employment contracts with the Church, and this includes a small number of URC ministers.
- 2.4 **Pensions Review Group (PRG)**. This is the group that has been working on the development of new pensions arrangements, as explained in section 4.

3. Decisions taken at Assembly 2021

3.1 Resolution 19 agreed at General Assembly 2021:

The General Assembly, being representative of Local Churches, Synods and the whole Church, confirms the Church's commitment to the pensions promises already made, and wishes any consideration of future pension arrangements for the Church's Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers, missionaries and staff to keep clearly in mind:

- a) The Church's warm gratitude for the commitment, gifts and service of those who work among us and serve in our name;
- b) The Church's desire to deal with these people honourably in their retirement;
- c) The Church's desire to act as a responsible employer, for the people we employ and for our stipendiary office-holders.
- 3.2 The principles contained in this resolution have governed the work on designing new pension arrangements for office holders and staff.
- 3.3 Resolution 20 agreed at General Assembly 2021:

General Assembly, recognising that the significant changes to the legal and regulatory framework for defined benefit pension schemes are making the two current URC pension schemes disproportionately expensive for the benefits they deliver, agrees in principle to the closure to future accruals of both the Ministers' Pension Fund and the Final Salary Pension Scheme.

3.4 It is worth recapping the scale of the financial challenge that would face the United Reformed Church if it was to stay with the two existing DB pension schemes.

At the time of Assembly 2021, the contributions being paid into the two pension schemes were:

Ministers' Pension Fund (MPF)	Church	21.95% of stipend

Members 7.5% of stipend

The PRG comprises:

Jane Baird (Convenor)	DGS Admin and Resources
Rob Seaman (Secretary)	URC Pensions Manager
David Martin	member of Pensions Committee, retired actuary
Gordon Justham	retired actuary
Ian Hardie	URC Treasurer
John Piper	member of Pensions Committee, formerly URC Deputy Treasurer
Lyndon Thomas	deputy chair of the Ministers' Pensions Trust
Richard Nunn	convenor of Pensions Commi ec0 (r) ML4 Td[(I)2& taactuarr

5. Future process and possible timetable following Assembly 2022

- 5.1 There is a legal requirement for the Church to carry out a formal consultation with the members of both current URC pension schemes before new arrangements are introduced. That is why Assembly is being asked to agree to the proposals set out in Part B below <u>subject to consultation</u>, with authority delegated to the Assembly officers or to Assembly Executive to give final approval to the new scheme.
- 5.2 If Assembly accepts these proposals, then the formal consultation process will begin straightaway, probably concluding in the second half of October.
- 5.3 The results of that consultation will be considered carefully. The PRG will discuss

Church:

January to explore the Church's needs in more detail. Aon has serviced the Church well for many years as key advisers to the Ministers' Pensions Trust. The team from Aon not only demonstrated a good understanding of the Master Trust market and how this is likely to develop, but also had a clear vision of the needs of the Church and of how Aon can meet them. They showed real enthusiasm for becoming the Church's partners in this new venture.

Providers of Master Trusts get most of their income by levying a charge on the investments they manage. However, Aon is also proposing to charge the Church an implementation fee of £10,000 and an annual service charge of £5,000. Although Aon's service is slightly more expensive than that of the other shortlisted providers, the PRG is clear that the extra cost is worthwhile.

Aon has been appointed as the Master Trust provider, subject to contract.

9.3 **Choosing the default investment fund**

The Church will choose a default investment fund into which all Church and member contributions will be paid, except where a member opts (or 'self-selects') for a different Fund or Funds to receive some or all of their contributions. The management charges on self-select funds are likely to be higher than those on default funds.

The PRG has identified the Aon Target Date Managed Retirement Pathway Fund as its preferred default fund for the new DC pension scheme. With this Fund, as a member approaches and then moves into retirement, the pension pot of that member is gradually transitioned into investments carrying less risk. This Fund is made up of several elements, containing different sorts of investment with their associated risks/rewards. The management of all the Aon Funds takes account of ESG issues, and this one includes a climate transition focus.

For members not close to retirement, 10% of this proposed default fund is

TT1 1 Tf1[(ESG)- Td[(07-5 (u)4 (c)4 Mopos)e)5(hm,18)22 (() (,18)2).7be)2)20 (t(,18)2i) 10%024 Tcoc4 (c)4 Mo(

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Church contribution rate is much higher than the rates being paid by most employers operating DC pension schemes (see 11.7 below).

Proposed Church contribution for staff: 16% of salary

10.4 It will be appropriate for these pension contribution rates to be regularly reviewed. The frequency of such reviews has not yet been determined.

11. Projected income in retirement

- 11.1 Most individuals will receive income in retirement from several different sources. What will matter to them is their total income, from whatever source. Because everyone's circumstances are different, it is hard to make any comments that will be generally applicable.
- 11.2 **State pension**. The level of state pension receivable is dependent on the number of years for which National Insurance contributions have been paid.
- 11.3 **URC DB pension schemes**. For those who have already retired or left the service of the Church, the pension receivable at retirement from one of the URC DB pension schemes will be unaffected by these changes.

For those who are active at the time when the new pension arrangements become effective, a pension will be payable at retirement from their URC DB pension scheme based on the years of service up to that date.

- 11.4 **URC DC pension scheme**. As already described, a DC pension scheme builds up a pension pot for each member. The purpose of that capital sum is to provide an income in retirement. It will be for each member, having taken appropriate advice, to decide how and when to take that income.
- 11.5 **Other income**. Some members of the URC pension schemes may have other income in retirement, possibly related to other employment before or after their service with the Church.
- 11.6 **Projections**. The projections of income in retirement described in Part C of this paper are for a very particular group of people: office holders (so the stipend is fixed) who spend their whole working lives serving the Church (so there are no other work-related pensions). For office holders with more complicated circumstances and for staff, any projections of income in retirement need to be based on their personal circumstances. It will be important for all members to obtain independent financial advice related to their particular circumstances, especially as retirement approaches.

The projections are based on the age of the member at the date of the change to the proposed new DC pension arrangements. They show estimated income in retirement under three different scenarios:

Left Assuming the current DB pension scheme remains open. Centre Assuming the new DC pension scheme is introduced, and the member opts to receive an annuity at retirement. The projections are based on modelling hundreds of possible outcomes for future investment returns.

The projections suggest that, assuming drawdown is used in retirement and assuming the proposed age-related Church contributions are agreed:

An office holder aged 58 at the time of the change to new arrangements opting for drawdown at age 68, has a 50% chance of achieving total annual income in

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13. Dealing with III Health Early Retirement (IHER)

13.1 Current benefits from the URC DB pension schemes

In appropriate circumstances, a member of either of the two current URC pension schemes may retire early on grounds of ill health, and they will then receive a pension from that date. The arrangements in the two schemes are different and they are complicated – partly because they have been changed several times.

The maximum IHER pension payable to a member of the MPF is 50% of stipend, based on their prospective years of service to normal retirement date.

The IHER pension payable to a member of the FSS is the pension accrued at the date of their ill health early retirement.

13.2 **Continuing benefits from the URC DB pension schemes**

Those who have already retired on grounds of ill health will be unaffected by these changes.

It is expected that, after the new pension arrangements have been introduced, someone who was a member of one of the two DB pension schemes will receive a pension from that scheme calculated on the same basis as someone who has a deferred pension having left the service of the Church. However, see 13.3 below.

13.3 **Proposed new arrangements for office holders**

Office holders who are granted early retirement on grounds of ill health will, up to the normal retirement age, receive payments totalling <u>either</u> 50% of stipend <u>or</u> 25% of stipend. This will depend on whether they are totally unable to work, or if they are able to work in another occupation but are not able to carry out the duties of a Church office holder. This is the total amount that will be received.

Part of this total amount may come from one of the DB pension schemes. As now, this will be a pension for life. If the DB pension is less than the above total, then the balance will be paid through the URC payroll up to normal retirement age and will, for tax and national insurance purposes, be treated in the same way as earnings. Corresponding Church contributions will be paid into the DC pension scheme, but members will not be expected to contribute.

It is not intended to make any new arrangements for staff, in addition to those in the existing Final Salary Scheme.

13.4 Availability of the DC pension pot

Subject to the agreement of the trustees, a member who has retired early on grounds of ill health may be able to gain early access to the funds held in their DC pension pot. It will be for the member to decide whether to do this as, clearly, this will reduce the income available after normal retirement age.

13.5 The estimated annual cost of these proposals is about 3% of total stipends.

14. Existing Additional Voluntary Contributions

14.1 Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVCs) are paid by some members of both the current DB pension schemes. The arrangements in the two schemes for investing those contributions and for calculating the additional pensions payable are different, and they are complex.

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First:

The existing defined benefit pension scheme, were it to continue as it is.

As explained in section 11, there lots of choice is available to members regarding the use of their DC pension pot in retirement. The following scenarios are based on just two of those options.

Second:

<u>Purchase of an annuity at retirement</u>. This is a prudent or low-risk approach, but it is also costly,

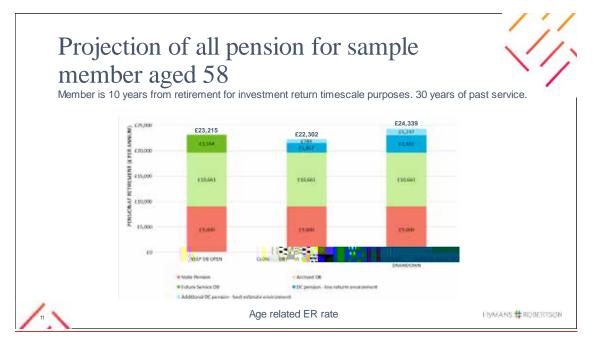
16.2 Member aged 28 when the new pension scheme is introduced

The dark blue rectangle indicates a 75% chance of receiving an annuity at retirement of at least £6,292. Total annual income including the State Pension and the MPF pension would be more than \pounds 9,000 + \pounds 3,554 + \pounds 6,292 = at least \pounds 18,846.

The light blue rectangle indicates a 50% chance of receiving an annuity at retirement of at least £14,597. Total annual income including the State Pension and the MPF pension would be more than $\pounds9,000 + \pounds3,554 + \pounds14,597 =$ at least $\pounds27,151$.

Proposed DC scheme with drawdown used after retirement

The right-hand block represents the proposed DC scheme, and assumes that the member will use drawdown to provide income in retirement. The test of the chabid (h) 202 le incl(ec eti (i)(mac)4 (la 75%)op(i-0.002 Tw



Existing DB scheme

The left-hand block shows that, if the existing DB scheme continues as now, the member would receive a pension from the MPF of £14,215 plus the State Pension of £9,000, making total income in retirement of £23,215.

Proposed DC scheme with an annuity purchased at retirement

The central block represents the proposed DC scheme with an annuity purchased at retirement.

The dark blue rectangle indicates a 75% chance of receiving an annuity at retirement of at least £1,857. Total annual income including the State Pension and the MPF pension would be more than \pounds 9,000 + \pounds 10,661 + \pounds 1,857 = at least \pounds 21,518.

The light blue rectangle indicates a 50% chance of receiving an annuity at retirement of at least £2,641. Total annual income including the State Pension and the MPF pension would be more than \pounds 9,000 + \pounds 10,661 + \pounds 2,641 = at least \pounds 22,302.

Proposed DC scheme with drawdown used after retirement

The right-hand block represents the proposed DC scheme, and assumes that the member will use drawdown to provide income in retirement. The same assumptions are made as before.

The dark blue rectangle indicates 75% chance of delivering at least £3,441 per year at retirement. Total annual income including the State Pension and the MPF pension would be more than \$9,000 + \$10,661 + \$3,441 =at least \$23,102.

This total is almost the same as the income in retirement if the current DB pension scheme remains open.

The light blue rectangle indicates a 50% chance of delivering at least £4,678 per year at retirement. Total annual income including the State Pension and the MPF pension would be more than \pounds 9,000 + \pounds 10,661 + \pounds 4,678 = at least \pounds 24,339.

Observations

The expected time to retirement is now ten years. The standard approach of the trustees of the DC scheme for a member this close to retirement would be to gradually de-risk the investments held, leading to a reduction in the expected investment returns. This is factored into these modelling results.

It will be noted that, even assuming this de-risking of the investments, using drawdown there is still a good chance of income in retirement being at least as good as from the current DB pension scheme if it remains open. This would not be true if a standard contribution rate was used across all ages – see 17 below.

17. Financial modelling based on a standard contribution rate

- 17.1 The proposals in Section B are based on age-related Church contribution rates for office holders. The reasons for this are explained in 10.2.
- 17.2 If a standard contribution rate is used, then the outcomes for members aged over 48 when the new arrangements are introduced will be slightly worse than those set out above. The outcomes for members aged under 48 when the new arrangements begin will be significantly better than those set out above.
- 17.3 All the detail is not reproduced here. However, the following comparisons of the modelling of income when using drawdown may be of interest:

Age of member	Income in retirement	Income in retirement

at changeover to

Paper H1 General report

Ministries Committee

		-	
Basic	: in	form	ation
Buoit			

Contact name and email address	Paul Whittle moderator@urcscotland.org.uk
Action required	For information.

through a variety of different ministries.

1.2 Ministries Committee has been working closely with other committees across the discipleship team, as well as with the Mission

our control. Therefore, upon taking advice from Finance, Ministries target figures produced from 2022 onwards will have a rolling four-year planning horizon. To avoid decisions being based on unreliable data, the Ministries Office will no longer attempt to suggest numbers more than four years ahead.

4.6 The Ministries Office will monitor the new figures closely.

5. Ministry in post-pandemic times

- 5.1 Post-pandemic, churches have emerged to find themselves with an even bigger role in helping people to move forward to 'normal'. Community hubs have always been, and will always be, key places of comfort and refuge in times of crisis. In the midst of change are our dedicated ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church-Related Community Workers, Locally Recognised Worship Leaders and Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers, Elders and lay folk, who have risen to the challenge and embraced new ways of being church as we tackle the current crisis.
- 5.2 Ministries does not underestimate the toll this has taken on many in our churches,

under the terms agreed in the Church-Related Community Work covenant. This includes the accreditation of churches-in-community.

Convenor: Paul Dean Joint Secretaries: Nicola Furley-Smith, Steve Summers

Members: Tim Clarke, Ann Honey, Marie Trubic, Bill Gould (convenor of the assessment board from 2019), Rob Moverley, Dave Herbert (Synod Moderator), Paul Whittle (convenor of Ministries Committee)

1. Introduction

This is the first report of Accreditation sub-committee (CRCW and SCM). The bringing of the two committees together has not been without its challenges, but it has allowed a pattern of closer working practice between the ministries of CRCW and Special Category Ministries.

2. Certificates of Eligibility

- 2.1 Ministries Committee is responsible to General Assembly for oversight of the projected number of ministers for future years, and for deciding each year, on the basis of those projections, whether certificates of eligibility for both stipendiary and non-stipendiary service may be issued to ministers of other denominations. Such a certificate grants eligibility to receive a call to service in a pastorate or post.
- 2.2 During the period since last General Assembly there were 19 applications. Six Certificates of Eligibility have been issued in the past 12 months to ministers from the Presbyterian Church of Korea (1), Reformed Church in Zimbabwe (1), United Church of Christ (1), Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa (3), and one certificate has been cancelled.

3. Certificates for Limited Service

3.1 Certificates of Limited Service allow a minister of another denomination to serve in, and be paid by, the URC, in a specified post only and for a limited period of time. They provide a flexible way of responding to particular local ministry need neetry neetmini

- 4.2 It was agreed by Mission Council in 2014 that the number of SCM posts (full-time equivalent) should not exceed 8% of the total number of stipendiary ministers available. This means, at the moment, that there is a limit of 19 FTE SCM posts.
- 4.3

Phipps, Kathryn Margaret Price, Raymond Sewananda Singh, Alan John Spence, Colin Peter Thompson, Caroline Helen Vodden, Elizabeth Jane Weedon, Martin Wheadon, David Edwin George Whiting.

- 9. Church-Related Community workers Roll of Church-Related Community Workers Admissions to the roll of Church-Related Community Workers (from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022).
- 9.1 By commissioning: None
- 9.2 Deletions from the roll by resignation and/or transfer to another denomination or by the disciplinary process: None

10. Roll of Assembly-Accredited Lay Preachers

- 10.1 The following have received Assembly accreditation between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2021 as a result of having completed a URC course of study or having prior accreditation from another denomination.
 - 04 Yorkshire Chris Mannall
 - 05 East Midlands Maggie Kirkbride
 - 07 Eastern Tina Wilson, Alison Jiggins
- 10.2 Deletions from the Roll of Assembly Accredited Lay Preachers by resignation, removal and / or transfer to other Churches from 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022: Derek Roger Marsh, Kenneth Ousbey, Helen May Pengelly, John Frederick Shaw, Elizabeth Warrington.
- 10.3 Lay Preachers Retired from 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022: Roger James Allen, Elizabeth Barnes, Reginald Brian Richard Cockerell, James Reiach Fells, Elizabeth Patricia Fletcher, Philip John Fowles, Constance Mildred E Garrett, Doreen Margaret Hampson, Elaine Harrison, Kathryn Hodkinson, Gordon Campbell McCallum, Guy Stuart Morfett, Jeffrey Newall, Margaret Judith Nicholson, Pauline Jane Oakley, Magnus Ramage, Stephen Geoffrey Smith, Peter Vince, Lindsay Williamson.

Assessment board

Convenor: Bill Gould (3) Secretary: Nicola Furley-Smith

Members: Liz Mullen (2), Keith Reading (3), Jamie Kissack (4), Dan Morrell (4), Samuel Silungwe (5), Mark Tubby (7),

Ministries Committee

Date of Conference		No. of Candidates	Number accepted
November 2021	CRCW	0	0

Maintenance of the Ministry sub-committee report

Advises on the level of stipend and ministers' conditions of service through the Plan for Partnership. It is also concerned for pensions through its associated Pensions Committee.

Convenor: David Coote

Members: David Gartside, Jean Wyber, Richard Nunn (convenor of pensions committee), Paul Whittle (convenor of ministries committee), Vaughan Griffiths (assistant treasurer)

1. The MoM subcommittee meets twice a year, but conducts much of its business by email as and when a decision is called for concerning stipends or allowances for individual ministers.

2. Plan for Partnership

Our main role is to interpret the Plan for Partnership, and to agree such changes as we consider necessary. When situations are referred to us that do not exactly fit the terms of the Plan, we try to apply the Plan fairly and reasonably. The situation is considered carefully, and can lead to amendments to the Plan; sometimes it is decided that the Plan is adequate, or might need a small clarification to make what is intended clearer. Since our last report, changes have been made to the Fixed Car Allowance to take care of a possible situation where a minister/CRCW is unable drive, and is being driven about. There have also been some small tweaks to wording for clarity.

3. Stipend Increase

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- 1.3 A further thought was to pass the functions of the sub-committee to the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee (PRWC), but that suggestion was disregarded as the PRWC is the place of last resort for stipend support, and needs to remain outside the business of the sub-committee to avoid conflicts of interest.
- 1.4 A more sensible response to the issue of 'staffing' the committee is for the MoM sub-committee membership to revert to the position as it had been prior to the present committee structure, the rationale being the saving in personnel whilst keeping the continuity of what is a very important function.

2. Membership

2.1 **The current membership** of the sub-committee is as follows:

Convenor (appointed by GA)

URC Honorary Treasurer

Convenor of Ministries

Convenor of Pensions Executive

Up to four other members, appointed by GA to serve for four years

The immediate Past, Present and next Moderators of GA, and the General Secretary are *ex officio* members, but rarely attend meetings

The Secretary for Ministries Committee and the Payroll Manager are in attendance.

Minutes are normally taken by a member of the sub-committee.

2.2 **The new membership** of the sub-committee would revert to the 'officers' of Ministries:

The Convenor of Ministries (who would convene) The Secretary for Ministries The DGS (Discipleship).

Plus

The URC Honorary Treasurer The Convenor of Pension Executive The Payroll Manager would be in attendance.

To facilitate the change in personnel and to assist in maintaining the functions of the sub-committee, it is suggested that the current convenor extends their term (until GA 2023), and convenes for one year to oversee the transition.

2.3 At present, the convenor of the MoM sub-committee is also an *ex* officio member of the URC Minister's Pension Fund and, therefore, a Trustee and Director as well as a member of the Pension Committee. Because of the discussions surrounding the change to the Pension arrangements, the current Convener has indicated they are willing to attend these until GA 2023. This would give time for us to work out whether either of these roles are required.

NB. The

Paper H3 Pastoral supervision update

Ministries Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Paul Whittle moderator@urcscotland.org.uk
Action required	None.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of

3. Outcomes of the review

3.1 Affiliation

The 2020 policy cited the lack of available accredited pastoral supervisors, yet required ministers to engage with a pastoral supervisor with accreditation to APSE (Association for Pastoral Supervision and Education) and BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy). Practicalities of available and suitably qualified pastoral supervisors dictates that:

- 3.1.1 the Association of Christian Counsellors is included in the approved list;
- 3.1.2 there is the need to build up an approved list of URC trained pastoral supervisors;
- 3.1.3 the request to use a pastoral supervisor from any other body would need prior approval from the Synod Moderator.

3.2 Training URC pastoral supervisors

- 3.2.1 To meet 3.1.2, Ministries has set up a scheme to train URC pastoral supervisors through the established scheme at Wesley House, Cambridge, taught by the Revd Bill Mullally, Wesley House, Cambridge, and the Revd Rick Mearkle, Director of Ministerial Formation at Westminster College, Cambridge.
- 3.2.2 Two Taster Days to learn about becoming a pastoral supervisor were held in September 2021 and January 2022.
- 3.2.3 The first cohort embarked on the course in November 2021. A second course werd ℝ (ng æT(C)@(a6Ppf)2(ot)17.1t (w)6 (er))-2.9 (2.20 (ehors)1Uuo20025Ti(t)2

Paper H4 URC Confidentiality Policy

Ministries Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Paul Whittle moderator@urcscotland.org.uk
Action required	To agree the reworded paragraph on prayer support, and the additional wording on references and use of multimedia platforms such as Zoom as requested at Assembly Executive, November 2022.
Draft resolution(s)	15. General Assembly accepts the additional wording on references and use of multimedia platforms such as Zoom as requested at Assembly Executive, November 2022.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Assembly Executive agreed the policy at its meeting in November 2022, but asked for the inclusion of two further paragraphs on references and use of multimedia platforms. This version of the policy has also tidied up the wording on prayer support, after taking legal and compliance advice.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	URC Confidentiality Policy as agreed at Assembly Executive November 2021 (paper H1).
Consultation has taken place with	URC Legal Adviser URC Compliance Officer.

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understanding, as to whether the candidate has the qualifications, skills and aptitudes to do the job as described.

As a referee, you owe the subject of the reference a duty to take reasonable care to ensure the information it contains is true, accurate and fair, and does not give a misleading impression. Any opinions should be supported with facts.

It is advisable to avoid referring to any matter relating to any of the protected characteristics mentioned in the Equalities Act 2010 (eg the primary reason for not disclosing information about health record is to avoid any potential claim for discrimination on grounds of disability).

Under the current data protection legislation, individuals are not entitled to access a confidential employment reference written about them. To refuse disclosure, the reference should clearly state that it is confidential, intended for the attention of the recipient only, and that the author does not give permission for it to be disclosed to the subject. With the foregoing statement, the reference would not be accessible to the candidate. That said, any reference being freely given on request should not contain within it any information that you, as the referee, would not stand by.

4. 1.8 of Appendix 2 now reads:

1.8 Virtual conferencing platforms

Virtual conferencing platforms (such as Zoom, Lifesize and Teams) are approved software tools for conducting remote/virtual meetings. This document provides basic guidance on how to protect your privacy and the privacy of others when using Zoom:

1.8.1 Visibility of remote work locations

Participants should use the platform's virtual background feature, when available, if they do not want to have their surroundings visible.

1.8.2 Screen Sharing Privacy

Protecting confidential data on your device from being viewed: Avoid sharing confidential information visible on your other screens. Before screen sharing, close all applications, emails and documents that you will not use in that session. Managing whose screen is visible: Default settings should be set to limit screen sharing to the host. The host can also allow screen sharing by participants. The host can select the "host only" setting to prevent others from sharing their screens. If the host determines that screen sharing by participants is needed, sharing by "one participant at a time" should be selected. The host should remind participants not to share other sensitive information during the meeting inadvertently.

1.8.3 Managing participants

Some basic tips for preventing unwanted attendees or 'bombing' are listed below:

Don't reuse meeting access codes. You can generate a new access code for each meeting Set a password for the meeting Monitor participant list for unwanted attendees Set up a waiting room function.

1.8.4 Zoom recordings

When recording a meeting, choose Record to the Cloud, and the video, audio, and chat text are recorded in the Zoom cloud. Prior to you recording a meeting, you must obtain consent from all meeting the definition of the cloud to the cloud text of tex

Previous relevant documents	Review of ecumenical relations, November 2011 Mission Council. A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission (and the accompanying Toolkit), Churches Together in England.
Consultation has taken place with	Mission Committee; Faith and Order Committee; Ministries Committee; Ecumenical Reference Group; Synod Moderators; the Clerk to General Assembly; members of the Law and Polity Group; Methodist/URC Liaison Group; Baptist, Church of England and Methodist National Ecumenical Officers.

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (eg ecumenical)	If the resolutions are adopted, this will demonstrate our continued commitment to ecumenical co-operation at a local level. The report has received positive affirmation from ecumenical partners.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The 50th anniversary of the formation of the United Reformed Church invites the question as to whether this should be a moment to celebrate or lament. The coming together of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches was seen as the start of a process of further unions. We were not expected to be in existence 50 years later.
- 1.2 This ecumenical fervour was not confined to the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists. The URC's first General Assembly was held at Westminster Methodist Central Hall in the presence o

to reinvigorate our ecumenical vision. Now, 50 years on, how do we remain true to our ecumenical DNA, enshrined in the statement concerning the ec

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could provide an appropriate framework for their mission together, and free them from the difficulties of drafting more complicated constitutional arrangements.

- 3.14 The irony of these practical issues is that the URC, as the denomination historically most committed to structural unity, both nationally and locally, appears to be the least able to respond to the oversight and nurturing of its LEPs.
- 3.15 The URC Faith and Order Committee contributed significantly to the work of this report, and offered this summary: In the light of the URC's 50th anniversary, it is time to revisit the principles which were so important to us 50 years ago, namely ecumenism and unity. The Faith and Order Committee endorses the encouragement to return to these core values. While the past 50 years have not moved us nearer to structural unity, we can see this ethos being expressed in our LEPs. We encourage all the councils of the church, including General Assembly, to ensure the URC becomes a positive and significant part of LEPs again. Such an affirmation of LEPs would be a restatement of our ecumenical vision.

4. New forms of ecumenical co-operation

- 4.1 The 2011 Mission Council ecumenical report anticipated a substantial review of ecumenical working which would be overseen by Churches Together in England (CTE), to which the URC was a substantial contributor, as part of the working group tasked with the review.
- 4.2 The CTE review recognised that ecumenical co-operation did not always need to be framed by establishing LEPs. There are many situations where 'lighter touch' governance models can be used to free up the sharing of resources for mission.
- 4.3 The first consultation document was issued by CTE in March 2015, and received both a warm welcome as well as some criticism, in many cases from denominations not involved in LEPs. The working group radically revised the document in the light of responses received. They issued a further consultation document and then, in 2016, *A New Framework for Local Unity in Mission* was launched. In April 2019, recognising the document was no longer new, this was changed to the current version, *A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission.*⁴ Former URC General Secretary, and then CTE General Secretary, David Cornick described it as *one of the most significant practical ecumenical documents of our time*.
- 4.4 Importantly, *A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission* offers agreed models of ecumenical co-operation which do not require the setting up of separate legal entities with requirement for complicated constitutions. Constitutional agreements remain part of *Flexible Framework*, but are only intended for the situations where substantial resource sharing is required.
- 4.5 To help with the interpretation of *Flexible Framework*, during lockdown 2020 the URC, Methodist, Baptist and Church of Engl4 (t)2 (R)6 (C)6 (,)2.9 (e F)15 (ant)2 (l)6 (y (or) 5y (

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- A future for the URC? Free to Believe Briefing www.freetobelieve.org.uk/uploads/3/4/5/7/34574639/briefing_2017-10_final_for_website%5b6420%5d.pdf (Winter 2017)
- ^{3.} Review of ecumenical relations https://urc.org.uk/images/MissionCouncil/Nov%202011/paper_b_ecumenical _relations_review.pdf (November 2011 Mission Council)
- ^{4.} A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission, -4/GSo (ur236 5Gb3 l(.)22Tc g (ons)T(e F)o.)2 https://ŧ.or.:loruk18 (i)6 (n)g(ill)]TJ0 Tc 0 Tw (-)Tj2.004 Tc -0.002 T.58.96 0 Td[FrcdcAcr

Paper I2

Environmental Policy

Mission Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Sarah Lane Cawte, Convenor of Mission Committee slanecawte@gmail.com Rob Weston, Convenor of Environmental Task Group tavistockurcminister@gmail.com Simeon Mitchell, Secretary for Church and Society simeon.mitchell@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	 General Assembly: a) Resolves that urgent action should be taken to reduce carbon emissions across the whole of church life, with the aim of reaching net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2030. b) Adopts the Environmental Policy in Part 2 of this paper, and <i>instructs</i> the committees and bodies under its control, and <i>encourages</i> associated terce cssemb 3 (h)-5 (e)20 (co)-5 (m)13 (m)13 (i)2 2 9 T20 (n)(i)

1. oversee progress in implementing this policy and

All Synods in England and Wales are now working towards Eco Synod status, with the West Midlands the first to achieve its Bronze award in March 2021, and at least one active Green Apostle has been appointed in each Synod Assembly Committees have all considered their environmental responsibilities, neighbours in the global south also continue to bear witness to increasing climate impacts.

- b) Alongside climate change, there is also increasing awareness of the extent and threat of pollution and biodiversity loss. In 2019, an intergovernmental panel of scientists said one million animal and plant species were now threatened with extinction. A 2020 report found global populations of mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles had plunged by 68%, on average, since 1970.
- c) While there has been growing political acknowledgement of the importance of tackling the climate emergency, and to a lesser extent biodiversity loss, practical and policy responses still fall short in many areas. In the UK, in 2019 a '2050 net zero emissions' target was set in law, and in April 2021 the UK Government committed to cut carbon emissions 78% from 1990 levels by 2035. However, as the government's own independent Climate Change Committee has highlighted, there has so far been a significant gap between the pledges the government has made and the action it has taken to meet them. Internationally, while COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021 resulted in a number of significant new commitments, it ultimately failed to unequivocally support this higher ambition with the funding and policy changes needed to respond meaningfully to the magnitude of the emergency that we face.
- d) It is notable that the most prophetic action and pressure for change around environmental concerns continues to come from non-governmental sectors of society, individuals and communities, including faith groups. Ahead of COP26, faith leaders, including the Moderators of General Assembly on behalf of the URC, committed in the Glasgow Multi-Faith Declaration to 'making transformational change in our own lives and in the lives of our communities through individual and collective action'.
- 4. Setting the necessary ambition: net zero emissions by 2030
- The proposals and policy below arise from our theological understanding, our assessment of recent scientific and political developments, and our reflections on progress since 2016.
- b) We believe the time is right for the United Reformed Church to set a target and develop plans to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 at the latest, building on current progress and the plans already in place. This would follow the lead set by a number of Synods, and bring the URC into alignment with the net zero target recently set by a number of other denominations, including the Church of England,

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- Where possible, play a proactive role as investors, by engaging further with companies whose activities foster significant carbon emissions, for example the electricity and automotive industries, and producers of energy intensive products (eg cement)
- c) Support investment in renewable energy and clean technologies.

8. Use and disposal of resources

- a) Reduce the use and consumption of unsustainable resources
- b) Work towards eliminating the use of single-use plastics, given their significant environmental impact
- c) Support and promote the reuse and recycling of materials
- d) Dispose of waste in ways that minimise its impact on the environment
- e) Reduce consumption of intensively produced meat and dairy products, and other food with a high carbon footprint.

9. Worship, teaching and education

- a) Ensure that those serving and being prepared for service in the church are cognisant of the global and spiritual context of the climate crisis, as well as the response required by our faith
- b) Compile, promote and use resources for worship and teaching related to environmental themes
- c) Provide, promote and use resources and campaigns that support churches and church members to reduce their environmental footprint.

10. Advocacy

- a) Advocate for action by government, industry and othermiprion byonmentprchip a((on)20a17 (om)
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Paper I3 Korea Peace Appeal

Mission Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Sarah Lane Cawte, Convenor of URC Mission Committee slanecawte@gmail.com	
Action required	Decision.	
Draft resolution(s)	18. a) General Assembly affirms its support for a lasting peace settlement to end the Korean War and instructs the General Secretary and Moderator to sign the Korea Peace Appeal on its behalf.	
	b) General Assembly commends the Korea Peace Appeal and urges Synods, local churches, and individuals to sign the Korea Peace Appeal in solidarity with ecumenical partners in Korea.	

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Garnering support for the Korea Peace Appeal, seeking a Peace Treaty to formally end the Korean War.
Main points	The Korean War ended in June 1953 with the signing of an Armistice, but a formal end has never been declared. Deep divisions remain between North and South Korea, compounded by the influence of external forces. The Korea Peace Appeal is a worldwide effort to secure 100 million signatures by June 2023 – the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice – in support of a formal Peace Treaty as a step to bringing lasting peace to the Korean peninsula. Members of the URC are encouraged to sign.
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with	National Christian Council in Korea (NCCK); ecumenical partners in Korea; Church of Scotland; Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI).

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (eg ecumenical)	The Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) is a close partner of the URC: the Revd Bo-Hyun Kim, former Special Category Minister serving the URC in Bristol, recently became the PCK General Secretary, reinforcing already close relationships.

	A PCK lay-missioner and several Korean ministers are currently serving with us. The URC also has links with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK).
	The URC has long participated in global ecumenical conversations involving the NCCK, World Council of Churches and CTBI, concerned with bridging relationships in Korea and the quest for peace.

1. The background

- 1.1 70 years ago, the Korean War was raging, ending in June 1953 with an Armistice. Nearly five million people died, more than half – about 10% of Korea's pre-war population – were civilians. Among the military casualties were 1,114 British soldiers.
- 1.2 The war entrenched the division of the Korean peninsula that separated up to 10 million families on either side of the 38th Parallel. The Republic of Korea entered 34 years of military rule, while the Kim dynasty in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) devised the Juche political doctrine that has led to isolation, widespread poverty, and human rights abuses, while at the same time enduring the harshest sanctions regime in the world. Meanwhile, South Korea pays \$1 billion annually for hosting 28,500 United States military personnel.

2. The proposal

- 2.1 At a webinar in January hosted by National Christian Council in Korea (NCCK) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), churches in Britain were urged to support the Korea Peace Appeal¹ to bring about a Peace Treaty to formally end the Korean War, end sanctions against DPRK, and promote links between North and South Korea and sustainable peace on the Korean peninsula. NCCK is one of more than 370 civil society groups that include each of the country's seven faith communities campaigning to end the Korean War by collecting 100 million signatures by June 2023, the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Armistice Agreement.
- 2.2 The Korea Peace Appeal and the URC's engagement with and support for this campaign is of greathsign (bit ance to au 0) ball wa 2,26) 3 27.4 Td[(f) 2 (ors) 3.9 (b (l)

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- 2.4 Over the years, we have received very few local mission pledges from local churches, but we do know that there has been engagement with Vision2020 from personal feedback, Vision2020 grant applications and the *It Just Works* workshop which was held in 2015. For a number of years, we also received feedback from the Mission Enablers network about how their synods and local churches were engaging with Vision2020. However, here again the focus has moved to *Walking the Way.*
- 2.5 Now that the ten-year time frame has come to an end, how have we engaged with Vision2020, and what lessons can we learn for the future? How has the framework helped the URC in its mission?

3.

Vision2020's ten statements from which churches were invited to identify mission priorities particularly pressing or relevant to their context	Churches that identified this priority for mission during the period 2016-20	% of the 799 churches that identified mission priorities from Vision2020 2016-20
1. Spirituality and prayer	586	73
2. Identity	177	22
3. Christian ecumenical partnerships	361	45
4. Community partnerships	518	65
5. Hospitality and diversity	438	55
6. Evangelism	306	38
7. Church growth	574	72
8. Global partnerships	141	18
9. Justice and peace	205	26
10. The integrity of creation	124	16

y	Children's/ outh/ amily	Practical/ physical/ creative*	Messy Church	,	Sponsoring students	Overseas	Fresh Expressions	Other
	13	29	7	24	2	11	4	18

* For example: mission notice board; mosaic on a boarded-up church door; community garden; art project.13

5.2 It is always difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of mission from data alone. The Gospel contains stories rather than statistics for good reason. For this reason, we hope the stories presented by the ten films present a snapshot of just part of the impact of the decade of Vision2020. Seeds have been sown, which will continue to bear fruit as a result of Vision2020.

5.3

Paper 15 Walking the Way: final report to General Assembly

Walking the Way Steering Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Philip Brooks philip.brooks@urc.org.uk Adrian Bulley adrian.bulley@urc.org.uk
Action required	Everyone in the URC to continue working in accordance with

Children's and Youth Work]
Finance.	

Summary of impact

Financial	Any financial needs for discipleship development in the URC will, in future, need to be covered through existing budgets and other sources of funding, such as the Discipleship Development Fund.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Consultation on whole-of-life discipleship with ecumenical partners continues, including with Churches Together in England, which is exploring ways to avoid duplication across member churches and organisations in formation for Mission and Discipleship.

1. This is not the end

- 1.1 *Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus* today is the long-term focus on wholeof-life discipleship devised by the United Reformed Church in the United Kingdom (URC). It launched in November 2017, and has, until March 2022, enjoyed funding from the Mission Support Programme (MSP) of the Council for World Mission (CWM).

in the concept of God being present in all aspects of everyday life, and are seeking to respond to that presence meaningfully, tend to support the efforts of the steering group. Even if they do not themselves use the branding or resources that *Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today* promotes, they are still willing to keep in contact, and share stories and resources on discipleship more widely across the denomination. Given that a key objective of *Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today* is collaborative working towards whole-of-life discipleship being a priority across the URC, this has been especially welcome.

- b) Simple resources which can be used in the context of everyday life are useful and popular. Despite the global Covid-19 pandemic slowing orders throughout 2020, substantial numbers of orders and requests for information have come in subsequently, as individuals and groups from across the URC have come to use these resources as a means of shaping their response, as disciples of Jesus, to the many struggles of the pandemic. Whole-of-life discipleship is clearly a helpful focus in highlighting the ways in which people can be the presence of Jesus, living the life of Jesus today in these strange times.
- c) Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today has provided an identity, catalyst and/or focus for bespoke resources/approaches. Every synod in the URC, as well as Resource Centres for Learning (RCLs) and key Church House offices (including Children's and Youth Work, Ministries, Education and Learning, Church and Society, Ecumenical and interfaith and Global and Intercultural Ministries), have something significant, at least in their short to medium-term plans, on wholeof-life discipleship. Some have appointed specialist staff or ministers to help explore discipleship, while others have created or promote existing resources to support congregations on their discipleship journey. It is clear in each case that *Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today* has played some role in inspiring or shaping these approaches.
- d) There is sustained support for network gatherings. Contacts representing synods, RCLs Alphif(Upp(ner)c2 (wer)-3A6 (ald(ac)4 ((s)4 m- (c)-20uear)-3e) et

programme with the LICC again, at its own cost. Churches in Mersey Synod, which have just commenced the accompaniment programme with the LICC, seem excited to continue this journey. Other synods have also expressed their appreciation for the LICC's resources, alongside others such as 'Holy Habits' resources and the 'Leading Your Church into Growth' programme which, in their own ways, walk alongside churches in their exploration of whole-of-life discipleship at a grassroots level. Wide support for, and use of, such resources, indicates a continuing need for accompaniment and mentoring for individuals and churches on their discipleship journey.

3. Lessons to be learned

- 3.1 Alongside successes, the steering group remains aware that:
 - a) Still not everyone understands the discipleship message. Because of longstanding difficulties in communications between the 'pentrhe c

- d) There is much resource/programme/project fatigue. Connected again is the fact that many are simply fed up of Church programmes and initiatives, of which there have been very many over the years, and anything that looks like a Church programme or initiative, including Walking the Way, has not always been received well as a result. It is hoped that Walking the Way's main legacy, namely a longterm focus on discipleship which reaches across everything the denomination does, will help to alleviate this.
- e) There is much scepticism/apathy. The fact alluded to above, that there have been so many programmes and initiatives in the Church over the years, all with varying levels of success but most ending up petering out with little legacy, means there is much scepticism or apathy shown towards anything coming from so-called 'central' Church, whether that be from synods or Church House. *Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today* has been no exception.
- f) There is a need for stronger relationships/collaboration/transferability of approaches to discipleship. Every success that Walking the Way has enjoyed has come from the strength of relationships across different parts of the Church's life and work, which has enabled more collaboration on different resources and events, as well as general good practice. The building and maintenance of such relationships will be unspeakably crucial in developing Walking the Way's longterm legacy.

4. There is more work to be done

4.1 As the steering group prepares to complete its work, it offers a plan in the appendix for the longer-term development of whole-of-life discipleship within the denomination, detailing the role everyone can play. Support for this plan will be offered by the Deputy General Secretaries for Mission and Discipleship.

5. Thank you

- 51 As this phase of the United Reformed Church's focus on whole-of-life discipleship transitions into the next, it is important to give thanks for all that has been.
- 5.2 From the outset, the former Deputy General Secretaries, the Revd Richard

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Walking the Way Steering Group Targets for 2022

Background

A disciple is one who seeks, in partnership with others, to recognise and respond to God's presence in every aspect of their life. Put holding each other to account as we journey together. The United Reformed Church's long-term focus on whole-of-life discipleship hold. Being a disciple is about figuring out what to do about that, with help from God and our fellow followers. In terms of discipline is truly a responsibility of the whole denomination, including individuals, local congregations, synods, and General Assembly, with at its simplest, God is there, in everything we are, think, say and do, no matter what age, abilities, background or status we may in a Christian context, there is much to say about moulding ourselves, individually and collectively, to be more Jesus-shaped, some strategical support from the Deputy General Secretaries for Mission and Discipleship.

Primary objective

The whole URC to understand what needs to be done about General Assembly resolution 36 of 2021, and to act on them.

Resolution 36 of 2021

In affirming that whole-of-life discipleship is the primary long-term focus of the United Reformed Church, General Assembly:

requests that those reviewing the future of the URC, as agreed by Mission Council in March 2021, takeh0 (s)4 ()20 (of)orn C eh0 (s(ee)20 a) invites all committees and groups connected with the life of the United Reformed Church to hold the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way at the heart of their work. ð

instructs the Walking the Way Steering Group, through the Project Manager, and in collaboration with other Church House staff, to develop a range of resources and relationships to better embed the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way across the Church. (e)

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Synods	Ensure key synod movers and shakers are appointed Synod Advocates	Every moderator to provide the name(s) of advocates	Walking the Way Project Manager Synod Teams	Completed list of Synod Advocates	By end of Jan 2022
	Ensure whole-of-life discipleship is embedded in synod's existing work	Synod Advocate to ensure that all synod's committees are talking discipleship and to feed this back to the Walking the Way project manager/DGS Discipleship and Mission quarterly, with the recommendation to formerly report to their own synod twice per year.	Synod Advocates Synod Teams	Established four-way communication between discipleship and mission at Church House, Synods, and local churches	Embedded practice by Nov 2022
	To create a network of local church advocates and equip them for the role	Highlight the importance of each church having a discipleship advocate who feeds back to the Synod Advocate	Synod Advocates	Synod advocate holds a complete list of local church advocates and establishes two-way communication with them, then feeds back regularly to the Walking the Way Project Manager/DGS Discipleship and Mission.	Highlight this at March Synod 2022 synod meeting, have list by Oct 2022 Embedded practice by Nov 2022
	Ensure all relevant synod roles have discipleship as a key priority	Synods to review job descriptions	Line Managers/HR	Job descriptions updated and discipleship included in all new roles wherever possible	In line with synod appraisal timelines

Throughout 2022	Embedded practice by November 2022	Throughout 2022
Submission of local stories and other feedback demonstrating awareness and engagement with social justice as part of whole-of-life discipleship discipleship discipleship lncreased use of Global justice materials, including from Commitment for Life	Synods working together more visibly on resource production, sharing good news, practice and information.	Increase in numbers participating in Stepwise Reports of more Elders' Groups participating
Synod Teams Synod Advocates Church and Society Global and Intercultural Ministries	Synod Advocates Synod Teams	Synod Advocate Synod Stepwise Promoter RCLs
Synod to encourage awareness of social justice issues and encourage the congregation in taking action as part of living out faith, calling on support from Church House (Church and Society and Global and Intercultural Ministries) as needed	Opportunities to be identified for the sharing of good news, practice and information on discipleship development as much as possible	Synod Advocate to work with those in synod responsible for promoting Stepwise to share it as widely as possible, especially in situations where people may not have
Synod staff and volunteers with responsibility for social justice to emphasise connection between everyday discipleship and social justice, especially in face of societal crises (eg cost of living, climate change, etc.)	Ensure effective sharing and receipt of good news, practice and information for mutual work and learning with other synods	Stepwise participation to be encouraged and enabled across the synod, including all Elders' groups to be given the chance to do it

	Throughout 2022
Good news stories of Stepwise participation being shared as widely as possible	Stories submitted regularly and followed through by Communications and published and shared across the URC networks
	Synod Advocate Communications
considered it as an option	Discipleship stories to be shared with Communications
	Synods to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the URC, ensuring discipleship is a core focus

Walking the Way Steering Group

More resources to be produced collaboratively across different Church House offices and departments, with a focus on whole-of

Increase in numbers participating in Stepwise	Good news stories of Stepwise participation being shared as widely as possibd newnd	
Stepwise Team Communications	Assembly Secretaries and Committee Convenors Discipleship Team Mission Team	Admin and Resources Team
Stepwise Team to share latest news and information across	church House, and Church House groups to participate in Stepwise, should they wish	
All staff to be given the opportunity to participate in and/or		

From 'Not Racist' to Anti-Racist –
Mission Council November 2020

group who were tasked with reading them. They shocked all of us by their tone and content.

- 1.6 The Task Group does not wish to shy away from any of the responses received all of which will be anonymised and made public before General Assembly meets in July 2022. We further intend to address the issues raised by adding to an FAQ document written in light of the autumn Synod presentations and previously circulated as part of the consultation materials. These documents will be available via the Legacies of Slavery webpage www.urc.org.uk/legacies-of-slavery.
- 1.7 The LoS Task Group has been convinced by the positive responses and by events of recent years that it is time for our Church to move beyond vague statements of 'regret.' We have listened to the concerns expressed by some respondents, and amended the proposed apology in light of this. We also take seriously the voices of those who feel this work is not just timely, but well overdue. We therefore ask General Assembly to endorse the 'Confession and Apology' as now drafted, together with the interlinked paper on how to express those words in reparative actions. We are aware that some concerns will remain. We also note that some congregations did not feel able to respond within the timeframe. We therefore encourage continued engagement with the issues beyond the period of the formal consultation. We propose that congregations and synods be encouraged to discuss and contribute to ideas for reparative justice projects within the UK, and/or supporting the work of our partner churches in Africa and the Caribbean. This will help to deepen awareness of the pain that endures and the need to build an anti-racist Church as a legacy of the URC's Year of Jubilee.

2. Proposed Con

2.3 To this end, the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, gathered here in Swanwick in the year 2022:

humbly acknowledges our share in and benefit from our nation's participation, and that of some of our own antecedent bodies, in transatlantic slavery. recognises our failure to honour the efforts of our abolitionist forebears by permitting the legacies of transatlantic slavery to continue shaping our world offers our apology to God and to our sisters and brothers in Africa, the Caribbean, and their descendants, for all that has created and still perpetuates such deep hurt, which originated from the horror of slavery.

repents of the hurt we have caused, our reluctance to face up to the sins of the past and our silence in the face of racism and injustice today.

admits that these sins are part of our continuing failure to see and hear God in all our neighbours, whoever they may be.

commits, in a true spirit of repentance:

to find

United Reformed Church – General Assembly, July 2022

Paper J1 Report to General Assembly 2022

Nominations Committee

Basic information

Contact names and email addresses	Mrs Helen Lidgett hnlidgett@gmail.com Mr George Faris nominations.secretary@urc.org.uk	
Action required	Decision.	
Draft resolution(s)	ion(s) 22. General Assembly extends the Revd Sara term of service as Assistant Clerk of Gen Assembly from 1 January 2023 to the end Assembly 2023.	
	23.	General Assembly appoints committees and representatives of the Church as set out in paragraph 10.3 of this report, subject to the additions and corrections

3.5 Following a discussion at Assembly Executive in November 2021, the committee has given thought to ways in which its work can comply with the United Reformed Church safeguarding policy and procedures and, in particular, the requirement for safer recruitment. We held an extra meeting in February 2022 to which Ms Sharon Barr, the Safeguarding Lead, was invited. The committee agreed to ask Assembly Committee Convenors and Secretaries to prepare role descriptions for each committee/sub-committee convenor and member, and to review these annually. They are also asked to identify whether any convenors or members need a DBS/PVG check, and to inform the Nominations Secretary if so. We recognised a particular need for care in appointing committee convenors, and recommended a process of consultation with potential candidates and the committee secretary and, where appropriate, the General Secretary or a Deputy General Secretary. This process has been followed in several of the nominations for convenors and convenors-elect brought to this Assembly.

Monitoring

- 4.1 Those invited to serve on the Church's committees and working groups are asked to complete a monitoring form. The results are shared with the Equalities Committee.
- 4.2 In all, 47 acceptances were received between 3 October 2021 and 5 May 2022. The ordained/lay and male/female figures ares mee (i10 Td(in)Tj-0.016 Tc 0.0190i23.32023.2e ac

Thanks to the Committee Secretary

7.1 At this Assembly, Mr George Faris completes his team of service as Nominations Committee Secretary. This is an arduous and time-consuming but voluntary role, which he has filled with exemplary attention to detail, skill and courtesy. He has kept records meticulously, and gently guided Convenors through the complexities. The committee offers him its heartfelt thanks for this work which has touched every part of the church's life, and wishes him well.

Resignations

8.1 General Assembly is asked to note the following resignations:

Ref	Committee/Group	Name
5.3	Equalities Committee	The Revd Mhari McLintock
9.2	Westminster College Board of Governors	The Revd Jan Adamson

Ref	Committee/Group	Name	Role	Years
2.4	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Dominic Grant	Member**	-
2.4	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Martha McInnes	Member**	-
2.4	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe	Member**	-
2.6	Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline	The Revd Tessa Henry- Robinson	Minister Member**	5
2.6	Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline	The Revd Nick Mark	Minister Member**	5
2.6	Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline	The Revd Raymond Singh	Minister Member**	5
2.6	Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline	Mr Tim Crossley	Elder Member**	5
2.6	Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline	Mr Dodie Khurshid	Elder Member**	5
2.7	Standing Panel for the Incapacity Procedure	The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe	Member [†]	4
2.8	Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee	Mrs Hilary Miles	Member**	4
2.9	Safeguarding Committee	The Revd Roger Jones	Convenor**	4
2.8	Safeguarding Committee	Ms Julie Rafferty	Synod Safeguarding Group Representative**	4
2.9	Safeguarding Committee	The Revd Ruth Whitehead	Synod Moderator**	4
2.9	Safeguarding Composite	MS Ruth Goold	National Synod of Scotland	-

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Ref	Committee/Group	Name	Role	Years
0.2	Westminster College	•	<u> </u>	

9.2 Westminster College

members of the United Reformed Church, or youth representatives who meet the criteria for membership of Assembl \mathbf{w} A term of service may normally be completed if someone ceases to be a member of the URC during their term.

- Nominations of URC representatives to external bodies should either be URC members, or youth representatives who meet the criteria for membership of Assembly, or URC staff who have relevant expertise. The nomination of a staff member would automaticall wispse in the person concerned ceased to hold a URC post. w URCa
- 11. This list then 23 with Td7a

Mr Christopher Buckwell (10)

Mr Gerry Prosser (9) Mr Guy Morfett (11)

1.4 Resource Sharing Task Group

Convenor: The Revd Steve Faber [2024] (Synod Moderator) Secretary: Mr Chris Atherton Treasurer: The Revd Dick Gray Miss Margaret Atkinson URC Treasurer

1.5 Environmental Task Group

Convenor: The Revd Rob Weston The Revd David Coleman The Revd

Ms Alison Greaves

2.2.1 Panel for General Assembly appointments

Members usually serve for five years, as training is required.

Retiring 2023

Mrs Barbara Ellis (3) Mrs Helen Lidgett (5) The Revd Ruth Whitehead (8)

Retiring 2024

The Revd Jan Adamson (13) Dr Paul Ashitey (10) Mr Matthew Barkley (9) The Revd Lucy Brierley (9) Mr David Gartside (3) The Revd Alison Hall (3) Ms Helen Stenson (12) Mrs Sheila Davies (3)

The Revd Tessa Henry-Robinson (9) Ms Victoria Paulding (5) Mr Reuben Watt (11) The Revd Sal Bateman (10) The Revd

2.5 Disciplinary Investigation Panel

Senior Member: The Revd Dr Janet Tollington [2028] Deputy Senior Member: Vacancy Members (not time-limited):

The Revd Martin Ferris The Revd Lesley Moseley The Revd George Mwuara Mr Andy Russell The Revd Martin Spain The Revd Geoff Wright The Revd Derek Hopkins The Revd Craig Muir Mr Mark Rigby Ms Cathy Simpson The Revd Dr Janet Tollington

2.6 Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline

Minister members:

The Revd Tessa Henry-Robinson [2027]**

The Revd Nick Mark [2027]**

The Revd Raymond Singh [2027]**

Elder members:

Mr Tim Crossley [2027]** Vacancy Mr Dodie Khurshid [2027]**

2.7 Standing panel for the incapacity procedure

This panel is normally convened by the member with legal experience. Members serve one or two five-year terms. Secretary: Vacancy Synod Moderator: The Revd Simon Walkling [2023] Past Moderator of General Assembly: The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2026][†] Commission officer for the incapacity procedure: The Revd Roy Lowes [2023] Mr David Nash (legal experience) [2023] Dr Ewen Harley (GP) [2023]

2.8 Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee

Convenor: The Revd David Grosch-Miller [2023] Convenor-Elect: Vacancy Secretary: Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) General Secretary Deputy Treasurer Synod Moderator: The Revd Brian Jolly [2024] Nominated Members: The Revd Bridget Powell [2023] The Revd Dr Irene John [2024] Mrs Hilary Miles [2026]**

2.9 Safeguarding Committee

Convenor: The Revd Roger Jones [2026]** Secretary: Designated Safeguarding Lead Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) Training and Development Coordinator Nominated Members:

Mr Alex Walker [2026]**

Mrs Kate Yates [2026]**

Synod Safeguarding Practice Group representative:

Ms Julie Rafferty [2026]**

Synod Moderator: The Revd Ruth Whitehead [2026]**

National Synod of Scotland representative: Ms Ruth Goold [2026]**

URC Advocated Survivors Group representatives (up to 2): group not yet operative Independent members:

Mr Tim Carter (Methodist Church) [2026]**

Ms Fi Cisneros [2026]**

In attendance:

Head of Children's and Youth Work

3. Mission department

3.1 Mission Committee

Convenor: Sarah Lane Cawte [2024] Secretary: Deputy General Secretary (Mission) The Revd Grant Wilson (1) [interim]** The Revd Stuart Nixon (3) [2026] The Revd Robert Bushby (5) [2023] Ms Lindsey Brown (7) [2026][†] The Revd Ray Stanyon (9) [2025] The Revd Martin Knight (11) [2026]** Mr John Collings (13) [2023]

Mr Aftab Mughal (2) [2025] The Revd Clare Davison (4) [2024] Vacancy (6) Vacancy (8) Vacancy (10) The Revd Branwen Rees (12) [2026][†]

3.1.1 International exchange reference group

Convenor: The Revd Dr Ana Gobledale [2024] Synod Moderator: Vacancy Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries Nominated member: The Revd Ros Lyle [2023]

3.1.2 Commitment for Life (CfL) reference group

Convenor: Mr Richard Lewney [2024] At least two CfL advocates Representative of Mission Committee Representative of Global Justice Now Programme Officer for Global Justice and Partnerships

3.1.3 Interfaith enabling group

The convenor is nominated by the Mission Committee. Convenor: The Revd Tracey Lewis [2023] Secretary: The Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Scotland Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Wales Nominated members: Ms Victoria Turner [2025] Mr Andy Lie [2023]

Ms Victoria Turner [2025] Co-opted members:

The Revel Dr Graham Adam -. ever 286 C/if b4 @ 2000/s) 25 (0) 220 J w 61 . 25 n (+0) e2 n (+20) 26 (n) d (5 (Fay 32 (6) 2 0 M d (

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4. Discipleship department

4.1 Ministries Committee

Convenor: The Revd Mary Thomas [2026]** Secretary: Secretary for Ministries Leadership in worship advocate: Vacancy Synod Moderator: The Revd Jamie Kissack [2024] Convenors of the Accreditations (CRCW and SCM), Maintenance of Ministry and Retired Ministers' Housing sub-committees Convenor of the Assessment Board Nominated members:

The Revd Stuart Scott [2023] Mrs Gill Bates [2024] The Revd Lesley Moseley [2025] The Revd Sally Willett [2023] Chris Kellett [2025]

4.1.1 Accreditations (CRCW and SCM) sub-committee

Convenor: The Revd Dr Paul Dean [2025] Secretary: to be confirmed Convenor of the Assessment Board Representatives: Synod moderators:

SCMs: CRCWs: The Revd David Herbert [2024] The Revd Tim Clarke [2024] Vacancy

Nominated Members:

The Revd Alison Micklem [2025]

Two vacancies

4.1.2 Ministries – maintenance of ministry sub-committee

Under review

4.1.3 Ministries – Retired Ministers' Housing Society sub-committee

Terms of service shall be for four years, with the possibility of a further term of four years. The convenor shall be a member of the Ministries Committee nominated by that Committee.

Convenor: The Revd Paul Whittle [2023]**

Secretary: Secretary for Ministries

Nominated Members:

Two vacancies

Representative Members:

Tenants: Retired Ministers' Housing Society:

Vacancy Vacancy

4.1.4 Assessment board

Members usually serve for five years, as training is required. Convenor: Professor Bill Gould [2024]

Relining 2023	
The Revd John Danso (10)	Mr Dan Morrell (4)
Retiring 2024	
The Revd Jan Adamson (13)	The Revd Gerald England (8)
Mr Mark Tubby (7)	
Retiring 2025	
Ms Mercy Nimako	Ms Liz Sharples
The Revd Samuel Silungwe	

4.3 **Children's and Youth Work Committee**

Convenor: The Revd Paul Robinson [2024] Acting Convenor: The Revd Samantha Sheehan [May to July 2022] Secretary: Head of Children's and Youth Work URC Youth Moderator URC Youth Moderator-elect Convenor of the Pilots sub-committee **Pilots representative** Nominated members: Mr Matthew Barkley [2023] Mr Reuben Watt [2023] The Revd Janine Atkinson [2024] The Revd Samantha Sheehan [2024] The Reverend Julian Sanders [2025] Ms Caroline Akinyele [2025]

4.3.1 Pilots sub-committee

Convenor: Mr Derek Goodyear Members:

Resources: Synod Pilot officers: Ms Liz Harrison Mr Alan Kendall Vacancy

Representatives:

Children and Youth Development Officer and team:	Ms Lorraine Downer [2023]
URC Youth Pilots:	Vacancy
Pilots company/Friends On Faith Adventures group:	2 to 4 vacancies
Co-opted:	

Resources:

Ms Sandra Ackroyd

Members are nominated by the Children's and Youth Work Committee and serve one or two two-year terms.

4.4 Walking the Way steering group

Co-Chairs: Deputy General Secretary (Mission) and Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship)

Secretary: Project Manager for *Walking the Way* Head of Communications

Stepwise Programme Manager

Communications Officer

Representatives:

Children's and Youth Work: Global and Intercultural Ministries: Education and Learning Committee: Resource Centres for Learning: Training and Development Officers: Mission Committee: Mission Enablers:

General Members:

The Revd Colin Bones [2023]

4.5 Worship Reference Group

Convenor: The Revd Sam Silungwe [2024] Secretary: The Minister for Digital Worship Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) Nominated Members:

The Revd Dr Ana Gobledale [2024] Co-op**ted** Member:

Ms Ruth White Revd Bachelard Kaze Yemtsa [2023] Mr Alan Yates The Revd Peter Ball The Revd Dr Jim Coleman Mr John Collings Mr Martin Hayward

The Revd Caroline Andrews [2024]

United Reformed Church Trust 5.5

Members normally serve for four years, and may only serve a maximum of two terms (eight years). The directors of the Trust appoint new directors from those appointed as members. The members of the Trust elect the chair from among their own number, and appoint a secretary and deputy secretary.

Chair: Mrs Val Morrison (to September 2022) Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones Deputy Secretary: Mr John Samson Members: Group one (Synods 1, 2, 3, 4, 13): The Revd Nick Mark (13) [2024] Group two (Synods 5, 6, 7, 8, 12): Mr Clifford Patten (7) [2024] The Revd James Breslin (5) [2024] Ms Catriona Wheeler (5) [2026][†] Group three (Synods 9,10,11): The Revd Julian Macro (9) [2025] There is one vacancy for a group member.

URC Youth appointee: vacancy Moderator of General Assembly General Secretary In attendance:

Mr David Greatorex (5) [2024] Mr David Lathbury (6) [2026][†]

The Revd John Macaulay (10) [2026]**

Clerk of General Assembly Treasurer

Convenor of the Investment Committee minute secretary Chief Finance Officer

5.5.1 Church House management group

Convenor: Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources) **General Secretary** Chief Finance Officer Nominated members: Dr Ian Harrison [2024] Mr Adam Lester [2024]

Two vacancies

5.5.2 Remuneration Committee

Convenor: Mr William McVey Secretary: Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources) Ms Sushila Jetha (Methodist HR) URC Treasurer In attendance: Chief Finance Officer

The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd 5.6

Terms run until the AGM in September. The directors of the Trust appoint new directors from those appointed as members. The board members elect the chair from among their own number and appoint the company secretary.

Chair: Mrs Bridget Micklem

Deputy chair: Mr Lyndon Thomas

Secretary: Ms Sandi Hallam-Jones

URC Deputy Treasurer

Church Nominated Trustees/Directors:

Mrs Bridget Micklem [2023] Mrs Faith Paulding [2025] Convenor of the Pensions Committee Mr Colin MacBean [2024] Mr Chris Atherton [2026]**

Convenor of the Maintenance of Ministry sub-committee Convenor of the Investment Committee

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7.11 Commission of Covenanted Churches in Wales

Appointed by the National Synod of Wales

7.12 Free Church education committee

Professor Graham Handscomb Mrs Gillian Kingston

7.13 European Churches' environmental network

The Revd David Coleman

7.14 Churches' committee on funerals and crematoria

The Revd Sally Thomas

7.15 Churches' forum for safeguarding

Designated Safeguarding Lead

7.16 Churches' network for nonviolence

Head of Children's and Youth Work

7.17 Churches Visitor and Tourism Association

Mrs Valerie Jenkins

7.18 Joint liturgical group

The Revd Dr Ana Gobledale

8. Representatives on formal bilateral and multilateral committees

8.1 Methodist/United Reformed Church liaison group

Co-convenor: The Revd Geoffrey Clarke (Synod Moderator) (five-year term) [2026] Co-secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Scotland Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer for the National Synod of Wales Nominated Members – serving one or two four-year terms:

The Revd Tim Richards [2024] Mr Tim Hopley [2025]

8.1.1 Methodist/ United Reformed Church strategic oversight group

General Secretary A General Assembly Moderator Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

8.2 Church of England - United Reformed Church Contact Group

Co-Chair: The Revd Ruth Whitehead [2024] Co-Secretary: Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations The Revd Dr Susan Durber [2024] Mr John Ellis [2024] The Revd Tim Meadows [2024]

8.3 EMU Partnership (Scottish Episcopal Church, the Methodist Church in Scotland and the United Reformed Church National Synod of Scotland) [see note 7]

Appointed by the National Synod of Scotland

8.4 Conversations between the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe and the Anglican Communion

The Revd Dr Julian Templeton

8.5 Roman Catholic/United Reformed Church Dialogue Group

Co-chair: The Revd Dr John Bradbury Co-secretary: The Revd Philip Brooks Members: Mr John Cornell

The Revd Jason McCullagh

The Revd Dr Sarah Hall The Revd Lindsey Sanderson

9. Representatives on governing bodies of theological colleges, etc

9.1 Northern College

The Revd Raymond Singh [2023]Mrs Margaret Marshall [2024]Mr Willie Duncan [2025]The Revd John Grundy [2025]The Revd Mark Bates [2026][†]Dr Lesley Coote [2026]^{**}In attendance: Secretary for Education and Learning

9.2 Westminster College: board of governors

Governors serve six-year terms, which may be renewed. Convenor: The Revd Nigel Uden [2026] Clerk to the governors: The Revd Naomi Young-Rodas [2028]** Honorary treasurer (Westminster College): Mr Andrew Grimwade [2023][†] Acting Principal: The Revd Dr Robert Pope Mr John Ellis [2023] The Revd Stuart Scott [2023] Mrs Darnette Whitby-Reid [2025] The Revd Stuart Scott [2023] Note 1: A further six governors are appointed by the Cambridge Theological Federation, the University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University, the college's teaching staff, its students and the Cheshunt Foundation. Note 2: The Secretary for Education and Learning and the URC Treasurer are normally in attendance.

9.2.1 The Cheshunt Foundation

Mr Guy Morfett

9.2.2 Cambridge Theological Federation

Convenor, Westminster College governors

10. Governors of colleges and schools with which the United Reformed Church is associated

10.1 Caterham School Southern Synod Moderator
10.2 Eltham College Mr Martin Fosten
10.3 Walthamstow Hall Mrs Isabel Heald
10.4 Milton Mount Foundation

Mrs Daphne Bembridge [2023] The Revd Kevin Swaine [2024] Vacancy Mr Ray Dunnett [2024] The Revd Derek Lindfield [2026][†]

10.5 Silcoates School

The Revd Jason McCullagh [2024] Governors serve three-year terms.

Vacancy

10.6	Taunton School	Baptist governor at present

10.7 Bishops Stortford College

Mr Richard Harrison

11. Miscellaneous

The United Reformed Church is represented on a variety of other national organisations and committees as follows:

11.1 Arthur Rank Centre

The Revd Elizabeth Caswell

11.2 Churches Legislation Advisory Service

Ms Muna Levan Harris [2023]

General Secretary

11.3 Congregational Fund Board

Mr Anthony Bayley [2023] The Revd Janine Atkinson [2023] Mr Mike Hart [2024] The Revd Geoffrey Roper [2023] Mrs Mary Steele [2023]

11.4 Congregational Memorial Hall Trust

Mr John Ellis [2023]Mr Simon Fairnington [2023]Mrs Margaret Thompson [2024]Mr Philip Bonnier [2025]The Revd Derek Wales [2025]VacancyRepresentatives serve four-year terms which may be renewed.

11.5 Historic England Places of Worship Forum

Convenor of the listed buildings advisory group

11.6 Lord Wddn

11.11 United Reformed Church History Society The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar [2024] Mrs The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe [2023] Council Members Mrs Jean Wyber [2027][†]

Paper M1

Ratification of constitutional changes concerning the Ministerial Discipline and Incapacity Processes

The General Secretary

Basic information

Contact name and	The General Secretary
email address	john.bradbury@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision to ratify the changes adopted at General Assembly 2021, to which no Synod has registered an objection.
Draft resolution(s)	 Resolution 24. General Assembly adopts the following amendments to the Basis of Union and Structure of the URC: Basis of Union of the United Reformed Church Schedule E, Paragraph 4 – delete the word 'ministerial' before 'rights of membership'. The Structure of the United Reformed Church Paragraph 1(4) – Add heading 'Definitions' and reword: 1.(4) Unless otherwise expressly stated or clearly excluded by the context, a) the expressions 'minister', 'ministers', 'ministry' and 'ministerial' when used in the Structure shall refer to the ministry of Word and Sacrament; b) the expression 'the Disciplinary Process' shall refer to the Process established by the General Assembly under paragraph 2(6)(xxi), but includes any process so established for similar purposes before the adoption of that provision; c) the expression 'the Incapacity Procedure' shall refer to the Procedure established by the General Assembly under paragraph 2(6)(xxii), but includes

any process so established for similar purposes before the adoption of that provision.
Paragraph 2(1) – in function (ix), insert '(subject to paragraph 2(7)(ii))' before 'to suspend or remove names'.
In the Functions of Synods, delete the initial 'A' and the words in brackets.
Function (xvii) – delete existing text and replace with the following:
'To discharge the functions required under the Disciplinary Process to be exercised by the synod, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Process may provide'.
Function (xviii) – delete existing text and replace with the following:
'To discharge the functions required under the Incapacity Procedure to be exercised by the synod, either directly, or indirectly through other officers or bodies, as the Procedure may provide'.
Function (xxi) after 'Disciplinary Process' delete 'contained in Section O'.
Delete section (B) of the Functions of Synods
Paragraph 2.(5) – In sub-paragraph (A), after 'the following functions', delete the words in brackets.
In the Functions of Ecumenical Area Meetings, Function (viii), delete 'contained in Section O' and the cross-reference in brackets.
Function (xviii) - delete existing text and replace with the following:
'To discharge, concurrently with the synod, such of the functions and duties conferred or imposed by the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure upon the synod in respect of a minister or Church Related Community Worker (or former holder of either office) serving or resident within the

Ecumenical Area, after proceedings involving that person are concluded, as the synod may from time to time request'.

Paragraph 2.(6) – After 'General Assembly is responsible for exercising the following Functions' delete the words in brackets.

In the Functions of the General Assembly, Function (xviii), delete the words in brackets.

Functions (xxi) to (xxvii) – delete existing text and replace with the following:

(xxi) to establish, and from time to time to review, amend or replace a Process for dealing with cases of h Related

> der the Disciplinary hbly, either directly, odies as the data the second seco

eview, amend h cases of ch Related

der the incapacity

context in respect of any member of the local church who is at that time a minister or Church Related Community Worker; nor shall any such member be removed from the Roll of Members or the membership of that person be suspended by the Church Meeting for disciplinary reasons.

(iii) The decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) under the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding, and once so initiated that case shall be resolved only by the steps for which that Process or Procedure provides.'

Paragraph 5 - delete existing opening text and replace with the following:

5. The procedure for dealing with references and appeals not concerned with the Incapacity Procedure or the Disciplinary Process is as follows:

Paragraph 5.4 – delete final sentence and replace with the following:

Paper M2 Additions to URC Structure and Rules of Procedure regarding Safeguarding

The General Secretary

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The General Secretary john.bradbury@urc.org.uk	
Action required	Ratification of the decision of Assembly last year, no objections having been received from Synods.	
Draft resolution(s)	Resolution25.General Assembly resolves to make the following additions to the Structure:	
	Functions of Church Meeting: [numbering to be determined] a) To appoint a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.	

b) To adopt and promote implementation of safeguarding

with the safeguarding policy statement adopted by the General Assembly.

d) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all its own activities and events.

Functions of General Assembly: [numbering to be determined]

- a) To appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- b) To have oversight of local churches and Synods, monitoring practice.
- c) To adopt a safeguarding policy statement and procedures for use throughout the whole United Reformed Church.
- d) To advise on all matters of safeguarding throughout the Church.
- e) To adopt best safeguarding practice for all its own activities and events.

Resolution

1. General Assembly resolves to make the following additions to the Rules of Procedure:

Safeguarding Implementation: [numbering to be determined]

- 1. Church Meeting:
- a) To appoint a Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator who is cognisant of current safeguarding policy, practice and procedure.
- b) To receive regular at least annual safeguarding reports from the Church Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- 2. Elders' Meeting:
- a) To present an annual safeguarding report to Church Meeting and an annual safeguarding return to synod.
- 3. Synod:
 - a) To appoint a Synod Safeguarding Officer with the necessary experience, qualifications and current knowledge.
 - b) To arrange for safeguarding training as appropriate.
 - c) T S

Paper M3 Church changes not previously reported to Assembly

The General Secretary

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The General Secretary john.bradbury@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	26. General Assembly notes the Churches which have closed since last they were reported to General Assembly. We give thanks to God for the worship and witness offered by these fellowships across the years.

Synod 1 – Northern Synod

Boldon United Reformed Church, East Boldon, Tyne and Wear, 11 September 2021 North Broomhill LEP, Northumberland, 24 July 2021 St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Hebburn, 29 September 2021 St Paul and St John's United Reformed Church, South Shields, 25 September 2021

Synod 2 – North Western Synod

Accrington United Reformed Church, Accrington, Lancashire, 27 June 2021 Burnley and Nelson United Reformed Church, Burnley, 27 March 2022 Chapel Street and Hope United Reformed Church, Salford, 10 October 2021 Christ Church, Reddish, Stockport, 19 September 2021 Church of the Epiphany Droylsden, Droylsden, 21 October 2021 Cleveleys United Reformed Church, Cleveleys, 26 December 2021 Fulwood United Reformed Church, Preston, 8 January 2022 Patricroft United Reformed Church, Eccles, 30 June 2021

Synod 3 – Mersey Synod

Hamilton Memorial United Reformed Church, Birkenhead, Merseyside, 27 January 2022 Minshull United Reformed Church, Minshull Vernon, Crewe, 28 November 2021 St George's United Reformed Church, Thornton Hough, Wirral, 31 July 2021

Synod 4 – Yorkshire Synod

Christ Church with Trinity United Reformed Church, Kirkella, Hull, 29 September 2021 Eccleshill United Reformed Church, Eccleshill, Bradford, 8 June 2021 Pickering Untied Reformed Church, Pickering, Yorkshire, 11 May 2021

Synod 5 – East Midlands Synod

Anstey United Reformed Church, Anstey, Leicestershire, 30 September 2021 Badby United Reformed Church, Badby, Daventry, 31 August 2021 Paulerspury United Reformed Church, Paulerspury, Towcester, 26 September 2021

Church closures

Paper N1 Church Life Review update

Church Life Review Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The General Secretary john.bradbury@urc.org.uk
Action required	Consultation.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To update General Assembly on the progress of the Church Life Review, and to consult on ongoing work.
Main points	The Theos research into what makes for flourishing in local United Reformed Church is ongoing, and will conclude in the first half of 2023.
	The Forensic Accounting research is underway, and Synods and the General Assembly have been providing financial data.
	There is a range of Governance issues that the denomination needs to address.
	There is a need for significant assistance to help churches and Synods with the burdens of compliance, and to free them for

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churches, Synods and, to an extent the General Assembly, floundering under the weight of these issues. There is a need to liberate the roots of the vine from the clay of compliance, allowing the vine to absorb the nutrients of the gospel as a church, while ensuring these matters of safety and justice the law requires of us are tended to. How this can be done can only be fully explored when we have a clear idea of the resources available throughout the United Reformed Church, and have given thought to the structures that might provide it. We have a vision that every local church would receive personalised assistance from someone who was able to come to them, assist in assessing their compliance needs, furnish them with the advice and resources necessary to meet those needs, and work with them on ensuring everything was appropriately in order. For many local churches, this would be liberating - liberating them for the work of growing disciples. It could also be liberating for Synods to be freed from the need to be concerned with these matters, leaving them to support local churches in their worship, witness, service and evangelism – as is their vocation in the structure of the United Reformed Church. Realising such a vision would take a concerted effort, and considerable resources. We believe this will be possible, and that the work we're doing on forensic accounting and governance will help work out how.

Another major issue for many local churches is the management of their property. Some of our most thriving congregations, interestingly, do not have buildings, and this is something some local churches would do well to consider. Many of our buildings are a glorious gift for the purposes of the work of the church, but their upkeep and development can become a real burden. Currently, responsibilities for buildings sit between the Trustees of the buildings, who hold much of the legal responsibility, and local churches themselves, who hold much of the day-to-day management responsibility (delegated to them by the trustees). Many Synods and Synod Trust companies work hard to support local churches in supporting their buildings. What is possible varies from Synod to Synod. We also manage different sorts of property in different ways. Many Synods now have responsibility for the maintenance of manse stock through manse schemes, whereas local churches are largely responsible for the upkeep of places of worship. We believe we need to ask questions about how we best manage the buildings of the family of the United Reformed Church. Again, it is in the light of the outcome of the forensic accounting and our work on governance that we believe that we will best be able to address this.

Initiating new work

We are aware the United Reformed Church family has planted relatively few new mission projects or congregations in the past few decades. The Special Category Ministry scheme was one way in which the Church tried to encourage new work, and while individuals have had ministries that have borne fruit, new communities of discipleship have not often emerged. A review of the outcomes of the Special Category Ministry scheme is underway. We have a vision of a much more integrated approach to church planting that may be able to restore the balance of places where the United Reformed Church is present (our essentially congregational approach to church closures meaning that there has, seemingly, been a significant pull-back of our ministry in areas of deprivation). We might also want to think about a variety of new pieces of work: that might be with young people, or involve us in greater community work, or see a significant gear-change in our response to the environmental crisis. Any new piece of work would require an ability to join up our human and financial resources in ways that are currently difficult. Again, we hope that our ongoing work will enable us to dream dreams, catch visions, and allow the vine to sprout new fruit, but this will only be possible when we much better able to discern what resources we have, to enable us to

make choices about how we use them, and have governance structures that allow us to take decisions we then can follow through with.

Ongoing work

Theos research project

As agreed at Assembly Executive, work is now underway with Theos, who are researching, using primarily qualitative methods, the identity of United Reformed Churches, what flourishing looks like for United Reformed Churches, and what resources are necessary or desirable to enable congregations and members to flourish. This will consist of ten case studies (some of which will be groups of local churches to give a wider spread of data), each consisting of ten qualitative interviews. This will be supported by background data from existing sources, and hopefully some quantitative data too.

This work will be complete by Spring 2023, and emerging outcomes will be available to the Church Life Review Group as they emerge. There is a small steering group, with staff time being given by Steve Summers (the Development Worker for CRCW and SCM Ministries).

Forensic accountancy project

At the time of writing, a template has been drafted of the headings it will be useful to analyse the income and expenditure of the General Assembly and Synods against. This has been refined in two workshops drawing together representatives of the Synods and Assembly finance teams, to ensure that the template will give the results needed, and that it is realistic to work with from the data that everyone holds.

Once the data are in, it will be possible for MKS to analyse it in ways that will tell us, for the first time ever, what we spend as a whole Church on each aspect of Church life. It should enable us as the family of the United Reformed Church to reflect on where our current priorities are in terms of our use of money, and give us the opportunity to reflect on where we would like them to be. It should provide insight into where useful economies of scale could be possible. It may also indicate areas where it would prove useful to do more detailed financial research to benchmark our use of resources against similar charitable organisations to help us gain a sense of where our expenditure may be out of kilter, or resources could be released for new work.

The theology of money

A small group has been appointed to help produce some initial material to enable us, as the family of the United Reformed Church, to think about what scripture and our faith has to say to us about the way in which we used our financial resources. A brief examination of General Assembly reports suggest that while we have given careful thought to our investment policies, and have, at times, paid attention to economic matters in relation to justice issues within society as a whole, we have never reflected ourselves on how our faith commitments shape our own use of the financial resources we have at our disposal. Clearly, as a Church we need to think with wisdom and care about how we wish in the future to use our financial resources. It is hoped this piece of work will enable 26 0 Td-3 (s)4 22 (hi)62 (C)6 (l)6 (k)24.1 (w i)6 (s)4 (pi) (e)20.1 (of)6cTJ-20.2 (t tic)20 (t)16 Tdy iee

Material is being provided for local churches to use in the a

that issues of compliance have often fallen between stools in ways that are unhelpful. The catisin was (a) bet phage of that an end of the compliance (see the asperation stated above about what local churches might wish to experience from the wider Church), the greater the possibility is that the wider councils of the Church expose themselves to liabilities for things that happen in the local context. It would be possible for find ways to give such support to local churches that avoid this, and this needs active exploration. There is a general concern that in places within the life of the United Reformed Church, the authority to act, and the liability for such action, do not rest in the same place, leading to unsustainable risks. This needs careful attention.

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Paper N2 Assembly Committee structures and Church House structures

Church Life Review

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The General Secretary john.bradbury@urc.org.uk	
Action required	Consultation and decision.	
Draft resolution(s)	 27. General Assembly welcomes the initial thinking about a General Assembly Committee structure and an associated Church House staffing structure. In the light of comments at Assembly, and the results of further consultation with committees, Synod Moderators and Clerks, it invites the Church Life Review Group to bring finalised proposals to Assembly Executive in November 2022 authorising Assembly Executive to adopt these if it sees fit so to do. 28. Assembly resolves to create a Chief Operating Officer post to replace the current Deputy General Secretary 	
	Administration and Resources role upon the retirement of the current post-holder. It authorises the Officers of the General Assembly to agree a finalised Job Description and Person Specification, having taken advice from the Human Resources Advisory Group.	

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To consult Assembly on current thinking about a new General Assembly Committee structure and associated Church House staffing structure.
Main points	To consult Assembly on proposals: To move towards three key strategic committees that serve the General Assembly: Mission, Church Life and Administration and Resources. To move to two staffing departments at Church House, <i>Church Life and Mission</i> , and <i>Administration and Resources</i> , under a Deputy General Secretary and a Chief Operating Officer respectively. From within existing staffing, to create two Team Leader roles for Church Life and Mission. To invite the Church Life Review Group to bring finalised proposals after further consultation to the Assembly Executive.

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before we take such a piece of business to General Assembly or Assembly Executive. This means we need to move ahead to the appointment of a new DGS Administration and Resources before we have completed the new

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committee is currently working on. This is also about improving the quality of appointments in the round, which is important for the good functioning of the Church.

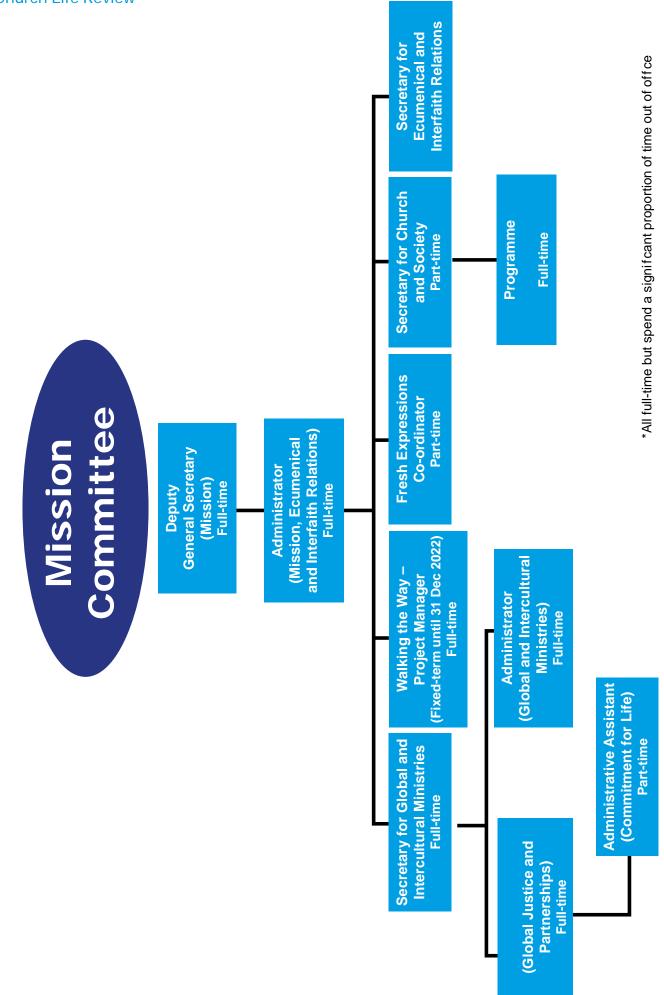
4.8. In our current committee structure, the first place within church life that can take a strategic overview of the whole work of the Church is the Assembly Executive or the General Assembly itself. While there is a relatively informal meeting of co

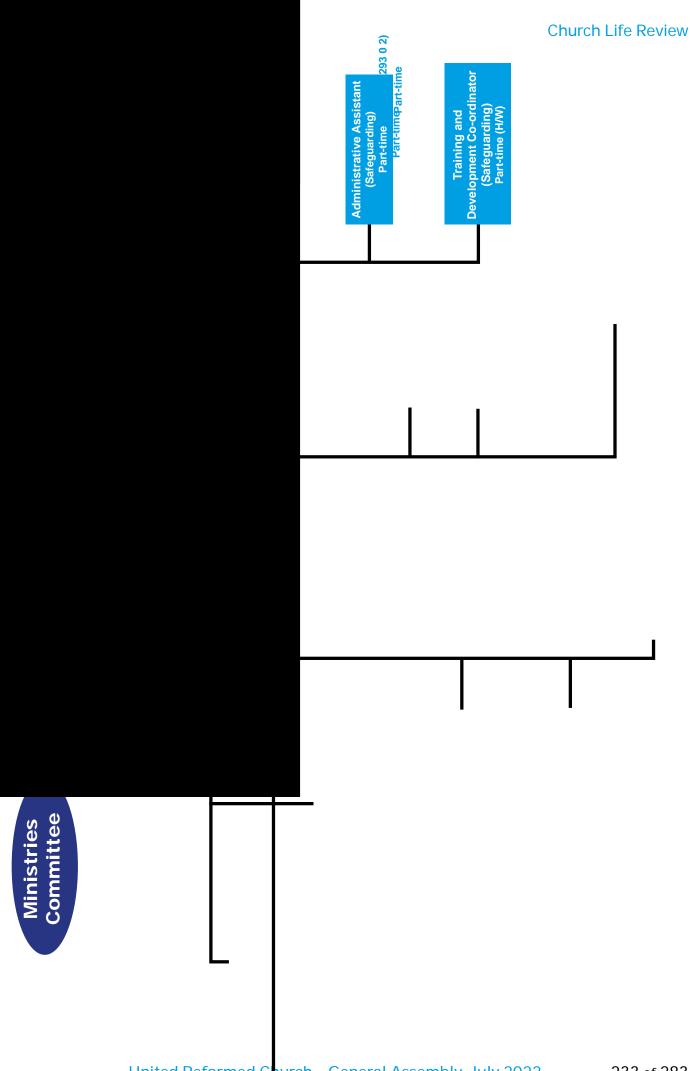
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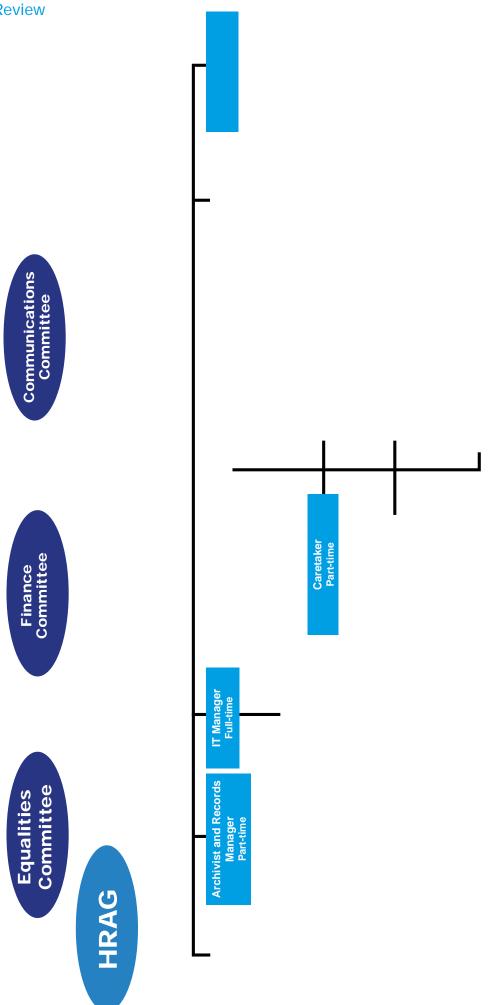
Committee, the Human Resources Advisory Group and The Church House Management Group (Finance, Facilities, IT, Communications,

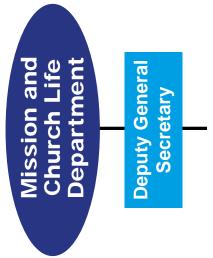
Church and Society. They will both be line-managed by the DGS. It is envisaged that these posts would be a reconfiguration of current posts rather than new roles.

7.2.3. The second senior post working with the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary would be a Chief Operating Officer. This would replace the current Deputy General Secretary for Administration and Resources. That role is essentially a COO role, and we are more likely to have a successful recruitment if the job title matches similar roles elsewhere. They would lead the work of the Administration and Resources staff team, and service the Administration and Resources Committee. Where necessary, they could, in aspects of the work, deputise for the General Secretary. We are bringing a resolution to Assembly to seek a change in the job title for this role. It is the mind of both the Church Life Review Group and the Human Resources Advisory Group that, when one reviews the Job Description for this role, it does not fall within the category that would legally allow it to be a 'Genuine Occupational Requirement' for the role-holder to be a practicing Christian. An indicative Job Description appears in an appendix to this report. We are asking Assembly for the authority to change the job title, and remove the current genuine occupational requirement (which we don't believe to be sustainable in law), and to empower the Officers of the General Assembly, after taking further advice from the Human Resources Advisory Group, to proceed to make an appointment.











Church Life Review

Indicative job description and person specification

Job Title	Chief Operating Officer
Area/Department	General Secretariat
Reporting to	General Secretary
Direct Reports	Chief Finance Officer; Head of Communications; Compliance Officer; Facilities Manager; HR Lead; Archivist and Records Manager; Head of IT
Location	Church House, 86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT
Travel	Occasional travel in UK
Working Hours	Full time

Job Summary:

Direct and oversee the functional activities of United Reformed Church House.

Contributes to the development of long term operational goals and strategies and ensures their execution.

Responsible for effective operational functions: finance; communications; legal; health and safety; compliance; IT; facilities management; records; central properties; Retired Ministers Housing Society.

The post-holder is expected to be in sympathy with the ethos and convictions of the United Reformed Church.

Background

This role works closely with the General Secretary and the Deputy General Secretary (Church Life and Mission). As part of the senior staff team, known as the General Secretariat, this role enables the effective and compliant operation of United Reformed Church House, as it seeks to serve the wider United Reformed Church, and resource the worship, witness, service and evangelism of the wider Church.

Church House operates with a two department structure: Administration and Resources and Church Life and Mission. The post-holder will head the Administration and Resources Department.

All authority for policy and strategy within the United Reformed Church resides in the councils of the Church. The primary councils that the post-holder will relate to will be the General Assembly and the Assembly Executive. The Administration and Resources Committee is the committee of the General Assembly which exercises authority over the areas of Church Life the Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for. The post-holder will work closely with the convenor of the committee in exercising leadership over the agenda and direction of the committee, helping the committee develop appropriate strategy and policy, and enabling the department to deliver the required outcomes.

Principal responsibilities and duties

Management

- 1. As a member of the General Secretariat, ensure that the work of Church House is serving the needs of the URC in the implementation of decisions of General Assembly and Assembly Executive.
- 2. Ensures staff team is managed in accordance with the policies and standards agreed for Church House.

Strategic

- 1. Develop strategies for the efficient operation of Church House (and other areas of the URC as agreed by General Assembly and Assembly Executive).
- 2. Lead change management initiatives.
- 3. Ensure appropriate cross departmental representation on project teams.

Operational

- 1. Monitor the efficiency of operational processed and take steps to improve them.
- 2. Ensure quality and legislative standards are met.
- 3. Participate in the setting and monitoring of departmental budgets.
- 4. Ensure appropriate HR, IT and other policies for Church House are kept up to date.
- 5. Ensure staff have appropriate training and equipment to fulfil their jobs efficiently.
- 6. Ensure office facilities are appropriate, meet legal requirements, and are maintained to a high standard.
- 7. Support HR to ensure staffing policies and practices meet the needs of the organisation.
- 8. Ensure that an effective remuneration system is in place for employees.
- 9. Ensure that IT services and systems and effective and meet the needs of the organisation.
- 10. Promote effective internal and external communications.
- 11. Manage sale and acquisition of property.
- 12. Support the general Manager of RMHS to provide an effective service to tenants and prospective tenants.

Working with committees and volunteers

This section lists the type and level of interaction that this role has with committees and other groups. It will vary from time to time and as directed by the [insert role].

- 1. The Administration and Resources Committee
- 2. The General Assembly

- 3. The Assembly Executive
- 4. The United Reformed Church Trust.

Expected standards

Experience	2.	Senior Management	HR	
	3.	Financial and budget		
		management		
	4.	Change Management		
Knowledge	5.	Company Law	URC	
	6.	Charity Legislation	Safeguarding	
	7.	Trust Law	Property	
	8.	Risk Management	management	
Skills and	9.	Excellent interpersonal		
Abilities		and communication		
		skills		
	10.	Presentation skills		
	11.	Problem solving		
	12.	IT literacy		
	13.	Ability to manage a		
		complex workload and		
		work to deadlines		
	14.	Ability to motivate a		
		team		
	15.	Ability to think		
		strategically and		
		formulate short and		
		long term plans		
Other	16.	Willing to work within		
		the Christian ethos of		
		the United Reformed		
		Church		



Summary of impact



Paper R2 Indemnity

MIND Advisory Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	andy.braunston@urc.org.uk	
Action required	Adoption of resolution.	
Draft resolution(s)	31. The General Assembly indemnifies any role-holder within the Ministerial Disciplinary and Incapacity procedures, who has been duly appointed by the General Assembly or on its behalf, trained, and has acted within the authority vested in them by those processes.	

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To give those appointed to act within the Disciplinary and Incapacity processes the comfort of knowing the Church will indemnify them if any claims are brought against them as a result of carrying out their duly appointed role within those processes.
Main points	In an increasingly litigious environment, the Church wishes those who take on significant responsibilities to know that the Church will support them, through indemnity, should they face action as a result of actions they take while carrying out the functions assigned to them by the process.
Previous relevant documents	Section O and P.
Consultation has taken place with	

Summary of impact

Financial	There is already a general understanding that the Church stands behind those who act in its name if necessary; this formalises this with respect to the new Disciplinary and Incapacity processes. Any financial impact cannot easily be estimated. No action ever has been taken against anyone fulfilling their role within the old processes, and if that continues, the financial impact will be nil. Were a claim to be brought, it is impossible to realistically estimate the financial impact.
External (eg ecumenical)	None.

Paper R3 Authority within the Discipline Process

MIND Advisory Group

Basic information		
Contact name and email address	andy.braunston@urc.org.uk	
Action required	Adoption of resolution.	
Draft resolution(s)	32. Assembly inserts a new paragraph 8:10 be inserted into the Framework	
	If, in the Investigation Stage, there is any need for an interpretation of the process, the procedure to be followed in a particular case, or if a complaint is raised by any party to the process, such matters shall be referred to the Executive Group of the Disciplinary Process. The Executive Group of the Disciplinary comprising the Convenor of the Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group, the Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel, and the Senior Member of the Disciplinary Investigation Panel or (if the Convenor or Senior Member are involved in the case concerned their Deputies) who, having taken such legal advice as considered necessary, may issue a definitive ruling on the matter. The Executive Group of the Disciplinary Process may also be a source of advice to the Assembly Commission for Discipline who assume all authority for the case in the Hearing Stage or	

MIND Advisory Group

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (eg ecumenical)	None.



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36. Further to paragraphs 1-3 ,General Assembly amends the Ministerial Disciplinary process (Section O) as follows:
a) Change section 6:5 to read
At the conclusion of the hearing the Assembly Commission for Discipline is to determine, on the balance of probabilities, whether any or all of the allegations made against the minister have been proved.
In respect of any proven allegation, it must decide either to impose no sanction, or that the accused minister should receive a written warning, or that any pastoral tie or appointment should be curtailed, or that his or her name should be deleted from the Roll of Ministers.
If the accused minister is the subject of an earlier written warning which remains current, the Assembly Commission for Discipline must take that into account.
A written warning, or curtailment of any pastoral tie or appointment, may be accompanied by directions regarding the minister's future ministry, conduct or remedial steps to be taken.
The Assembly Commission for Discipline may direct that, in the event it curtails a pastoral tie or appointment, the minister does not return to their existing post save for the purposes of farewell and handover.
[Note for Margin: Any extension of housing and stipend, normally for a period of between three and six months, is the concern of the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee.]
b) Change Appendix Q:7 to read
If the Commission does not accede to the minister's desire expressed in the admission notification, the Investigation Stage is to continue to the conclusion of the Hearing. If the Commission accedes to the minister's desire, it may attach Directions to a written warning, curtail any pastoral tie or appointment, or make recommendations in the event of deletion, and the same consequences are to follow as if those sanctions were imposed at the close of a Hearing.
c) add to Appendix S after Part I:
Part two Curtailment

37. A finding of Curtailment has the effect of concluding any office or appointment which a minister may hold

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)

General Assembly, exercising its powers under the Basis of Union and Structure of the United Reformed Church confirms by resolution that an Assembly Commission for Discipline, acting in its name, has the authority to curtail a Minister's office or appointment when making decisions wBfummaci1 4.44 0 Th

Paper R5 Assisting an accused minister

MIND Advisory Group

Basic information		
Contact name and email address	andy.braunston@urc.org.uk	
Action required	Adop 0 0 ETQqonQq204.016 588.936 341.28 13.68 reW nBT0	

	have a friend (or, in the case of the accused minister, a colleague, their assisting Investigation Panel member, or Trade Union representative) present. A note of any interview is to be taken at the time or made immediately afterward, and a copy supplied to the person interviewed for comment.
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Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To offer an experienced and trained member of the Investigation Team to a minister accused for a breach of vows in order to help that minister prepare and, if necessary, present their case.
Main points	Ministers can be overwhelmed if placed into the disciplinary process; some may use a Union representative, others may use a lawyer, many use no one Several 25,

Paper R6 Appendix Y – confidentiality, dissemination of information, and retention of records

MIND Advisory Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	andy.braunston@urc.org.uk
Action required	Adoption of resolution.
Draft resolution(s)	

Appendix Y

Confidentiality, dissemination of information, and retention of records

Part one – principles

- The Disciplinary Process balances both the need for appropriate confidentiality as expressed within the policies adopted by General Assembly on confidentiality – and the need for transparency to ensure that justice is both done and seen to be done, held in creative tension with the fact that it may not helpful to a minister's continuing ministry to publish generally the fact of a past error. This balance requires respecting the privacy of complainants, witnesses and the accused minister whilst, at the same time making it possible for complainants and witnesses to come forward to offer their perspectives.
- 2. Confidentiality is both important to all concerned in the process yet can, perversely, be a weapon used to escape further scrutiny or to tell only one side of a story.
- 3. In the interests of all concerned, accused ministers, complainants, witnesses and all who administer the process are expected to maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding the existence and progress of a disciplinary case whose details are not in the public domain.
- 4. The balance between confidentiality and transparency involves a number of factors:
 - a) the need to share information during the process with those who operate it, who exercise oversight of an accused minister, or who need to be aware of any suspension
 - b) allegations may have to be disclosed as required by law or in order to prevent harm to others
 - recommendations made by a Commission regarding a minister whose name has been deleted from the Roll must reach those to whom they are addressed
 - compliance with the terms of any agreed caution, or any directions accompanying a written warning or curtailment, must be appropriately monitored
 - e) any curtailment of a pastoral tie or appointment must be communicated to the appropriate officers of the pastorate or appointed role
 - f) if a minister's name is deleted from the Roll, public notice needs to be given that that person no longer acts, speaks, or ministers with the endorsement of the United Reformed Church by virtue of ordination, commissioning or call
 - g) those charged with the ongoing review of the operation of the process will be assisted in their work by full information regarding cases
 - if disciplinary allegations become public knowledge through causes outside the Church's control, it may be necessary to counter erroneous assertions or assumptions, and
 - i) the balance between confidentiality and transparency changes throughout the process.

any organisation outside the Church in which the accused minister has any involvement that could give the organisation a reasonable and proper expectation of being made aware of disciplinary steps.
The Officers of the General Assembly.
The Secretary for Ministries, the Press Officers and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

G	The Secretary of the Assembly	The Synod Clerk if the accused minister is
	Commission for Discipline or the Secretary	the Moderator.
	of the Disciplinary Appeal Commission (as	
	the case may be) informs those on the	The Officers of the General Assembly.
	right.	
		The Secretary for Ministries, the Press
		Officers and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

A minister under the oversight of a Synod receives a written warning (see also lifting of suspension).

The Secretary of the Assembly Commission for Discipline or the Secretary of the Disciplinary Appeal Commission (as the case may be) informs those on the right.

J

The accused minister, all those notified in A or D above with the fact that a warning has been issued.

The complainants are given details of the warning and any conditions.

The directions accompanying a written warning, are notified to Councils, Committees or Officers at any level within the Church, or of any organisation outside the Church, which the Commission imposing the warning directs to be so notified on the ground that they are in a position to monitor compliail (r)17 (ec)4 (t)2 (s)4 (t)2 (o)20 (be sd)711 ()]T

		Church, or of any organisation outside the Church, which the Commission imposing the warning directs to be so notified on the ground that they are in a position to monitor compliance with those terms or directions.
		The Officers of the General Assembly.
		The Secretary for Ministries, the Press Officers and Designated Safeguarding Lead are given details of the case.
L	A minister under the oversight of a Synod receives a curtailment of pastoral tie or	The minister.
	appointment (see also lifting of suspension).	The complainants are given details of the curtailment and any directions.
	The Secretary of the Assembly Commission for Discipline or the Secretary of the Disciplinary Appeal Commission (as the case may be) informs those on the	The Moderator of the Synod in which the minister resides (or the clerk if the minister is the Moderator.)
	right.	The next meeting of the General Assembly is informed that a disciplinary case against a minister has completed the Hearing Stage or the Appeal Stage, as the case may be. If a decision remains subject to appeal the report shall so state. If a decision is not so subject, it shall state what sanction, if any, was imposed, but shall not name the minister.
		The terms of the curtailment, and any directions, are notified to councils, committees or Officers at any level within the Church, or of any organisation outside the Church, the Commission imposing the curtailment directs to be so notified on the ground that they are in a position to monitor compliance with those terms or directions.
		The Officers of the General Assembly.
		The Secretary for Ministries, the Press Officers and Designated Safeguarding Lead are given details of the case.
Μ	A minister under the oversight of the General Assembly receives a curtailment of	

the case may be) informs those on the right.

The next meeting of the General Assembly is informed that a disciplinary case against a minister has completed the Hearing Stage or the Appeal Stage, as the case may be. If a decision remains subject to appeal the report shall so state. If a decision is not so subject, it shall state what sanction, if any, was imposed, but shall not name the minister.

The terms of the curtailment, and any directions, are notified to councils, committees or Officers at any level within the Church, or of any organisation outside the /4 7Tw (c)Tj0

		The next meeting of either General Assembly is informed the former minister's name has been deleted from the Roll.
		The Officers of the General Assembly, the Secretary for Ministries, the Press Officers and Designated Safeguarding Lead are given details of the case.
0	The Process against a minister under the oversight of a Synod is terminated without sanctions being imposed (see also lifting of suspension).	All those named in A or D above. The complainants with details as to why this decision was reached.
	The Secretary of the Assembly Commission for Discipline or the Secretary of the Disciplinary Appeal Commission as the case may be informs those on the right.	The next meeting of the General Assembly is informed that a disciplinary case against a minister has completed the Hearing Stage or the Appeal Stage, as the case may be. If a decision remains subject to appeal the report shall so (t)2 (he A5ac)4 (hed.)]TJET1 g310.302 603.1

United Reformed Church – General Assembly, July 2022

Paper R7 The Assembly Representative for Discipline

MIND Advisory Group

Basic information	
Contact name and email address	andy.braunston@urc.org.uk
Action required	Adoption of resolution.
Draft resolution(s) 43. Assembly deletes section 2 of Appendix H replaces it with:	
	The Assembly Representative for Discipline will normally be the General Secretary or their duly appointed deputy. Where a disciplinary case is brought against the General Secretary the line manager of the General Secretary (or if for any reason that is inappropriate, such person as the Officers of the General Assembly shall appoint without reference to the General Secretary) shall act as Assembly

Because it is the Assembly Representative for Discipline who Synod Moderators must request the appointment of Assembly Standing Panel members from, this also offers assurance that the General Secretary always knows at the outset of any potential discipline case. The previous process made it possi.9 (e)-Io3vsi22 -2 (r)-3 (ev)4 (i)6.1 (ous)4 ()20 (p9ahTT2 1 T(r)-3 m)-3



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GA Referral Notice has been issued but the Assembly Commission has not yet been sent papers under E2.1.The case proceeds under the rules of the new Process, the Commission being appointed in accordance with Appendix N (not following para C of the old Process). An Investigation Team is appointed in accordance with Appendix K and takes over from the former Mandated Group. e20 Tc -99 8Tj/TT2 1 Tfo-			
	G	been issued but the Assembly Commission has not yet been sent	rules of the new Process, the Commission being appointed in accordance with Appendix N (<u>not</u> following para C of the old Process). An Investigation Team is appointed in accordance with Appendix K and takes over from the former

when the notice of appeal was lodged.

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Resolutions

Children's and Youth Work Committee

Resolution 1

page 34

- a) General Assembly resolves that nominations for Moderator of the General Assembly may be received from Youth Assembly in addition to Synods.
- b) General Assembly instructs the Business Committee to work with

Resolution 7

General Assembly endorses the report of the Affirmative Action Task Group. It instructs the task group to continue consulting with other URC committees and groups, bringing firm proposals to General Assembly 2023 to ensure the URC takes positive action towards becoming an anti-racist church in terms of its recruitment and representation.

Finance Committee

Possible one-off payments to ministers and lay staff

Resolution 8

General Assembly resolves that, as a gesture of good will towards those who work for the Church centrally and bearing in mind the recent energy cost increases for many, with the likelihood of further energy price rises to come later in the year, a gross payment should be made together with October 2022 stipend and salary payments amounting to:

£800 in the case of each office holder in receipt of a stipend under the URC Plan for Partnership; and

£500 in the case of each 'Church House' employee.

Does the URC need a Retired Ministers' Benevolent Fund?

Resolution 9

General Assembly instructs the Finance Committee to bring together a group, including representatives from the URC Trust, Ministries and Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committees and the General Secretariat, to consult with Synods and/or Synod Trusts, to consider further:

whether a benevolent fund might be the right way to provide support to retired ministers in particular financial difficulties; and if so

in what circumstances might ministers be eligible for support from such a fund; and what should be its nature and size and how might it be resourced;

with a report of the group's work and/or conclusions to be presented to the 2023 General Assembly.

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page 49

page 79

page 82

Resolution 12

page 86

General Assembly approves signing of the contract with Aon referred to in that paper.

Resolution 13page 86General Assembly authorises Assembly officers to consider the outcome of the

Environmental Policy

Resolution 17

page 131

General Assembly:

- Resolves that urgent action should be taken to reduce carbon emissions across the whole of church life, with the aim of reaching net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2030.
- b) Adopts the Environmental Policy in Part 2 of this paper, and *instructs* the committees and bodies under its control, and *encourages* associated bodies (including Trusts, the Retired Ministers Housing Society, and Resource Centres for Learning), Synods and local churches to adopt as a minimum the practices it sets out.
- c) Instructs each Assembly committee to develop a Net Zero Action Plan for its area of responsibility, and set and monitor targets for implementing this policy, reporting by March 2023, and annually thereafter.
- d) Establishes a Net Zero Task Group with membership of one Synod Moderator, one member of the Finance Committee, one representative of the URC Trust, the Secretary

Legacies of (transatlantic) Slavery

Resolution 20

General Assembly adopts the statement of 'Confession and Apology by the United Reformed Church' prepared by the Legacies of Slavery Task Group, and commits the Church to sharing the confession and apology widely, both within and beyond the URC, including with our global partners in Africa and the Caribbean.

Resolution 21

page 169

page 169

General Associations) is committing 139 needical 139 to Associate (Got 129 of 120 on a negative impacts of the legacies of transatlantic slavery on black communities in the UK, actf General Assembly afanf

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Resolution 27

page 213

If, in the Investigation Stage, there is any need for an interpretation of the process, the procedure to be followed in a particular case, or if a complaint is raised by any party to the process, such matters shall be referred to the Executive Group of the Disciplinary Process. The Executive Group of the Disciplinary comprising the Convenor of the Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group, the Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel, and the Senior Member of the Disciplinary Investigation Panel or (if the Convenor or Senior Member are involved in the case concerned their Deputies) who, having taken such legal advice as considered necessary, may issue a definitive ruling on the matter. The Executive Group of the Disciplinary Process may also be a source of advice to the Assembly Commission for Discipline who assume all authority for the case in the Hearing Stage or the Disciplinary Appeal Commission during any appeal.

Curtailment of a pastoral tie or appointment

Resolution 33

page 237

General Assembly, noting that the Structure [paragraph 2 (6)] recognises that:

The General Assembly which shall embody the unity of the United Reformed Church and act as the central organ of its life and the final authority, under the Word of God and the promised guidance of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of doctrine and order and in all other concerns of its common life...

And acting under function (xxix)

to do such other things as may be necessary in pursuance of its responsibility for the common life of the church,

resolves that an Assembly Commission for Discipline, acting on behalf of General Assembly, may, as part of its decision-making within the Ministerial Disciplinary Process, and with the minister's name remaining on the Roll of ministers of the United Reformed Church, curtail their pastoral tie or appointment.

Resolution 34

page 237

Where such a decision is made, the General Assembly, through its Pastoral and Welfare Committee shall grant a period of, normally, between three and six months, from the conclusion of the disciplinary case, for a new Call to be found by the minister.

Resolution 35

General Assembly notes that an Assembly Commission for Discipline may further direct that the minister whose pastoral tie or appointment has been curtailed shall not engage with the pastorate/project, save for the purposes of handover and farewell, despite any suspension being lifted at the conclusion of the case.

Resolution 36

To save paper, this resolution has been printed only on page 238.

Resolution 37

A finding of Curtailment has the effect of concluding any office or appointment which a minister may hold in a local church or any Council of the Church.

Resolution 38

Any extension of housing and stipend, normally for a period of between three and six months from the date when curtailment takes effect, shall be a question for decision by the Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee.

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Resolution 39

page 239

Directions may be given by the Assembly Commission for Discipline to accompany curtailment in the same way as provided by Part I of this Appendix in respect of written warnings. But the minister remains on the Roll and eligible to be called or appointed to a new sphere of ministry. Pending such call or appointment, the minister will be an associate member of the Synod of the province or nation of residence on the same basis as a retired minister.

Assisting an accused minister

Resolution 40

page 241

Assembly resolves to change Appendix K of Section O to read:

6. On receiving the material transmitted by the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline, the Senior Member is to appoint three willing members of the Investigation Panel to form an Investigation Team for that case, and one panel member to assist the accused minister to address the issues and, if required, before the ACD or the DAppC, having regard to geographical proximity to the accused, complainant and likely witnesses as well as to

The Assembly Representative for Discipline will normally be the General Secretary or their duly appointed deputy. Where a disciplinary case is brought against the General Secretary the line manager of the General Secretary (or if for any reason that is inappropriate, such person as the Officers of the General Assembly shall appoint without reference to the General Secretary) shall act as Assembly Representative for Discipline.

Resolution 44

page 254

Assembly resolves to appoint the General Secretary as the Assembly Representative for Discipline – or the Line Manager of the General Secretary if the case in question concerns the General Secretary.

Transitional arrangements from the 'old' to the 'new' disciplinary process

Resolution 45

page 256

Assembly resolves the following transitional arrangements from the 'old' to the 'new' Ministerial Disciplinary Process.

'The Relevant Time' means 12pm on the day before the scheduled opening of the General Assembly in 2022 (ie at the date of writing, 7 July 2022).

No action is to be taken under the old Process from that time until the close of Assembly, unless exceptional and urgent circumstances call for a minister to be suspended from ministry by the Moderator of the Synod having oversight.

If decisions taken by the Assembly have the effect that the new process does <u>not</u> come into effect at the close of Assembly, then the old process will remain in force (subject to any directions the Assembly may give), and the days of the sitting of Assembly are to be discounted in any calculation of time under its rules.

No rule as to the confidentiality of the process shall prevent Synod Appointees or the members of a Mandated Group from providing an Investigation Team which is to replace them in their function with the full information necessary for that purpose.

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