

# Assembly Executive

22-24 November 2021  
High Leigh Conference Centre  
Hoddesdon



*The*  
United  
Reformed  
Church







The  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**

# General Secretary

The United Reformed Church  
86 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9RT

4 November 2021

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

## **Welcome to the Assembly Executive Monday to Wednesday 22 to 24 November 2021**

This is the second mailing for this month's Assembly Executive. It includes the agenda for our meeting and a map of the venue. The first mailing included a covering letter, a list of members and travel directions to the High Leigh Conference Centre. If any of these are missing, please contact Samantha Bircham: [samantha.bircham@urc.org.uk](mailto:samantha.bircham@urc.org.uk).

### **1. Assembly Executive Papers**

Many of the papers for Assembly Executive are now available here:

[www.urc.org.uk/assembly-executive.html](http://www.urc.org.uk/assembly-executive.html). Other papers may follow over the coming days, so please check this page on our website regularly.

### **2. En Bloc**

At General Assembly and Assembly Executive meetings, we take certain business *En Bloc*. These are items where the Moderators think that decisions might be reached responsibly without further discussion. You will see that the agenda includes a slot when these items will be voted on.

I suggest you read the *En Bloc* papers first. This will give you time to contact the author of a paper if you have questions. Authors' names and email addresses are noted on the cover sheets. If you think any of these papers need discussion at Assembly Executive, particularly if you disagree with a proposed resolution, you may ask that a piece of business be removed from *En Bloc*. You must put that request to the Clerk [michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk](mailto:michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk) four days before we meet (11:00 on Thursday 18 November). If three people ask to remove an item, it will be withdrawn from *En Bloc* and added to our agenda.

I need to remind you too that we really rely on every Assembly Executive member to read the papers and take note of information to relay back to their synods. In using the *En Bloc* method of decision-making there is no wish to bury information or to avoid discussions which Assembly Executive ought to have. We must all ensure the appropriate flow of information from Assembly Executive to the synods.

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Here are the papers the Moderators presently expect to take in *En Bloc*:

- A2 Business Committee: Updating the Rules of Procedure
- B1 Children's and Youth Work Committee: Update
- D1 Discipleship Development Fund
- F1 Faith and Order Committee: Report
- H3 Plan for Partnership Revisions
- H5 Active Ministers Policy
- H6 Ministries Committee: House of Duty
- I1 Walking the Way Steering Group: Update
- J1 Nominations Committee: List of Nominations
- P1 Law and Polity Advisory Group: National and Provincial Synods and Trust Companies
- I2 Mission Committee: Update

With best wishes,

John Bradbury

# Assembly Executive

## Monday 22 to Wednesday 24 November 2021

### Agenda

#### Monday 22 November

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**12:30 to 13:00** Registration in reception

**13:00 to 14:00** *Lunch*

#### **Session one**

**14:00 to 15:30** Worship

Welcomes and introductions

Minutes and matters arising

Business Committee – Standing Orders A1

Children and Youth Friendly Synod Scheme B1

**15:30 to 16:30** Check in/access rooms

*Break*

## **Session two**

<b>16:30 to 18:00</b>	Confidentiality Policy	H1
	Safer Election of Elders	H4
<b>18:30 to 19:30</b>	<i>Dinner</i>	
<b>19:30</b>	Church Life Review introduction	N2
	Evening prayer	

# Tuesday 23 November

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## Session three

<b>09:15 to 11:00</b>	Worship	
	Finance – M&M Fund Budget for 2022	G3
	Pension Update	G1
	Pension Deficit Funding	G2
	Video: Inclusive and expansive language	
<b>11:00 to 11:30</b>	<i>Break</i>	

## Session four

<b>11:30 to 13:00</b>	Pioneering and Fresh Expressions Enabling Group (group work)	I3
<b>13:00 to 14:00</b>	<i>Lunch</i>	
<b>14:00 to 16:00</b>	Free time	

## Session five

<b>16:00 to 18:30</b>	En Bloc	
<b>18:30 to 19:30</b>	<i>Dinner</i>	

## Session six

<b>19:30 to 21:00</b>	Church Life Review (Break-out rooms)	N2
<b>21:00</b>	Worship	

## Wednesday 24 November

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### Session seven

<b>09:30 to 11:00</b>	Worship	
	URC 50th Jubilee	N1
	Remaindered business	
<b>11:00 to 11:30</b>	<i>Break</i>	
<b>11:30 to 12:30</b>	Worship with Communion	
<b>12:30 to 13:30</b>	Lunch and departures	
<b>13:30 to 15:00</b>	Meeting of Committee Convenors and staff	





# Paper A1

## Updated Standing Orders

### Clerk

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	For points of detailed wording, Michael Hopkins, <a href="mailto:michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk">michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk</a> For overall conceptual matters, John Bradbury, <a href="mailto:john.bradbury@urc.org.uk">john.bradbury@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Assembly Executive agrees the revised Standing Orders as set out in paper A1 of Assembly Executive November 2021 with immediate effect.</b></li> <li><b>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.</b></li> </ol>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Updating Standing Orders.
<b>Main points</b>	<p>Having different Standing Orders for virtual meetings and for face-to-face meetings is no longer practical, as the boundaries have become blurred.</p> <p>Currently there is no provision for hybrid meetings. The revised Standing Orders bring back many of the features of Consensus Decision-Making, particularly from the Information and Discussion sessions, and the Facilitation Group. They also set out principles which are required for hybrid meetings.</p> <p>At this stage in the life of the church, and the evolution of technology and our use of it, these Standing Orders will naturally represent a work-in-progress, and can be revised in the future as our experience, wisdom, and abilities develop.</p>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Previous Standing Orders.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Business Committee.

## Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	N/A
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	N/A

## Standing Orders for the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church

### 1. The agenda of the Assembly

- 1.1 At its meetings the Assembly shall consider reports and draft motions prepared by its committees which include the Assembly Executive or by synods, and motions and amendments of which due notice has been given submitted by individual members of the Assembly.

### 2. In-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings

- 2.1 A meeting may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid. The boundaries between these descriptions are not always clear. A generally in-person meeting may have a minority of members joining the meeting by virtual means. A virtual meeting may have some participants gathered together in one place. In any event, what is always strictly essential is that all participants, both in-person and virtual, can fully see and hear each other in all directions, and that the Moderator is totally confident that participants are able to see and hear each other effectively. The Moderator must also be content and comfortable that they can manage full and proper participation from all participants in the meeting.

### 3. Records of meetings

- 3.1 Any streaming and/or recording of meetings, including subtitles or captions, does not replace the formal minutes of the meeting and is not a record of the decisions made. Formal minutes shall continue to be maintained and retained.
- 3.2 Meetings should not normally be recorded, in order to comply fully with both safeguarding and data privacy policies.

### 4. Operating procedure

- 4.1 Meetings will commence when the Moderator opens the meeting, within the requirements set out in the Rules of Procedure.
- 4.2 At the start of any meeting the Moderator shall make reasonable efforts to confirm that any members attending virtually can see and hear, and be seen and heard. The meeting shall not start until the Moderator is so satisfied.
- 4.3 Where available, participants joining a meeting virtually should normally use video as well as audio. Where video is not available, or it is not safe for the attendee to use video, then audio only may be used.
- 4.4 The Meeting will finish when the Moderator formally closes the meeting.

- 4.5 All microphones should be set to mute at the start of the meeting, apart from the Moderator and any necessary technical staff. Microphones should only be unmuted when a participant is speaking.
- 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 Standing Orders

- 6.1 Where the Moderator is required to interpret any Standing Orders they shall take advice from the Clerk before making a ruling. The Moderator's decision in all cases shall be final.

## 7. Presentation of business

- 7.1 All reports of committees, together with the draft motions arising therefrom, shall be delivered to the General Secretary by a date to be determined, so that they may be circulated to members in time for consideration before the date of the Assembly meeting.
- 7.2 A synod may deliver to the General Secretary not less than twelve weeks before the commencement of the meeting of the Assembly notice in writing of a motion for consideration at the Assembly. This notice shall include the names of those appointed to propose and second the motion at the Assembly.
- 7.3 A local church wishing to put forward a motion for consideration by the General Assembly shall submit the motion to its synod for consideration and, if the synod so decides, transmission to the Assembly, at such time as will enable the synod to comply with Standing Order 7.2 above.
- 7.4 A member of the Assembly may deliver to the General Secretary not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting of the Assembly a notice in writing of a motion (which notice must include the name of a seconder) to be included in the Assembly agenda. If the subject matter of such a notice of motion appears to the General Secretary to be an infringement of the rights of a synod through which the matter could properly have been raised, the General Secretary shall inform the member accordingly and bring the matter before the Business Committee which shall advise the Assembly as to the procedure to be followed.
- 7.5 Proposals for amendments to the Basis and Structure of the URC, which may be made by the Assembly Executive or a committee of the General Assembly or a synod, shall be in the hands of the General Secretary not later than 12 weeks

before the opening of the Assembly. The General Secretary, in addition to the normal advice to members of the Assembly, shall, as quickly as possible, inform all Synod Clerks of the proposed amendment.

7.6 It shall not be in order at any time to move a motion or amendment which:

7.6.1 contravenes any part of the Basis of Union, or

7.6.2 involves the Church in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committee, or

7.6.3 pre-empts discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda, or

7.6.4 amends or reverses a decision reached by the Assembly at its preceding two meetings unless the Moderator, Clerk and General Secretary together decide that changed circumstances or new evidence justify earlier reconsideration of the matter, or

7.6.5 is not related to the report of a committee and has not been the subject of 21 days' notice under Standing Order 7.4, or

7.6.6 simply reaffirms existing work.

The decision of the Moderator (in the case of 7.6.1, 7.6.2, 7.6.3, 7.6.5, and 7.6.6) and of the Moderator with the Clerk and the General Secretary (in the case of 7.6.4) on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.

7.7 In advance of the meeting, the General Secretary shall, in consultation with the Moderator and Clerk, prepare a proposal for a Facilitation Group for that meeting, for appointment at the beginning of the meeting. Some or all of the members of the Facilitation Group may be called upon by the Moderator at any time to help the Assembly reach a mind upon a question. The Assembly may add or remove members of the Facilitation Group at any time. The Facilitation Group may consult with whoever they deem it appropriate. Draft revised wording of motions should be checked by the Clerk, and by the Legal Advisor where appropriate, before being proposed to the Assembly.

## 8. En bloc business

8.1 The Moderator, Clerk, and General Secretary shall together decide which items of business shall be taken en bloc. Placing business in the en bloc category does not imply anything about the importance of any item of business, merely that those planning the meeting think that it may be possible to agree the business without discussion. Any members wishing to have items removed from en bloc business should notify the Clerk by a stated time in advance of the meeting. If six or more members have so notified, then the business shall be added to the agenda of the meeting, otherwise en bloc business shall be voted upon without any discussion.

## 9. Business requiring discussion

9.1 It is not possible to use full Consensus Decision-Making during many meetings, since Consensus Decision-Making relies upon the Moderator being able to sense the mood of the meeting, and the members also being able to sense that and trust the Moderator, which requires senses not always available in online meetings or meetings with online participants. However, all meetings should still be conducted in the spirit and ethos of seeking consensus.

9.2 To ensure that all meetings always operate to the same procedure, noting the blurred boundaries referred to in Standing Order 2, all meetings will use the

information session and the discussion session from Consensus Decision-Making, and then take a vote for the actual decision-making.

- 9.3 All decisions shall be made by vote, using the procedure set out in Standing Order 10. The Moderator, Clerk, and General Secretary shall together decide in advance which items of business require a simple majority, and which require a two thirds majority, using the principle that routine formal decisions such as agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting might reasonably be taken on a simple majority, whereas matters of policy require a greater level of support than a simple majority. This Standing Order does not override any other provision for a specific majority set out elsewhere in the Standing Orders, particularly procedural motions.

## 10. Information and discussion sessions

- 10.1 The first stage is the information session. During the information session, members of Assembly may ask questions only to seek clarification or further information.
- 10.2 Once the Moderator decides that the information session has ended, the Assembly moves into the discussion session, in which the substance of the matter may be discussed.
- 10.2.1 The methods used may include prayer, buzz groups, group discussions, speeches to the whole Assembly, time for thinking during a break, etc. The Moderator may invite Assembly to indicate opinions by the use of coloured cards at this stage or electronic equivalent, and shall ensure that the full ranges of voices are given opportunity to contribute.
- 10.2.2 Minor changes of wording may be agreed as the discussion proceeds. If a proposed change is, in the opinion of the Moderator upon the advice of the Clerk, a major change, then a proposer and seconder are required and it is an amendment.
- 10.3 When the Moderator senses that the Assembly may be ready to reach a decision, the Moderator shall state that Assembly is moving into the decision session.

## 11. Decision session

- 11.1 All decisions shall preferably be made by vote. Those participating virtually should normally use any built in voting mechanism in the software. In a very small meeting, where the Moderator can see everyone at once, it may be possible to resolve this informally.
- 11.2 Voting on any motion whose effect is to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, the Structure and any other form or expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church, is governed by paragraph 3(1) and (2) of the Structure.

## 12. Business and procedural motions

- 12.1 If notice has been given of two or more motions on the same subject, or two or more amendments to the same motion, these shall be taken in the order decided by the Moderator on the advice of the Clerk.

- 12.2 A report presented to the Assembly by a committee or synod, under Standing Order 7.1, shall be received for debate, unless notice has been duly given under Standing Order 7.4 of a motion to **refer back** to that committee or synod the whole or part of the report and its attached motion(s). Such a motion for reference 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 can be moved until that one has been dealt with.
- 12.5 A seconder may second without speaking and, by declaring the intention of doing so, reserve the right of speaking until a later period in the debate.
- 12.6 An amendment shall be either to omit words or to insert words or to do both, but no amendment shall be in order which has the effect of introducing an irrelevant proposal or of negating the motion. The Moderator may rule that a proposed amendment should be treated as an alternative motion or as a further motion.
- 12.7 If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. If an amendment is rejected, a further amendment with a different outcome may be moved.
- 12.8 An amendment which has been moved and seconded shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved, but notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Assembly be rejected.
- 12.9 The mover may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter the motion or amendment proposed.
- 12.10 A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly. Any such consent shall be signified without discussion. It shall not be in order for any member to speak upon



- it after the proposer has asked permission to withdraw unless such permission shall have been refused.
- 12.11 Alternative (but not directly negative) motions may be moved and seconded in competition with a motion before the Assembly. It shall be for the Moderator, on the advice of the Clerk, to rule when motions shall be considered as alternatives under the Terms of this Standing Order.
- 12.11.1 When such draft alternative motions have been received by the General Secretary, the Moderators may ask the General Secretary to convene a meeting (in-person or virtual) of the proposers, to ascertain if it may be possible to agree on a single draft motion to put before the Assembly, or to clarify the areas of disagreement.
- 12.11.2 If the Assembly has alternative motions before it, each proposer shall be given the opportunity to present their motion in an order decided by the Moderator.
- 12.11.3 After any amendments duly moved under Standing Order 12 have been dealt with and debate on the alternative motions has ended, the movers shall reply to the debate in reverse order to that in which they spoke initially. The first vote shall be a vote in favour of each of the motions, put in the order in which they were proposed, the result not being announced for one until it is announced for all. If any of them obtains a majority of those voting, it becomes the sole motion before the Assembly. If none of them does so, the motion having the fewest votes is discarded. Should the lowest two be equal, the Moderator gives a casting vote. The voting process is repeated until one motion achieves a majority of those voting.
- 12.11.4 Once a sole motion remains, further discussion is permissible and votes for and against that motion shall be taken in the normal way.
- 12.12 In the course of the business any member may move that the question under consideration **be not put**. 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. To carry this motion, **two-thirds** of the votes cast must be given in its favour. Should the motion be carried, the business shall immediately end and the Assembly shall proceed to the next business.
- 12.13 In the course of any discussion, any member may move that the question **be now put**. This is sometimes described as “the closure motion”. If the Moderator senses that there is a wish or need to close a debate, the Moderator may ask whether any member wishes so to move; the Moderator may not simply declare a debate closed. Provided that it appears to the Moderator that the motion is a fair use of this rule, the vote shall be taken upon it immediately it has been seconded. When an amendment is under discussion, this motion shall apply only to that amendment. To carry this motion, **two-thirds** of the votes cast must be given in its favour. The mover of the original motion or amendment, as the case may be, retains the right of reply before the vote is taken on the motion or amendment.
- 12.14 During the course of a debate on a motion any member may move that decision on this motion be **deferred to the next Assembly**. This rule does not apply to debates on amendments since the Assembly needs to decide the final form of a



motion before it can responsibly vote on deferral. The motion then takes precedence over other business. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion 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 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, (e.g. 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 5 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 their area 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 explanations, dissent

15.1 A member shall have the right to call attention to a point of order, and immediately on this being done any other member addressing the Assembly shall cease speaking until the Moderator has determined the question of order. The decision on any point of order rests entirely with the Moderator. Any member calling to order unnecessarily is liable to censure of the Assembly.

15.2 A member feeling that some material part of a former speech by such member at the same meeting has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may request the Moderator's permission to make a personal explanation. If the Moderator so permits, a member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.

15.3 The right to record in the minutes a dissent from any decision of the Assembly shall only be granted to a member by the Moderator if the reason stated, either verbally at the time or later in writing, appears to the Moderator to fall within the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Basis of Union.

15.4 The decision of the Moderator on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, or on the right to have a dissent recorded, shall not be open to discussion.

## 16. Admission of the public and closed sessions

16.1 Only those who are members of the meeting, staff members in attendance, or invited guests may join a meeting. However, a meeting in open session may allow guests or be shown as a live stream.

16.2 A closed session is one in which the business is highly sensitive. Only members of Assembly, the Legal Adviser, and any technical staff required to enable Assembly to function may be present. Neither content nor process may be divulged to non-members, save specific information authorised by the Moderator in consultation with the Clerk and the Legal Adviser. No social media in any form may be used during a closed session, nor to report upon such closed session. Any live streaming must be switched off. Minutes will be taken, but these will be held *in retentis* by the Clerk, and

shall not be made available to non-members.

- 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 manner as the Business Committee may determine.
- 18.2 The draft minutes of each day's proceedings shall be made available in an appropriate form normally on the following day. They shall, after any necessary correction, be approved at the opening of a subsequent session. Concerning the minutes of the closing day of the Assembly the Clerk shall submit a motion approving their insertion in the full minutes of the Assembly after review and any necessary correction by the Officers of the Assembly. Before such a motion is voted upon, any member may ask to have read out the written minute on any particular item.
- 18.3 A signed copy of the minutes shall be preserved in the custody of the General Secretary as the official record of the Assembly's proceedings.
- 18.4 As soon as possible after the Assembly meeting ends, the substance of the minutes together with any other relevant papers shall be published as a "Record of Assembly" and a copy sent to every member of the Assembly, each synod and Local Church.

## **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.

# Paper A2

## Updating the Rules of Procedure

### Clerk

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Michael Hopkins <a href="mailto:michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk">michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Assembly Executive updates the Rules of Procedure as set out in paper A2 of Assembly Executive November 2021 with immediate effect.</b></li><li><b>2. Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Assembly Executive instructs the Clerk and Assistant Clerk, in consultation with the Officers of Assembly, to make any further minor updates required to the Rules of Procedure to reflect decisions made by the General Assembly.</b></li></ol>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Updating the Rules of Procedure (section C of The Manual) to reflect decisions that have been taken by the General Assembly.
<b>Main points</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Some references to the Moderator need to reflect one Moderator serving for one year.</li><li>2. The section on virtual meetings needs to be simplified and updated.</li></ol>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Many and various reports.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Business Committee.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	N/A
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	N/A

## Updating to reflect decisions already made

1. The following rules need updating to reflect a single Moderator serving for one year:
  - 1.2 "either Moderator".
  - 3.9 "to elect the Moderators".
  - 3.13 "either or both of the persons elected to serve as Moderator".
  - 3.17 "During the temporary absence of a Moderator, the other Moderator may serve alone... if neither Moderator is present".
- 5.2 "the Moderators of General Assembly (one of whom ...".

## Updating and simplifying

2. Rules 3.14 to 3.16 cover the absence of a Moderator. These need updating, and simplifying. The current text says:
  - 3.14 Where the previous General Assembly at its ordinary meeting has failed to elect, or in the event of either or both of the persons elected to serve as Moderator becoming unable to serve more than 120 days before the first day of the meeting of the General Assembly at which they were to have been inducted, then the General Secretary shall seek nominations from synods in the manner prescribed in clauses 3.3 to 3.5 for persons available to serve as Moderator for the coming Assembly. On receipt of those names, the General Secretary will inform all those whose names appeared on the roll of the previous Assembly of the nominations and send them a ballot paper. Those ballot papers shall be returned by post within five working days of receipt. Thereafter, the General Secretary shall deliver these ballot papers unopened to the tellers for the election of the Moderator who shall open and count the votes cast and report the result of this election to the General Secretary in the same form as would have been reported to the General Assembly had this election been held during the Assembly.
  - 3.15 If a Moderator is unable to take office fewer than 120 days and more than 60 days before the first day of the meeting of the General Assembly at which they were to have been inducted, then the Moderator currently in office shall continue in office until a successor is inducted. The General Secretary shall seek nominations from synods in the manner prescribed in clauses 3.3 to 3.5, and an election shall be held at the General Assembly in the manner prescribed in clauses 3.7 and 3.8, and the Moderator so elected shall be inducted during that meeting of Assembly.
  - 3.16 If a Moderator is unable to take office fewer than 60 days before the first day of the meeting of the General Assembly, or resigns from office after induction, or is removed from office after induction, then the General Secretary shall forthwith initiate a postal ballot as described in clause 3.14, and the person so elected shall be inducted at the next meeting of the Assembly Executive, save that if this clause comes into effect less than nine months before the planned meeting of General Assembly, then the remaining Moderator shall serve alone until the next meeting of General Assembly.

It is proposed to replace this with:

- 3.14 Where the previous General Assembly at its ordinary meeting has failed to elect, or in the event of the person elected to serve as Moderator becoming unable to serve more than six months before the first day of the meeting of the General Assembly at which they were to have been inducted, then the General Secretary shall seek nominations from synods in the manner prescribed in clauses 3.3 to 3.5 for persons available to serve as Moderator for the coming Assembly. On receipt of those names, the General Secretary will inform all those whose names appeared on the roll of the previous Assembly of the nominations and send them a ballot paper. Those ballot papers shall be returned by post within five working days of receipt. Thereafter, the General Secretary shall deliver these ballot papers unopened to the tellers for the election of the Moderator who shall open and count the votes cast and report the result of this election to the General Secretary in the same form as would have been reported to the General Assembly had this election been held during the Assembly. Any electronic form of voting approved by the Business Committee may replace the postal method prescribed in this rule.
- 3.15 If a Moderator is unable to take office less than six months before the first day of the meeting of the General Assembly, or resigns from office after induction, or is removed from office after induction, then the current or most recent former Moderator available and willing to serve shall so serve.
- 3.16 Delete, and re-number subsequent paragraphs.

### **Virtual meetings rule**

3. It is proposed that the existing Rule 10 be re-worded as follows:
10. Provision for virtual and hybrid meetings.
- 10.1 For the avoidance of doubt, all meetings in the United Reformed Church, including councils of the church, may in principle be held face-to-face, virtually, or hybrid.
- 10.2 All meetings must always be held in accordance with the current Standing Orders.
- 10.3 In particular, all virtual or hybrid meetings must meet the standards set out in the Standing Orders.
- 10.4 Providing that a meeting remains quorate, no failure of technology however caused, or decision to remove any person from a meeting, shall invalidate the meeting or any decision taken at the meeting, nor shall any such matter be a ground for appeal against any decision taken at that meeting.
- 10.5 In deciding the method of meeting, the Convener, or Moderator, is required to consult with other Officers of the body in question to consider what proportion of the members of the meeting are able to participate in face-to-face, virtual, or hybrid meetings.

# Paper B1

## Update and Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme

### Children's and Youth Work Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Paul Robinson, Convenor <a href="mailto:paul@pjr-robinson.co.uk">paul@pjr-robinson.co.uk</a> Dr Sam Richards, HCYW <a href="mailto:sam.richards@urc.org.uk">sam.richards@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive commends the new Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme as an award to be made by children's and youth work committee on behalf of the denomination to synods completing the approval process.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Update and creation of Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme.
<b>Main points</b>	Messy church research update, Pilots affiliation update, proposal for new Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	B1 Mission Council November 2019 CYWC Update B1 Mission Council March 2020 Children and Youth Friendly Church Scheme B1 General Assembly 2021 URC Children and the future of Pilots.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	CYDO+ team Clerk to General Assembly Synod Moderators.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Consultation required with the Congregational Federation.



## 1. Messy Church research update

A two year research project to discover 'how can we enable local churches to enhance Messy Church practice for discipleship development' was approved in November 2019, to involve the CYDO+ team supporting local churches through appreciative inquiry and action research to develop, capture and disseminate innovation and effective practice. This was to run parallel to a larger study being undertaken by the Church of England. £36,000 funding over two years was approved by Mission Council to cover the costs of Lucy Moore's time, gatherings for the Messy Church teams, publishing findings with a launch event, plus additional team costs incurred conducting the research.

After a very positive start, with 18 Messy Church groups engaging with the process, the pandemic brought the work to a halt. The CYDO+ team, who were conducting the action-research with Messy Church groups, shifted their focus to supporting churches throughout the pandemic. This included some specific sessions for Messy Church group leaders over zoom, for which Lucy Moore kindly recorded a short video. Now that groups are starting to meet in person, their focus is very much on re-engaging with families and rebuilding volunteer teams, and so we have taken the decision not to resume the research process, as this would place an extra burden on groups at a difficult time.

None of the extra funding was used as we were able to fund the initial work from our normal budget.

The Church of England, who had started earlier and gave Messy Church groups initiatives to try out, have produced a report ([www.messychurch.org.uk/deepening-discipleship](http://www.messychurch.org.uk/deepening-discipleship)). The URC research was smaller scale and about facilitating Messy Church groups to identify their own local approaches to deepening discipleship. A brief report will be produced, summarising the learning from the initial phase of the research before the end of 2021. There are currently no plans to resume this research.

## 2. Pilots companies – clarifying relationship to URC

It was identified in the recent Pilots Review that a couple of companies had continued after their local URC had closed. Children's and Youth Work Committee (CYWC) undertook at General Assembly 2021 to clarify potential issues around accountability and liability. After consultation with the Clerk to General Assembly, the CYWC agreed that ideally a Pilots company should have the oversight of a local URC church meeting and eldership. Where there is no obvious local URC church offering oversight, the company should approach the Synod Pilots Officer, or CYDO+, to see if oversight may be offered by another local URC church in the synod, or to explore if the synod is able to provide this oversight.

We are also aware that there is one remaining Pilots company based in a Congregational Federation member church. Issues of accountability for this group will be reviewed with the Congregational Federation. Pilots companies cannot affiliate without providing this information, and cannot be run by individuals independently.

We believe this should bring clarity to the concerns raised in the Review, and we will continue to reflect on best practice as a new future emerges for Pilots following the resolutions passed by General Assembly 2021.

## 3. Children and Youth Friendly Synod proposal

Following the replacement of the Child Friendly Church Award with the new Children's and Youth Friendly Church scheme in March 2020, this is being successfully rolled out by the CYDO+ team. Despite the pandemic, the first church was awarded their plaque earlier this year, and over 20 are now in process.

As a further development, CYWC are proposing a parallel Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme. In the same way that the Eco Church and Eco Congregation scheme offer the opportunity for synods to engage in environmental issues at a strategic level, the Children and Youth Friendly Synod scheme would recognise and celebrate significant steps taken to include all ages in the life of the synod.

A synod can apply to join the scheme through their CYDO+ or directly to Church House. A CYDO+ from another synod will then be appointed to take the role of accompanier. They would meet with the synod and provide a booklet outlining the reflective process to journey through, before meeting with a group from the synod to reflect together on their engagement with children and young people and agree an action plan. The completed booklet, along with the action plan, and an outline 'pen portrait' of the synod's engagement with children and young people completed by the accompanier, would be submitted for approval by the Children's and Youth Work team.

A plaque stating 'This is a Children and Youth Friendly Synod' will be presented to the synod on behalf of CYWC. A record shall be kept of all synods approved by the scheme. The CYDO+ would keep in contact with the synod to review progress in relation to the action plan, and to prepare them for re-approval is appropriate after five years.

# Paper D1

## Discipleship Development Fund update

### Education and Learning Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Mr Alan Yates <a href="mailto:alan.yates@urc.org.uk">alan.yates@urc.org.uk</a> The Revd Jenny Mills <a href="mailto:jenny.mills@urc.org.uk">jenny.mills@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	None.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>None.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Following the agreement by Mission Council in March 2021, the Discipleship Development Fund is now operational. This paper explains how grants are awarded and celebrates the first awards.
<b>Main points</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The operational details have been finalised.</li><li>2. A Large Grant Awarding Group has been established.</li><li>3. The application timetable has been published.</li><li>4. The first 'large grants' have been awarded.</li></ol>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Paper D3 – Education and learning Committee – Revising the Discipleship Development Strategy and the Discipleship Development Fund policy and operation, Mission Council, March 2021.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	The Large Grant Awarding Group.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	No additional administrative costs for the denomination.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	None.

## Discipleship Development Fund update

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since March 2021 the Education and Learning Committee has been working to establish the Discipleship Development Fund (DDF) policies and operational processes agreed in Mission Council. These have now been completed and this report provides a summary of the details.

### 2. Small grants

- 2.1 Following feedback from the Synod Moderators, it has been decided that a fixed allocation of £2000 will be offered to each synod to be used as small grants for discipleship development, normally up to £200, with applications being made to E and L at the beginning of the financial year. Synods can decline the grant if they feel they do not need the funds. Any money not taken remains in the DDF for use in future years or as part of the Large Grant scheme.

### 3. Large grants

- 3.1 A Large Grant Awarding Group (LGAG) has been established. The group consists of Adrian Bulley, George Watt, Jayne Taylor, Jenny Mills, Matt Barkley, Simon Peters and Stuart Scott. The group first met in July 2021 to finalise policies and working arrangement. The final policy document is included as an appendix to this report. With the help of the Communication Department, initial applications were invited to be submitted by the end of September.
- 3.2 Three applications have been received and were reviewed in the first operational meeting of the LGAG held on 12 October 2021.
- 3.3 The innovative application from St Columba's United Reformed Church in Oxford was approved. The application was for the final element of funding needed to launch a three year initiative to support the discipleship of trans and gender non-conforming people and to strengthen the ability of local congregations to recognise the enrichment of their own discipleship and congregational life that will result. The LGAG has awarded £3,000 for each of three years. This represents about 8.5% of the total funding requirements and will now enable the initiative to proceed.
- 3.4 The application from Herringthorpe United Reformed Church in Rotherham was partially approved. As part of their focus on prayer and discipleship, they are planning a church away-weekend at the Hayes, Swanwick. Herringthorpe sits in the most deprived ward of Rotherham, and so the LGAG were pleased to support the initiative. The grant of £2,250 will enable the church to fund a speaker, the two Herringthorpe children and youth leaders as well as funding the cost of rooms for children and young people to enable families to attend. Additional information has been requested before additional elements of the application are considered.
- 3.5 The LGAG has asked for more information before they decide on the final application.
- 3.6 These applications represent a small, but positive start to the use of the DDF to encourage the development of discipleship in the United Reformed Church.
- 3.7 Applications are invited at any time. Applications will be considered four times every year when the LGAG meets (virtually) in April, July, October and January.

The deadlines for applications to be reviewed at these meetings are:  
31 March, 30 June, 30 September, 31 December. Decisions will be notified by:  
30 April, 31 July, 31 October and 31 January.

## **4. Reporting**

- 4.1 This report has been prepared to signal that the DDF is now fully operational. Further reports will be prepared as per the agreement (repeated in 4.2) contained in paper D3 presented to Mission Council in March 2021.
- 4.2 The Education and Learning Committee will prepare an annual report for General Assembly based on:
- Synod statistics of small grants made in the previous year, provided to the Education and Learning Committee by the end of May
  - Large grant awards made in the previous year
  - Completion reports provided to the Education and Learning Secretary once the events have been completed.

## APPENDIX - Discipleship Development Fund Large Grant Awarding Group operating policy

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Mission Council in March 2021 approved the revised Discipleship Development Strategy and its complementary discipleship development fund policy and operation. This document aims to add more detail to the outline policy approved by Mission Council. It is expected that this will be a living document informed by the experience of operating the Large Grant Awarding Group.

### 2. Large grants

2.1 Large grants will be given using the DDF capital. The URC is prepared to deplete the DDF within a decade. Consequently, the total value of grants in one year will be limited, on average, to 10% of the present value of the fund ie £85,000. The expectation is that most grants would not exceed £5,000 pa.

2.2 **How will the grants be awarded?** An application form detailing purpose, outcomes, plans and assessment will be assessed by a group convened by the Deputy General Secretary, Discipleship. This group will consist of representatives from the Synod Moderators and the Education and Learning, Ministries, Equalities, Mission and Children and Youthwork Committees and will meet virtually four times a year. Conflicts of interest will be avoided by group members with an interest in a grant application being excused from the debate and the vote. The decision of the group will be final. A quorum of four, including the convenor, is in operation.

### 2.3 The grant awarding process consists of five key stages:

1. Group eligibility check
2. Proof of group/synod/Assembly Committee approval
3. Application completeness and cohesiveness check
4. Application approval in principle
5. Defining size of the award and supplementary conditions.

2.3.1 Group eligibility check. The text agreed by Mission Council is as follows:

2.3.1.1 *'Any recognised group in the URC, including local churches, synods or Assembly Committees, can apply. Should a group that isn't a synod or Assembly Committee apply they will need to have their application endorsed by the relevant synod or Assembly Committee. For example, if the Youth Executive wanted to apply for a grant, they would need to get the endorsement of the Children and Youthwork Committee'*

2.3.2 Proof of group/synod/Assembly Committee approval. An application for a group should be accompanied by evidence that the application has the formal approval of the group, and their sponsoring body if necessary (synod or Assembly Committee). For example, if a local congregation applies for a grant, approval from the Church Meeting and their synod will be required.

2.3.3 Application completeness and cohesiveness check. All parts of the form need to be completed. In addition, all the contents of the form should be

mutually supportive and not contradictory. The request must include the following elements:

- the purpose of the grant
- the names of the people responsible for delivering the application, including the sponsor, project manager and team members
- the target(s) of the application
- what the application is aiming to achieve
- a simple plan covering the full lifecycle of the application
- a statement of the costs and how they will be met
- a statement of how its impact will be measured and reported
- if a local church application, audited accounts included.

2.3.4 Application approval in principle. Six criteria will be assessed for approval:

1. Is it in line with the aims of the URC's Discipleship Development Strategy?
2. With the grant, is the application viable? Have all of the resource needs been fully identified and sourced? It is particularly important to consider the human resource needs of the project.
3. Is the application sustainable? Does the award of a grant carry with it the implication of further grants being needed in the future?
4. Is the application credible? Is it deliverable and likely to achieve its aims?
5. Does the application add sufficient 'value' to justify its cost? Value will have a number of dimensions. In this regard one key dimension is the number of disciples impacted by this initiative. With experience, a guide (but not benchmark) such as cost per disciple can be developed.
6. Does the application have any innovative elements, and if so, will they be shared to enhance the URC's overall capability? Note that not being innovative will not prevent a grant being awarded, but innovative applications are more likely to be funded.

2.3.5 Defining size of the award and supplementary conditions. The size of the award will take into account factors such as the 'value' of the application, the novelty and replicability of the scheme, the total value of awards already awarded to the synod or Assembly Committee and the expected number of applications in the year. Some conditions may be attached to the award at the discretion of the LGAG. For example, if the grant will be used to purchase third party products or services three independent quotations may be required.

2.4 **What is provided?** A grant will be made to cover some or all of the expected costs for the lifetime of the project, subject to a usual limit of £5000 pa. Grants for partially funded projects will be subject to the other funds being received. For multi-year projects the total grant will be made in principle but will be paid out annually, according to the plan which is to be updated annually. Multi-year awards will normally be made for no more than three years.

2.5 **What can this money be used for?** The DDF is intended to contribute to the development of lay people and therefore the purposes for which it can be used are as broad as can be generated by creativity and vocation, in line with the aims

of the URC's Discipleship Development Strategy (DDS), which are to equip the people of the United Reformed Church to:

- Create opportunities for everyone to encounter the living God, whether they already identify themselves as followers of Christ or not
- Encourage everyone in their prayer life and relationship with God to enable them to live as disciples of Jesus
- Encourage everyone to make the most of education opportunities that are relevant and appropriate for them in their discipleship journey.

The eligible costs would include, without being restricted to:

- National or denominational learning events, conferences or programmes developed in-house
- Personnel costs
- Courses (at any level) at any of the United Reformed Church Resource Centres for Learning or other suitable learning providers
- Books, equipment and resources related to a particular topic or activity
- Attendance at synod learning events
- Travel costs for attending learning events.

- 2.6 The activity can be within the church, the community or an institution in which they are serving. Activities can be face-to-face or virtual, live or recorded, or a combination of the above.
- 2.7 **Are there any restrictions?** The grants would not be expected to cover the cost of 'normal' operations or to replace money that would usually be provided through the usual denominational or synod budgeting processes. In addition, it is not expected, at least in the short term, to award multiple grants to the same group or project. These awards are fundamentally aimed at Lay Discipleship Development and not intended to have mission as their main focus and priority.
- 2.8 **How are applications made?** Applications will be made using a simple form and sent to the Secretary for Education and Learning.
- 2.9 **How are grants paid?** For a project which has a plan of less than a year the grant will be paid in full at the beginning. Once the project has been concluded a report of the project [aims, outcomes, participant feedback and expenditure, including receipts] must be sent to the Secretary for Education and Learning. For multi-year applications the grant will be paid annually and can be tapered to allow for 'pump priming'. The second and subsequent tranches of the grant will be paid once the end-of-year account and an updated plan has been received by the Secretary for Education and Learning.
- 2.10 **Deadlines for applications:** 31 March, 30 June, 30 September, 31 December. Decisions notified by: 30 April, 31 July, 31 October, 31 January.



# Paper F1

## Update on the work of the Faith and Order Committee

### Faith and Order Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Robert Pope <a href="mailto:rpp20@cam.ac.uk">rpp20@cam.ac.uk</a> Philip Brooks <a href="mailto:philip.brooks@urc.org.uk">philip.brooks@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	For information.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	None.

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Update on the work of the Faith and Order Committee.
<b>Main points</b>	This paper outlines the current areas of work for the Committee.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	None.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	URC Communications, URC Youth, Fresh Expressions Enabling Group, Walking the Way Steering Group, ecumenical partners and URC Ministries Committee.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Ongoing discussions with ecumenical partners about the role of eldership in LEP's.

#### The Remit of the Faith and Order Committee:

- \* To address issues of faith and order on behalf of the URC.
- \* To participate in and respond to ecumenical and inter-faith discussions on faith and order issues.
- \* To advise the assembly, its officers and committees on questions of faith and order.
- \* To listen to concerns raised by Local Churches, synods and individuals and to advise as appropriate.
- \* To publish and disseminate occasional materials relating to questions of faith and order.

The Faith and Order Committee will meet on 20 to 21 October (a date after the date to submit papers to Assembly Executive but prior to the meeting itself). The Committee has not met since General Assembly, but its work has continued and this paper gives an update about ongoing work.

- After wide consultation, a revised paper on the place of Elders in the United Reformed Church has been drafted. This includes an understanding of ordination (of Elders) and some biblical, historical and theological reflection on how and why we might have inherited this ministry and why we ordain elders. It is hoped that an agreed version of the paper might help clarify the United Reformed Church position in LEPs and in ecumenical discussion. The Committee will consider how best to take this matter forward.
- The sub-group delegated from Faith and Order to consider questions raised by the Fresh Expressions Enabling Group regarding what makes a group of people a *church* have now drafted a response for discussion. This document will be discussed at the meeting in October. It is hoped that our continued discussion will help the Fresh Expressions Enabling Group in terms of ecclesiology as it brings together a breadth of URC Committees with a view to an Assembly Executive consultation and ultimately a combined paper for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary General Assembly in 2022.
- Faith and Order continues to engage with the IRAD report '*Koinonía: God's Gift and Calling: The Hiroshima Report of the International Reformed-Anglican Dialogue*' (2020) and the follow-up, on-line seminars which have been organized by the joint committee (there is a webinar to be held on 2 to 3 November, hosted by Churches Together in England, the United Reformed Church, the Church of England and IRAD representatives). Faith and Order has also suggested to the Worship Reference Group that it might use the report to commission worship material around *koinonia*. We continue to commend the Report to the Church and would ask that any worship material relevant to the subject of *koinonia* should be forwarded to the Worship Reference Group for wider dissemination in the denomination.

Alongside ongoing work, some new subjects will be included on our agenda in October.

- As the United Reformed Church prepares to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of its inception, the opportunity has been taken to review its ecumenical policy. A paper will come to the October meeting discussing the 'place and potential' of LEPs, something that might well prove significant in a post-lockdown world.
- A report will be given to the October meeting about the Meissen Colloquium, 5-6 July 2021. The Colloquium discussed *episcopate* and this might be something the Committee takes up.
- A question has been submitted to the Committee regarding how best to articulate our understanding of creation, especially in light of the most recent scientific reporting about climate change. A further question has come to the Committee regarding the place of the imposition of hands in ordination and induction. The Committee will discuss and report back accordingly.

## Paper F1

Members of the Committee would be pleased to receive comments and feedback from members of Assembly Executive. We would be pleased also to receive questions of faith and order for deliberation during, or between, our meetings.

# Paper G1

## URC Pension Schemes: a brief update

### Finance and Property Committees

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Ian Hardie <a href="mailto:ianzhardie@googlemail.com">ianzhardie@googlemail.com</a>
<b>Action required</b>	None – for information.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>None.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To report progress since General Assembly took the decision in principle to close both URC defined benefit pension schemes to future accrual.
<b>Main points</b>	<p>Following General Assembly's decision two working groups have been focussing on different aspect of what is a large and complex task.</p> <p>One working group is looking primarily at how the new pension arrangements should be managed. It is hoped to identify a suitable Master Trust partner by the end of 2021.</p> <p>The other working group is looking at the design of the contributions to, and benefits from, the new scheme. This work is currently focused on arrangements for Ill Health Early Retirement and Death in Service benefits.</p>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Paper G4 for 2021 General Assembly titled 'URC Future Pensions – time for a change of approach'.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	External consultants have helped with advice and some financial modelling.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Changing the Church's pension arrangements is not, primarily, to reduce cost, but to deal with the expected increase in costs from 2022 to a level that is unsustainable and may no longer be the most cost-effective way to provide good pensions to the Church's office holders and staff.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	N/A

1. Early in 2020, the Pensions Committee and Finance Committee decided to set up a Pensions Review Group, convened by Jane Baird. This Review Group is accountable to the URC Pensions Committee which is, in turn, accountable to the URC Finance Committee.
2. General Assembly in July this year agreed in principle to close the two URC defined benefit pension schemes to future accrual. Following this, the Review Group has been expanded to bring in several URC people with direct experience of designing and implementing new pension schemes. The group has established two sub-groups to focus on different aspects of the project. All important decisions are taken by the full Review Group and sent to the Pensions and Finance Committees for approval. Those committees will bring recommendations to Assembly.
3. The first working group is focused on how and by whom any new pension arrangements should be managed. It recommended that the Church pursue a Master Trust arrangement if this proves possible. The Review Group agreed with this. Expressions of interest from Master Trust providers were sought and, based on the responses received, a short list of six firms has been agreed. Documentation is being prepared to enable these bodies to provide detailed proposals. It is hoped the process of selection of our preferred partner will get underway during November.
4. The second working group has reached some conclusions about how to deal with death in service benefits and ill health early retirements but (at the time of writing) had not yet shared its thoughts with the Pensions Review Group. Although these matters only affect a minority of members, they are relatively costly. Agreeing the likely costs for these is necessary before considering what level(s) of employer contributions into the new scheme might be affordable and what benefits they might be expected to deliver.
5. The current intention is to have scheme design proposals for General Assembly to consider in July 2022. If approved, there would then be a formal consultation with the members of the two current pension schemes. General Assembly would be asked to authorise Assembly Executive to take final decisions in November 2022 in time for a 1 January 2023 start.

# Paper G2

## Dealing with the Ministers' Pension Fund deficit

Finance Committee and Pensions Committee

### Basic information

Contact name and email address	Ian Hardie <a href="mailto:ianzhardie@googlemail.com">ianzhardie@googlemail.com</a>
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	<p><b>Assembly Executive, acting on behalf of General Assembly:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• expresses its deep gratitude to all the synod trusts which have, according to their means and where appropriate with the approval of their synod meetings, committed to contributing to the new Ministers' Pension Support Restricted Fund</li><li>• approves the recommendation of the directors of the URC Trust Ltd to contribute from its general reserves to this restricted fund £500,000 in 2023 and £500,000 in 2024</li><li>• approves the intention of the directors of the URC Trust should there continue to be a deficit in the Ministers' Pension Fund at the 2024 valuation to contribute to the restricted fund from its general reserves £500,000 in 2025, £600,000 in 2026 and £600,000 in 2027 or such smaller amounts as are agreed at the time</li><li>• approves the intention of the directors of the URC Trust should there continue to be a deficit in the Ministers' Pension Fund at the 2027 valuation to contribute to the restricted fund from its general reserves £600,000 in 2028, £600,000 in 2029 and £600,000 in 2030 or such smaller amounts as are agreed at the time</li><li>• authorises the URC Trust to amend the guarantee it gives the Ministers' Pension Trust to cover up to £24 million of contributions due under the Schedule of Contributions or in respect of any "Section 75" debts arising from future cessation of participation in the scheme by other scheme employers.</li></ul>

## Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Assembly Executive is asked to approve proposed contributions from the URC Trust's general reserves to help address the deficit in the Ministers' Pension Fund and to authorise the URC Trust directors to amend the current guarantee given to the Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd.
<b>Main points</b>	<p>The 2021 actuarial valuation of the Ministers' Pension Fund will reveal a substantial deficit. This is primarily because of the extra prudence now required by the Pensions Regulator.</p> <p>Steps are being taken by synods and synod trusts to help address this problem. The URC Trust directors believe a contribution to the solution needs to come from the money it holds in general reserves on behalf of General Assembly. They recommend and seek approval for payments in 2023 and 2024 and possible further payments in the years 2025 to 2030 subject to certain conditions still being met.</p> <p>They also seek approval for enhancing the current guarantee given by the URC Trust to the Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd.</p>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	<p>General Assembly 2021 Paper G3 'URC Pension Schemes – current challenges – a family problem requiring a family solution'.</p> <p>Paper titled 'URC Pension Schemes – facing up to some serious challenges' written for General Assembly 2020 and considered by Mission Council in July 2020.</p> <p>March 2021 Mission Council Paper titled 'URC pension schemes – dealing with current challenges – a conversation in progress'.</p>
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Officers of synods and synod trusts, directors of the Ministers' Pension Trust and the URC Trust.

## Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Up to £4.5 million will be taken from the general reserves of the URC Trust over the next ten years to help deal with the Ministers' Pension Fund deficit. £1 million will be committed before the next actuarial valuation of the Fund's assets and liabilities. Amounts to be contributed thereafter will depend on that and subsequent valuations.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	None.

## **Valuation(s) of the Ministers' Pension Fund**

1. The actuarial valuation of the Ministers' Pension Fund ('MPF') as at 1 January 2021 is well advanced. The intention is that this valuation will be finalised, including agreement of the schedule of deficit and future service contributions, by the end of this calendar year.
2. If the 2021 valuation had been carried out on the same basis as the one in 2018, it would have produced a small surplus – much better than expected, because of the good performance of the assets over the last three years.
3. However, for reasons explained in previous papers, the Pensions Regulator ('tPR') now requires a much more prudent valuation of the liabilities of the MPF. The result of that is there will be a sizeable deficit, estimated at £24 million. Further prudence will be required in each of the valuations in 2024, 2027 and 2030. We are still estimating that the total amount of required extra funding over the next ten years will be around £45 million.

## **Consultation across the URC family**

4. It was clear at the time of the 2018 valuation of the MPF that this challenge was coming, though its size was not then clear. An Integrated Risk Management (IRM) project group was set up consisting of representatives of the Ministers' Pension Trust ('MPT') and of the Church. This group started by trying to establish the size of the challenge and the issues that needed to be dealt with. The group then began a consultation across the URC family, which has been ongoing for over two years.
5. This consultation has been primarily with the officers of the synod trusts and the URC Trust, as the legal owners of the financial resources of, respectively, the synods and the General Assembly.
6. On behalf of the IRM group, as well as the Finance and Pensions Committees, it is important to express thanks for the willingness of all these bodies to recognise that this is a challenge that requires a URC family solution and to indicate willingness to make sacrificial offers of financial assistance in proportion to the resources available to them. By June this year, we had received provisional offers from each of the synod trusts and the URC Trust which more than covered the required £45 million over the next ten years. We intend to take up all the offers so that we have flexibility further down the line to discuss with the trustees of the MPF whether there is scope for them following a more high-risk investment strategy than tPR would expect, backed by some of this money.

## **Turning provisional offers into firm commitments**

7. We are expecting the directors of each of the synod trusts to pass resolutions this autumn to turn their provisional offers into firm commitments. In most cases, this will be after asking their synod meetings to approve those provisional commitments. I will update the Assembly Executive at its meeting as to how matters have developed during October and November.
8. In a similar way, the Assembly Executive on behalf of General Assembly is now asked to approve the proposed contributions from the URC Trust as recommended by its directors. The URC Trust has already contributed £1.5



million from its reserves towards deficit reduction during 2019. As the (separate) Budget paper reports, it is expected that the M&M Fund will need to meet a very large increase in future service contributions from its reserves at least in 2022. Nonetheless, the directors of the URC Trust recognise that the Church at denominational level needs to be seen to contribute to the family solution as well as the synod trusts. Accordingly, approval is sought for future pension contributions from the general reserves of the URC Trust which might total £4.5 million by 2030.

9. All the money to be contributed by synod trusts and the URC Trust will be held in a new restricted fund separate from the M&M Fund and will be applied (at least initially) to meet the deficit contribution payments to be agreed towards the end of this year between the Church and the MPT in a Schedule of Contributions. Records of contributors and contributions will be kept in such a way that, if all of the restricted fund proves no longer to be required for ministers' pension support, it will be possible to return the surplus in proportion to original contributions to the synod trusts and URC Trust or their successors.
10. It is currently anticipated that this restricted fund should have enough money paid into it in any year to more than fund the amount of deficit contributions for the following year in full. A 'pot' of money will therefore build up in this fund over time. This will provide a buffer which will allow time for the URC family to deal with any future shortfall, should one or more of the synod trusts find themselves unable to meet the commitments they have made.

### **Enhanced Guarantee from the URC Trust Ltd**

11. Approval is also being sought for the URC Trust to give an enhanced guarantee to the MPT in relation to the moneys to be promised under the Schedule of Contributions due to be agreed by the end of this year. At present the guarantee is for £16 million. However, with the assurance that is provided by the money which will be sitting in the new restricted fund, the URC Trust believes it would be possible to increase the amount guaranteed to £24 million (the projected size of the deficit after the 2021 valuation).
12. There are some potential liabilities of the Church to the MPF which are not detailed in the Schedule of Contributions. This relates, in particular, to the other two participating employers in the MPF – Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and Northern College. If either of those bodies were no longer to employ any members of the MPF they would become liable for a "Section 75" debt – essentially, their share of the current deficit on the MPF measured on the solvency basis. If either body incurred such a liability but failed to discharge it, the debt would become a liability of the Church as the principal employer. Such potential section 75 debts are not at present covered by the guarantee.
13. Given that these potential liabilities are small relative to the overall situation and that they are very unlikely to arise, the directors of the URC Trust seek your approval to extend the scope of the guarantee to cover such potential section 75 debts also.

### **Timetable**

14. Once firm commitments are in place from synod trusts and, if you approve, from the URC Trust, it will be possible for the officers of General Assembly to agree the proposed schedule of deficit contributions from 2022 and for the directors of the URC Trust to consider providing the enhanced guarantee to the MPT.
15. All these decisions need to be taken before the 14 December meeting of the MPT at which the 2021 valuation of the MPF and the proposed Schedule of Contributions will be finalised.

# Paper G3

## M&M Fund budget for 2022

### Finance Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Ian Hardie <a href="mailto:ianzhardie@googlemail.com">ianzhardie@googlemail.com</a> Vaughan Griffiths <a href="mailto:deputy.treas@urc.org.uk">deputy.treas@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive adopts the M&amp;M Fund budget for 2022 as set out in the Appendix to paper G3 for November 2021 Assembly Executive.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	The paper presents a budget for 2022 to be considered for adoption by Assembly Executive.
<b>Main points</b>	<p>In future, pension deficit contributions and payments will not be dealt with through the M&amp;M Fund.</p> <p>Income in 2022 is likely to be substantially reduced as a result of lower expected contributions from local churches.</p> <p>Expenditure is expected to rise mainly as a result of increased future service pension costs and some salary cost increases.</p> <p>The result is a budgeted deficit of around £2.7 million which is manageable for next year; but would be unsustainable in the longer term.</p>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	<p>Paper E1 for November 2020 Mission Council.</p> <p>Re the pensions position – papers G3 for General Assembly 2021 ‘URC Pension Schemes – current challenges – a family problem requiring a family solution’ and G4 ‘URC Future Pensions – time for a change of approach’.</p>
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Budget holders and the URC Trust Our investment managers and a major grant awarding body.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Failure to adopt a budget would create uncertainty around the denomination’s financial arrangements for next year.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	None.

1. When we presented the draft 2021 budget for consideration by Mission Council at its meeting in November 2020, we emphasised the uncertainties the denomination faced as a result of the pandemic. These uncertainties are still with us. Although it is clear that a number of local churches are not going to reopen following lockdown closure or may decide to close in the near future, the numbers involved and their potential impact on M&M contributions is presently unclear. Nonetheless, the Finance Committee presents the draft budget for next year as set out at column three of the attached Appendix: with the same proviso as last year, namely that the budgeted M&M contributions may be less reliable than usual. This draft budget has been reviewed by the directors of the URC Trust and it has their support.

### **The MPF Pension Deficit**

2. By the time Assembly Executive meets it is hoped that all the synod trusts will have formally agreed their respective contributions to clearing the current Ministers' Pension Fund deficit. It is also expected that, by the end of the year, some synods will have contributed around £7 million toward ministers' pension support. It has been agreed with the synods that, starting in 2021, all such contributions by synods and the URC Trust as well as the deficit recovery payments made by the URC Trust should be accounted for in a new restricted fund separate from the M&M fund. Accordingly, the figures in the Appendix make no provision for deficit recovery payments from the M&M Fund in 2022 and show the previous budgeted figures for 2021 in the note at the foot of the Appendix.

### **Income**

3. In arriving at a figure for M&M contributions by local churches and synods for the following year it is our normal practice to seek estimates from the synods during the summer months as to the likely level of contributions to be expected in that coming year. As at the end of July 2021 the actual amounts received by way of M&M contributions for the first seven months of this year were almost 4% down on the budgeted figures synods suggested during last summer. Given the level of uncertainty we referred to in our 2021 budget paper, that is a reasonable position – especially since some local churches “backload” their contributions to near the year end and some synods also tend to contribute late in the year. Given the continuing uncertainties about potential church closures and the speed of recovery in the finances of churches, synods have suggested this summer that the likely M&M contributions might be around 7.5% (or £1.3 million) lower than the 2021 budget figure. Given that synods know their local churches better than we do, the Finance Committee has accepted the figures estimated by synods even though this reduction in income creates a big hole in the denomination's budget for 2022.
4. Following discussion with one significant grant awarding body, our expectation is that our 'donations, legacies and grants' income will be down by around £280k compared with the 2021 budget. On the other hand, following discussions with our investment managers, we expect an increase in investment income of almost the same amount.
5. As a result, the budget suggests a reduction in income compared to the comparable 2021 budget figures of nearly £1.3 million.

## Expenditure

6. Our largest single item of expenditure relates to the cost of paying stipends and directly related costs of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers.
7. The task of setting the stipend level has been delegated to the Finance Committee in conjunction with the URC trustees. After a recommendation not to raise stipends at all in 2021, the recommended rise for 2022 is 3% which is built into this budget. The figure has been calculated using the usual formula based on the consumer price index and average weekly earnings. This will increase the stipend by £828 to £28,428.
8. This level of increase adds around £0.25 Million to the cost of ministry but you will see that, despite the number of serving ministers dropping compared to last year, our expenditure on stipends and associated costs is expected to rise by over £1 million compared to last year's budget. This is primarily because of the extremely large increase in future service contributions payable to the Ministers' Pension Fund from 1 January 2022, as reported to General Assembly (paper G4, paragraph 5.1). In July, General Assembly took the decision in principle to close both the URC's defined benefit pension schemes. It will not take a final decision about this until it is satisfied that alternative arrangements have been identified which will give a good pension for ministers and lay staff. The earliest any change can take place is January 2023. So, the increased pension contribution for 2022 is an inescapable budget cost for next year.
9. We are also budgeting for an increase in salaries and associated costs next year. Some of this relates to a proposed 2.5% salary inflation uplift for lay staff following no increase in 2021, as well as the recently announced increase in national insurance contributions. But it also reflects the decision of General Assembly to approve a post to support the new Minister for Digital Worship, the appointment of a Compliance Officer in Church House and the need to increase salary levels for a few vacant posts, where the original salary was not attracting suitably qualified candidates.
10. Professional and consultancy fees have been affected by a long-standing, complex, Employment Tribunal case, which is expected to come to a head later this year with a five week hearing due to begin in November. Accordingly, in drawing up the budget we have assumed that the bulk of the costs of the case will be incurred in 2021. However, should the hearing be postponed (as has happened at earlier stages of this case) it may be necessary to adjust the 2022 budget figure upwards once the position is clearer. The Treasurer will provide an update at Assembly Executive.
11. The result of the budgeted reduction in M&M giving by almost £1.3 million together with increase in stipend and salary costs of around another £1.3 million accounts for the extremely large budget deficit set out in the Appendix of almost £2.7 million. The URC Trust's reserves are sufficient to absorb that level of deficit for 2022 but it would not be sustainable for such large deficits to continue to arise in future years.

12. The Finance Committee is encouraged by the setting up of the URC Church Life Review and looks forward to its work making a significant difference to financial aspects of the life of the denomination as well as other areas of church life.

### **Resolution**

13. Subject to the need to amend the professional fees budget for the matter referred to in paragraph 10 above, the committee proposes the resolution set out above.

### **Projections**

14. In recent years it has been our custom to offer rough projections for the two years following the budget year with health warnings as to accuracy. This year both Finance Committee and the URC Trust directors agreed that several factors made producing such projections at this time pointless. The ongoing uncertainty over future M&M levels together with lack of clarity as to if/when the existing pension schemes will finally close to accruals and the nature and pace of recommendations arising from the Church Life Review make any attempt at producing projections for 2023 and 2024 meaningless.

## Appendix

**UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
2022 BUDGET & COMPARATIVES**

<b>URC TOTAL</b>	<b>2020 Actual</b>	<b>Full Yr Budget 2021</b>	<b>Full Yr Budget 2022</b>
	£	£	£
<b>Income</b>			
Income from Churches & Synods	17,908,130	17,442,285	16,148,127
Donations, Legacies & Grants	190,083	390,000	109,950
Income from training & academic activities	1,634	1,000	1,000
Other income	21,333	0	12,000
Income from Investments	1,184,782	934,000	1,199,000
Income from Trading Activities	249,270	210,400	219,500
Property income	166,386	167,300	163,770
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>19,721,617</b>	<b>19,144,985</b>	<b>17,853,347</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Stipends & associated costs	13,319,568	12,793,725	13,837,800
Other Minister costs	61,184	129,000	116,800
Salaries & associated costs	2,380,679	2,439,100	2,792,737
RCL Support	658,683	699,000	683,665
Student Fees & Support	574,192	515,485	566,910
Mission Costs	45,337	78,000	58,500
Programme expenditure	119,348	393,200	258,950
Committee & other meeting costs	81,330	293,450	227,150
Grants	571,492	487,100	521,520
Travel, accomodation & subsistence	41,563	180,000	170,400
Office & other staff costs	256,148	232,250	267,850
Professional & Consultancy fees	270,281	194,250	254,200
Telecoms	35,967	30,500	33,430
Facilities & buildings costs	165,938	170,500	183,700
IT Costs	154,444	232,900	216,840
Cost of sales	176,842	128,000	134,500
Sundries	19,721	23,000	15,250
Depreciation	66,293	69,500	74,200
Irrecoverable VAT	112,712	140,000	120,000
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>19,111,724</b>	<b>19,228,961</b>	<b>20,534,402</b>
<b>Net expenditure/(Income) excl Pension Deficit items</b>	<b>(609,893)</b>	<b>83,976</b>	<b>2,681,055</b>
<b>Pension deficit</b>			
- Contributions from Synods/URCT	(88,031)	(300,000)	(6,356,633)
- Payments to Pension fund	574,719	574,000	4,700,000
<b>Net</b>	<b>486,688</b>	<b>274,000</b>	<b>(1,656,633)</b>
<b>Net/(Income) Expenditure after Pension Deficit items</b>	<b>(123,205)</b>	<b>357,976</b>	<b>1,024,422</b>

# Paper H1

## URC Confidentiality Policy

### Ministries Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Paul Whittle <a href="mailto:moderator@urcscotland.org.uk">moderator@urcscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive adopts the URC Confidentiality Policy.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly the procedures and principles to be used by anyone who exercises a role within, or on behalf of, the United Reformed Church when dealing with confidential and personal information whether in the context of local church, synod or Assembly and whether the person concerned is a volunteer, paid member of staff or an Office Holder, voluntary or paid.
<b>Main points</b>	This policy gives clarity about when personal information is required and ensures that those who handle information on behalf of the URC make sure that information is relevant to the purpose and not excessive; information is accurate; personal data collected for one purpose should not be used for another purpose; confidential and/or personal information is kept securely; and individuals will have access to their own personal data held either in paper form or electronically.  The policy sets out guidance on how this can be achieved.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Good Practice 5.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	HR, URC Compliance Officer, URC Legal Adviser, Synod Safeguarding Officers.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	



## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The United Reformed Church affirms that the church should be a place of trust and safety for everyone, whether they are church members or not.
- 1.2 The United Reformed Church keeps and uses personal data for the purpose of general church administration eg pastoral care and oversight including calls and visits, ministry to children and young people, preparation of rotas, maintaining financial records, safeguarding vulnerable groups, training and to contact people to communicate church news, events and activities. This data may be held by the United Reformed Church at local church, synod and General Assembly levels. It can be held in paper filing systems and in computer databases. Data is kept by the United Reformed Church under Data Privacy Notice and disclosed to other church leaders, administrators, Synod Officers and pastoral visitors as necessary to facilitate the administration and ministry of the church activities whether at local church, Synod or General Assembly.
- 1.3 This policy asks everyone to be aware of the information they hold about other people and explains the expectations of the denomination in relation to confidentiality. The policy provides guidance notes to those who will be receiving, handling and storing personal, criminal convictions data and “special category” (formerly termed “sensitive”) data.
- 1.4 It is important to read this policy alongside the relevant Data Privacy Notices which specifies how your data is used. These can be found in your local congregation; for synods, on synod websites, and for the General Assembly at: <https://urc.org.uk/privacy-notices>

## 2. The purpose of the policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly the procedures and principles to be used by anyone who exercises a role within, or on behalf of, the United Reformed Church when dealing with confidential and personal information whether in the context of local church, synod or Assembly and whether the person concerned is a volunteer, paid member of staff or an Office Holder, voluntary or paid.
- 2.2 This policy explains the expectations of those who exercise a role within, or on behalf of, the United Reformed Church in how to treat confidential information. It is unavoidable that those who exercise such roles shall receive and handle personal and private information about others. The United Reformed Church aims to ensure this information is well-protected.
- 2.3 This policy gives clarity about when personal information is required and to ensure that
  - information is relevant to the purpose and not excessive
  - information is accurate
  - personal data collected for one purpose should not be used for another purpose
  - confidential and/or personal information is kept securely
  - individuals will have access to their own personal data held either in paper form or electronically.

## 3. Legislative framework

The United Reformed Church will monitor this policy to ensure it meets statutory and legal requirements including Data Protection Act 2018, Children's Act 1989, Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Prevention of Terrorism Act 2000, and Social Security Administration (Fraud) Act 1997 and subsequent legislation that affects confidentiality.

## 4. Exceptions

To establish a relationship of trust within a pastoral relationship and within the wider church community, it is important that the things people share are treated in confidence. There are three exceptions to this:

- If someone specifically gives the worker permission to pass on something they have said (e.g. they give permission for a situation they are facing to be mentioned in the intercessions at church)
- If a person discloses information that leads a worker to think that the person or another person is at risk
- If a person indicates that they have been involved in or are likely to become involved in the commission of a criminal offence.

4.1 For the avoidance of doubt in the second and third cases information should be passed on to the Church Safeguarding Coordinator, Synod Safeguarding Officer, or agency immediately.

- a) where the Church has a statutory duty to disclose information, (i.e. if there is a safeguarding concern)
- b) in exceptional circumstances where there is evidence or reasonable cause to believe that an individual is suffering, or is at risk of suffering, neglect or physical, mental or other disability, age, illness, or other situation are permanently, or for the time being, unable to take care of themselves, or to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse or exploitation." (GP5 p15); Care Act 2014
- c) to prevent significant harm to a child or harm to an adult
- d) where seeking consent would prejudice the provision of the protection, the prevention, detection or prosecution of a crime
- e) where seeking consent could delay the enquiry process into allegations of significant and harm
- f) where an accused minister in the United Reformed Church's Disciplinary process for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers discloses information that is pertinent to the case against them to their pastoral support which is both a safeguarding concern or may be an admission of misconduct or gross misconduct.

4.2 Wherever possible the person disclosing information should be supported in sharing that information himself or herself. If that is not likely, they should be encouraged to give permission for the information to be passed on. The worker may only disclose the information to the appropriate third party without permission where the two options mentioned are not possible. A child would not necessarily be expected to disclose information themselves, but they should be carefully consulted. Guidance on the Safeguarding of Young People and adults at risk can be found on the URC website and in Good Practice 5 - page 73ff.

4.3 Where there is an indication by an individual, that things verbally mentioned ought to be kept confidential, the expectation is that this is understood and adhered to

(subject to the circumstances outlined above).

## **5. Responsibilities**

### **5.1 Church House**

Church House staff, Office Holders and volunteers will operate this policy in line with the Data Privacy Notices of their departments.

### **5.2 Synods**

Synod staff, Office Holders and volunteers will operate this policy in line with the Data Privacy Notices of their synods.

### **5.3 Elders and Church Meetings**

- The limits of confidentiality within any Elders or church meetings needs to be identified and not kept by implicit assumption but by an explicit and agreed policy. A Meetings will remain in good order, where there is an application of the data protection principles. In particular, knowing that information should only be shared where permission is provided by the owner, or it is in the public domain and the person involved knows the context in which their information will be passed on.
- Where there are group discussions about an individual's status, participants of the said groups must be reminded of the confidential nature of their business
- Elders should have their own email accounts, rather than sharing with a partner. Shared email accounts constitute a breach of confidentiality, and data protection laws.

### **5.4 Committees**

All committee members (local churches, synods or General Assembly) of the United Reformed Church, are required to sign the Data Privacy Committee form, both when joining and leaving the committee. These forms should be in the possession of the secretary of the committee

### **5.5 Prayer support**

Personal information such as an individual's name and other personal identifiers should not be mentioned in public worship and in the context of open prayers if express consent and permission is not provided by the individual. This is applicable in the instances of prayers written in books, prayers hung on prayer trees and prayers passed on to prayer chain groups and networks. Personal data is fragile and so care must be taken to only share, where permission has been given by the person who the data belongs to.

When a Minister, a Locally Recognised Worship Leader or an Assembly Accredited Lay Preacher invites topics for intercessory prayers, it's vitally important that people understand nothing can be shared about an individual, without their consent. They could, however, share information that is already in the public domain, about the individual, that is available for all to see. Information publicly known cannot be given personal data protection rights, under data protection laws.

## 6. Breaches of confidentiality

Any breach of confidentiality will be dealt with, in accordance with the disciplinary policy put in place, in the various categories of workers (i.e., employees, officer holders, Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers) in the URC.

## 7. Support for those working in pastoral care

Support should be provided to individuals in a recognised pastoral relationship. Churches and/or synods should have an effective system in place, that provides support for individuals engaging in pastoral work. It would be ideal if they were given an opportunity to converse with a professional such as a Synod Safeguarding officer or other individuals, such as an experienced pastoral visitor, a pastoral secretary, a lay pastoral worker, a minister, or church related community worker.

# Appendix 1

## Guidelines for Good practice in Confidentiality and Pastoral Care

1. There are three simple headings which can help individuals in pastoral relationships to develop their self-awareness in relation to confidentiality.
  - i) When to tell:
    - When permission has been given by the 'owner of the story'
    - When an individual/individuals will be at risk of harm if the information is not passed on
    - When information has been disclosed about a criminal offence that has taken place or is planned
    - In the context of an Elders meeting when sharing pastoral news, with an awareness of the individual's prior knowledge that this may take place
    - Safeguarding concerns should always be shared in line with their church's policy, usually with the pastoral worker's line manager or church safeguarding coordinator in the first instance, or the Synod Safeguarding Officer, except in emergency situations. It is the responsibility to share a concern with an at-risk individual, as long as the individual or other person is not put at an increased amount of risk by this action.
  - ii) What to tell:
    - What are the facts of the story? These need to be told without gloss or 'spin'. Be careful to use words that were used and do not place your own interpretation on what was said.
    - Personal information such as an individual's name or mentions of their personal matters should only ever be mentioned during public worship and in the context of open prayers, where expressed consent or permission was

given by the said individual. This applies to prayers written in books, hung on prayer trees and passed on to prayer chains and networks.

- Care should be taken when a worship leader or preacher invites topics for intercessory prayer. Everyone must be aware that they should only share information about other individuals, where permission (by those individuals) has been given.
- Avoid sharing more than is necessary. Ensure that disclosure of information is proportionate to the aim of sharing (Human Rights Act, proportionate and necessary).

### iii) Who to tell

- Identify the most appropriate person (if any) to pass on the information to. The following questions should be considered: Who can help or has the resources or access to support for the person concerned? Who will most appropriately support the pastoral worker in reflecting on what they have heard?
- Ministers, Church Safeguarding Coordinators, Elders, Synod Safeguarding Officers or other local church leaders will need to make decisions about sharing information with external agencies, including the Police and Local Authority. Individuals may not give their consent to the sharing of safeguarding information for several reasons. For example, they may be frightened of reprisals, they may fear losing control, they may not trust social services, or other partners, or they may fear that their relationship with the abuser will be damaged. Reassurance, appropriate support and advice from a safeguarding professional may provide guidance to the individual in these circumstances, in order for them to make an informed decision about the sharing of information. Advice can be sought from Synod Safeguarding Officers or Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Identify any persons or groups who should not be told. It should not be assumed that the person concerned has told their family or friends. Potential harm could be done if someone was to contact the individual's family.
- It is not good practice for pastoral workers to share pastoral information about third parties with members of their family. People would not expect a GP to pass on to their partner confidential medical information, yet often assumptions are made that to tell a pastoral worker information will lead automatically to their partner knowing. Boundaries of confidentiality need to be made clear to all concerned, and the family members of the person offering care should not be expected to carry the responsibility of holding such information.

## Appendix 2

### Guidelines for the use of Technology

#### 1. Technology

##### 1.1 Data storage

When a computer is passed on, sensitive and confidential data from the hard drive should be permanently deleted. Security software can be purchased to do this. Alternatively, hard drives should be removed from equipment being disposed of.

Where data is stored in such a way that there is shared access, proper use of passwords should be made to limit access to appropriate persons. This is true of those whose computers are based at home and used by family members, as well as those who work in an office.

When data is stored on portable media, including: CD and DVD ROMs, Cloud drives, USB drives, mobile phones and laptops, care needs to be taken to password protect files and machines. Passwords should be stored securely and form part of the Business Continuity Plan.

If using a Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN) to store, send or receive confidential information, it is important to ensure that a high level of security encryption is enabled.

##### 1.2 Social Media Networks and Websites

Sites such as Facebook and Instagram and popular others are increasingly popular and are used by many people as a source of support and friendship. People are often quite relaxed about the amount of information they disclose about themselves and possibly about others. It is important to apply the principle of 'who owns the story' in what is shared about others online, remembering not to share if it is not about yourself.

##### 1.3 Photocopiers

Be mindful of leaving sensitive material on the photocopier, especially original documents. Others using the photocopier after you, may not understand the importance of the document and/or the severity of the confidential nature of what has been left for all to see. Be aware that some photocopiers retain a scan of a document until the next document has been copied in its memory. If a print run is interrupted (due to lack of ink or paper), be sure to restock whatever is required. Leaving the restocking task to someone else, could result in confidential information falling into the wrong hands. Restricted access must be placed on sensitive information.

##### 1.4 Email

Individuals should have their own email addresses otherwise confidentiality is immediately breached as both parties (if there is a marriage or partner relationship) have access to the information sent, for one person's viewing only.

Any email that contains personal data about a third party should only be sent with their permission and should be treated with the same care and attention as any other written information being passed on.

It is important to take care not to accidentally 'reply to all', if the contents of your reply to an email should not appropriately be seen by the wider group. When emailing a group, if the members have not given permission for their details to be circulated within the group, they should be mailed using the 'blind carbon copy' (ie bcc) facility.

## **1.5 Protecting contents**

When sending documents, secure the contents against accidental or deliberate alteration by converting documents into a more secure format such as a PDF. Ideally you should encrypt emails sent. Containing documents attached. The password should be sent in a separate email.

## **1.6 Mobile technology**

The same care should be taken in passing on texts as when using any other method of passing on information. It is important not to discuss personal details of individuals whilst using a mobile phone in a public place.

Documents, images, sound recordings and videos can easily be made and passed on using various kinds of mobile technology. If sending data by Bluetooth it is important to remember that unintended people may have their Bluetooth connectivity set to 'on' and be able to receive information. When sending confidential or potentially sensitive data it is important to target a particular device (phone or laptop), rather than use a general broadcast, which may be picked up by other devices within range.

## **1.7 Shredding**

The increase in cases of identity theft has brought to light the need for careful disposal of sensitive or personal information in accordance with the relevant retention schedule.

Documents containing personal details or confidential information should be shredded before binning or recycling.



# Paper H2

## Retired Minister's Housing Society Sub-Committee new Terms of Reference

### Ministries Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Paul Whittle <a href="mailto:moderator@urcscotland.org.uk">moderator@urcscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive adopts the new Terms of Reference for the Retired Minister's Housing Society Sub-Committee of the Ministries Committee new Terms of reference.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	The paper reflects the changes in RMHS and the role of the sub-committee as the point of liaison between Ministries Committee on behalf of General Assembly and the Retired Ministers Housing Society.
<b>Main points</b>	<p>The committee becomes the point of liaison between Ministries and RMHS on behalf of the URC and tenants ensuring that all eligible member are adequately housed and supported in retirement <b>to</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) raise matters with the RMHS directors in relation to the needs of retired ministers and/or spouses</li><li>b) be responsible for gathering data for projecting future housing requirements for RMHS (URC Minister's Data Privacy Policy 2019)</li><li>c) determine each applicant's eligibility for RMHS housing provision</li><li>d) promote good practice amongst ministers in making provision for retirement including provision for running seminars 10 years before the expected date of retirement and the pre-retirement course</li><li>e) may from time to time as the need requires, seek additional funding by appealing for donations and legacies in the first instance.</li></ul>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	None.



<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	RMHS.
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## Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	

### 1. Introduction and purpose

- 1.1 The URC has long recognised its obligation to provide suitable housing for its retired ministers and their spouses, as well as others who have served the church in its mission to the world. The URC carries out this covenant of care through a Community Benefit Society, the URC Retired Ministers' Housing Society (RMHS).
- 1.2 For the avoidance of doubt ministers shall include Ministers of Word and Sacraments (stipendiary service), Church Related Community Workers, Missionaries who serve the URC and individuals who have served in one of the recognized CWM partner churches.
- 1.3 Ministries notes that there are four principle points of interaction that the RMHS Board of Directors has with different aspects of the URC's governance structures:
  - a) With the United Reformed Church Trust
  - b) With the United Reformed Church Ministries Retired Ministers' Housing Subcommittee (particularly in relation to the projection of housing requirements for retired ministers)
  - c) With the United Reformed Church Finance Committee
  - d) With the Human Resources department at Church House.
- 1.4 The role of the Ministries Retired Minister's Housing Sub-committee is to be the point of liaison between Ministries Committee on behalf of General Assembly and the Retired Ministers Housing Society.

### 2. Terms of Reference

Ministries Retired Minister's Housing Sub-committee shall:

- 2.1 be the point of liaison between Ministries and RMHS on behalf of the URC and tenants ensuring that all eligible member are adequately housed and supported in retirement.
- 2.2 raise matters with the RMHS directors in relation to the needs of retired ministers and/or spouses.
- 2.3 be responsible for gathering data for projecting future housing requirements for RMHS (URC Minister's Data Privacy Policy 2019).
- 2.4 determine each applicant's eligibility for RMHS housing provision.
- 2.5 promote good practice amongst ministers in making provision for retirement, including:
  - a) a seminar ten years before the expected date of retirement and
  - b) pre-retirement course.

- 2.6 seek additional funding support from URC synods and synod trust companies through URC General Assembly resolutions.
- 2.7 appeal for donations and legacies from URC local churches and church members, through appeals based on resolutions to the URC General Assembly.
- 2.8 appeal for RMHS Volunteer Overseers from the URC membership through General Assembly or synod meetings.
- 2.9 undertake anything else General Assembly instructs it to do.

### **3. Membership**

- 3.1 The Committee shall consist of:
  - Convener
  - Secretary: Secretary for Ministries
  - Two members nominated by Nominations Committee
  - One tenant
  - One director of RMHS.
- 3.2 The Convener shall be a member of the Ministries Committee;
- 3.3 Terms of service shall be for four years with the possibility of a further term of four years
- 3.4 The Subcommittee shall normally meet three times a year, two weeks before the RMHS Board meets; one of the meetings shall be with the Board.

# Paper H3

## Revision to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration

### Ministries Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Paul Whittle <a href="mailto:moderator@urcscotland.org.uk">moderator@urcscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive adopts the changes to the Plan for Partnership.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Revisions are to be made which reflect best practice in respect of the financial responsibilities of the local church.
<b>Main points</b>	From time to time revisions are required to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration to reflect current and best practice in respect of the responsibilities of local pastorate, synod and Minister/CRCW when a) there is a synod element to the pastorate/post b) the minister/CRCW's circumstances change.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Plan for Partnership 2021.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Maintenance of Ministry sub-committee.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	

1. From time to time revisions are required to the Plan for Partnership in Ministerial Remuneration to reflect current and best practice in respect of the local pastorate, synod and minister/CRCW. This paper gives clarity.
2. It is often not clear:
  - 2.1 which council of the church is responsible for which expenses particularly in cases where part of the post has a synod element;
  - 2.2 when there is a change in the circumstances of the minister in respect of claiming the fixed car allowance.

3. The revisions are:
- 3.1 The current wording for 6.3: Financial responsibilities of the local church *should now read*: Financial responsibilities of the local church/pastorate recognising that some of these responsibilities may lie with the synod in certain posts, or shared posts.
- 3.2 The current wording for 6.3.4.1 Car: where a minister/CRCW provides a car, the financial arrangements shall be agreed with the synod, the local church and the minister/CRCW. The MoM Sub-Committee shall distribute annually the rates of reimbursement for mileage undertaken on church business, which must not be exceeded (see Appendix A) *should now read*:
- 6.3.4.1 Car: where a minister/CRCW provides a car, the financial arrangements shall be agreed with the synod, the local church and the minister/CRCW and shall be stated in the Terms of Settlement. The MoM Sub-Committee shall distribute annually the maximum rates of reimbursement for mileage undertaken on church business, which must not be exceeded (see Appendix A).
- 3.3 Current wording for 6.3.4.2: As the rates of reimbursement of mileage do not adequately reimburse the costs incurred, a fixed car allowance should be paid. A fixed allowance may be claimed for motorcycles if this is the only mode of transport used by the minister for church business. The amount paid shall be 25% of the fixed car allowance. The rate of fixed car allowance will be advised by the MoM Sub-Committee. Similarly the Sub-Committee will advise a motorcycle allowance and both a motorcycle and a bicycle mileage rate (see Appendix A) *should now read*:
- 6.3.4.2 As the rates of reimbursement of mileage do not adequately reimburse the costs incurred, a fixed car allowance should be paid. A fixed allowance may be claimed for motorcycles if this is the only mode of transport used by the minister for church business. The amount paid shall be 25% of the fixed car allowance. If a minister is unable or becomes unable to drive (for whatever reason) but believes that the payment of a fixed car allowance may still be appropriate, they should speak to the Secretary for Ministries who will take their request to the MoM Sub-Committee. The rate of fixed car allowance will be advised by the MoM Sub-Committee. Similarly, the Sub-Committee will advise a motorcycle allowance, and both a motorcycle and a bicycle mileage rate (see Appendix A).

# Paper H4

## Safer Election of Elders

### Ministries Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Paul Whittle <a href="mailto:moderator@urcscotland.org.uk">moderator@urcscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive strongly recommends local churches to use the process for the Safer Election of Elders.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	<p>The office of the elder is a calling of God and a ministry of the Church and elders are ordained (prayerfully set apart to this public office in the church). Elders share with the Minister of the Word and Sacraments in the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the local church. They also represent the local congregation in the wider councils of the church at synod, General Assembly and ecumenically.</p> <p>As such, the United Reformed Church is required to have a process for those called to be elders comparable to the practice of safer recruitment for other roles within its life whilst acknowledging the need to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit by both the candidate and the church meeting. This paper sets out this process.</p>
<b>Main points</b>	The paper seeks to assist local churches in best practice when electing Elders and sets out a simple process for ensuring safer election including simple nomination and election processes.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Good Practice 5.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Synod Safeguarding Officers, Clerk to General Assembly.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 In the United Reformed Church, the office of Elder within a local congregation is a significant ministry. Elders share responsibility, with the Minister of the Word and Sacraments (where possible), for the spiritual oversight of the congregation.
- 1.2 The elders' meeting is intended to be a distinctive and vital part of every URC congregation with the Elders collectively possessing the abilities, skills and spiritual gifts of leadership to serve the local church actively and creatively as it seeks to respond to the needs and circumstances of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- 1.3 At its best, the elders' meeting is at the heart of every local congregation, providing impetus and positive influence on the mission, witness and service of the church. In short, Elders play an essential role in enabling the congregation to live fruitful lives as God's people.

## 2. The ministry of the Elder

- 2.1 The United Reformed Church recognises the ministry of the Elder is a calling rather than a job for which the church recruits personnel.
- 2.2 Elders are called into ministry by the church meeting which recognises that calling through the charisms (or gifts) they display in their Christian living and ordains and inducts them.
- 2.3 This is a ministry acknowledged by the whole United Reformed Church and exercised on its behalf as well as on behalf of the local church.
- 2.4 However, the United Reformed Church acknowledges that those who are in positions of trust within its life, and who show they have gifts appropriate for their office, should be properly equipped for the ministry to which they are called.
- 2.5 The Basis of Union and The Manual detail the role, promises and functions of an Elder.
  - a) Schedule A paragraph 23 (page 6) of The Basis of Union sets out the ministry of Elder within the United Reformed Church:  
[https://urc.org.uk/images/the\\_manual/A\\_The\\_Basis\\_of\\_union\\_23\\_01\\_2020.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/images/the_manual/A_The_Basis_of_union_23_01_2020.pdf)
  - b) Schedule B (page 21) of the Basis of Union details the promise and Elder makes, with God's grace, at their ordination to:  
[https://urc.org.uk/images/the\\_manual/A\\_The\\_Basis\\_of\\_union\\_23\\_01\\_2020.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/images/the_manual/A_The_Basis_of_union_23_01_2020.pdf)
    - accept the office of Elder of the United Reformed Church and to perform its duties faithfully
    - pray for the Minister/CRCW they will be working with (or interim moderator if no minister or CRCW is in place)
    - seek together with the Minister/CRCW and each other, the will of God
    - give due honour, consideration and encouragement
    - build one another up in faith, hope and love
    - in dependence on God's grace, to be faithful in private and public worship
    - live in the fellowship of the church and to share in its work

- give and serve, as God enables them, for the advancement of his kingdom throughout the world
  - follow Christ and to seek to do and to bear his will all the days of their life.
- c) Schedule B (page 4) of the Manual Details the functions of the elders' meeting which can be found at [https://urc.org.uk/images/the\\_manual/B-The\\_Manual\\_-\\_Section\\_B-2019.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/images/the_manual/B-The_Manual_-_Section_B-2019.pdf)

### 3. Why safer election and not recruitment?

- 3.1 The United Reformed Church is committed to the safeguarding and protection of all within our church communities. The United Reformed Church recognises the importance of carefully selecting, training and supporting all those with any responsibility within the Church.
- 3.2 Elders are ordained (prayerfully set apart to this public office in the church). They are inducted to serve in a particular congregation, sometimes for a fixed period of time. Elders share with the Minister of the Word and Sacraments in the pastoral care and spiritual leadership of the local church. They also represent the local congregation in the wider councils of the church at synod, General Assembly and ecumenically.
- 3.3 As such, the United Reformed Church is required to have a process for those called to be elders comparable to the practice of safer recruitment for other roles within its life whilst acknowledging the need to discern the movement of the Holy Spirit by both the candidate and the church meeting. This paper sets out this process.

### 4. Safer election of Elders in the URC

- 4.1 It is very strongly recommended that the step by step process below is followed by church meetings as the safest way to elect Elders:
- 4.1.1 **A nomination** process shall be agreed by Church Meeting at least two weeks before the church meeting during which the election will take place shall take place. Names of those nominated should be given in written form to the Minister and/or Church Secretary;
- 4.1.2 **Those nominated should**
- a) be a church member for at least one year before being nominated;
  - b) be given copies of the leaflet *They've asked me to be an Elder* which details the promises and functions of the elders meeting (see [https://urc.org.uk/images/Churches/Theyve\\_asked\\_Elder.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/images/Churches/Theyve_asked_Elder.pdf));
  - c) have a conversation with the minister/interim moderator plus a serving Elder including the responsibilities of an Elder with specific regard to
    - the role within the local church including commitment of promises
    - functions as laid out in the Basis of Union
    - an overview of safeguarding procedures
    - responsibilities of trusteeship where the Elder is going to be a trustee
    - where elders are unable to be a trustee because they are disqualified a risk assessment by the Synod Safeguarding Officer (SSO) should be completed

- a Self-Declaration form be completed.
- d) agree for their names to go forward to Church Meeting;
- 4.1.3 Election shall normally by secret ballot. Only church members are eligible to vote;
- 4.1.4 Upon election, the newly elected elder shall
- a) undertake a suitable induction training programme. This shall normally include shadowing an established elder. Induction may include elders training. The synod can support churches to deliver this training. Online elders training material can also be found at: **[https://urc.org.uk/images/Elders\\_2014/Resourcing-our-Elders-8-areas-for-development.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/images/Elders_2014/Resourcing-our-Elders-8-areas-for-development.pdf)**
  - b) be given a copy of
    - URC Guidelines for the Conduct and Behaviour of Elders
    - the church's safeguarding policy with knowledge of how to report concerns.
  - c) apply for a relevant DBS/PVG (where appropriate) through the normal channels. Where timing between election and ordination and/or induction does not allow a DBS self-declaration form should be completed;
  - d) safeguarding training is attended within six months of ordination and or induction.



# Paper H5

## Active Minister's Policy

### Ministries Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Paul Whittle <a href="mailto:moderator@urcscotland.org.uk">moderator@urcscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive adopts the revision to the Active Minister's Policy as in Appendix 1.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	The paper is a revision of the policy agreed at General Assembly 2018.
<b>Main points</b>	The paper introduces two new categories of active minister to reflect current practice: a) in a lay post for which they are receiving a salary not under the Plan for Partnership but where the synod has requested the status of active; b) authorised to perform the functions of ministry on a limited basis as specified in an agreement between the General Assembly and the minister and with the approval of the Accreditations Sub-Committee on behalf of Ministries.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Active Minister's Policy 2018.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	None as this is a revision of current practice.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	

#### Introduction

1. The United Reformed Church values the contribution of its ministers.
2. For the most part, clarity about who is and who is not an active minister is easily established. However, there are times when it is important to have a clear definition. This includes such areas as safeguarding, mandatory training and discipline.

3. Even with a clear definition there will be rare instances when it is not entirely clear whether an individual should be defined as an active minister. The definition provides for this by identifying the synod as arbiter in such instances.
4. Assembly Executive is asked to approve the definition in order to provide clarity as to who has the privileges and responsibilities of being an active minister.
5. The Roll of Ministers will continue to include others who are rightly listed but not undertaking an active role, mainly retired ministers who do not wish, or are not able, to remain active.
6. Some external appointments are within the gift of the church to the wider church, such as some Higher Education chaplains, and others are external appointments to which lay and ordained people from any denomination can apply. If a post is the former, then a minister can apply for that post but should inform their synod and the synod shall request the status of active. This addresses the issue of accountability between the church and the ordained.
7. Any minister who wishes to undertake external appointments to which lay and ordained people from any denomination can apply will need to inform the synod and the synod shall request the status of active. This addresses the issue of accountability between the church and the ordained.
8. The category of active minister can change within the course of a ministry. In most cases this will be because a minister moves from one kind of ministry to another.
9. Applications that do not fit the given criteria of the policy should be approved by Accreditations Sub-Committee on behalf of ministries;
10. A minister may move from the active to non-active list for a variety of reasons but still remain on the Roll of Ministers. This includes, for example, a minister who informs the synod that he or she no longer intends to perform the functions of ministry, instances of ill-health determined by an independent occupational health assessment or during a disciplinary process.
11. The synod will be responsible for updating the list on the URC database as changes occur.
12. Where a minister serving in a General Assembly post requires an application to remain as an active minister when moving on from that post, the synod in which they hold their Church Membership shall make that application.

### **Definition of an active minister**

A minister of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Worker is considered active if they are on the URC roll of Ministers and at least one of the following applies.

They are:

1. In a pastorate or post for which they are receiving a stipend (either full or part) from the United Reformed Church (e.g. deployed post, SCM post, Assembly appointment) under the Plan for Partnership.

2. In non-stipendiary service in a recognised ministry post (e.g. model 1, 2, 3 or 4 or Local NS CRCW).
3. Exercising a ministry with another organisation within the gift of the church to the wider church to which they have been inducted by the URC where possible (e.g. chaplaincy, educational establishment, ecumenical body) and for which they receive a stipend, salary or serve in a voluntary capacity.
4. In a lay post for which they are receiving a salary not under the Plan for Partnership but where the synod has requested the status of active.
5. Providing recognised voluntary service on behalf of the Church (e.g. Interim Moderator, serving on a synod or area committee, representing the URC on an external body).
6. Not in a formal position but whose expertise and experience means that, enjoying the confidence of Synod Officers, they are asked to undertake pieces of work from time to time.
7. Frequently leading worship in a church other than where they are a member (this criterion does not apply in the case of Church Related Community Workers).
8. Categories 1-7 but authorised to perform the functions of ministry on a limited basis as specified in an agreement between the General Assembly and the minister and with the approval of the Accreditations Sub-Committee on behalf of Ministries.
9. Applications that do not fit the criteria 1-7 which are approved by Accreditations Sub-Committee Committee.

Where there is uncertainty as to whether or not a minister of Word and Sacraments or Church Related Community Worker falls within any of the seven descriptions given above the judgment shall be made by the minister's synod, which may delegate the responsibility to one of its committees. Any appeal against the decision of a synod in this respect should be lodged with the Clerk to the General Assembly under Section 9 of the Rules of Procedure.

# Paper H6

## House for Duty Policy for ministers

### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	The Revd Paul Whittle <a href="mailto:moderator@urcscotland.org.uk">moderator@urcscotland.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Assembly Executive adopts the policy on House for Duty and recommends a licence agreement should be used in situations where a House for Duty is required.</b>

### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	House for Duty enables ministry to be offered in places where it might not otherwise be possible. This document regularises current practice and establishes a policy.
<b>Main points</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. There are particular circumstances which do not make stipendiary ministry feasible in the short-medium term, or in a particular geographical area where it is difficult to provide ministry, a manse may be provided to a minister on a 'house for duty' basis.</li><li>2. House for Duty is normally defined as 'Sunday duty plus no less than two days per week' (or x sessions or x hours per week). The minister gains a house to live in rent free with the local pastorate paying Council Tax, Water Rates and buildings insurance and being responsible for the maintenance of the property in accordance with the synod manse scheme.</li><li>3. In the first instance this will be for a period of three years and in no circumstances beyond seven years.</li><li>4. A House for Duty Licence with the trustee/s of the manse should be in place.</li><li>5. There should be a clear arrangement for housing at the end of the term.</li></ol>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	None.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Ministries Committee Finance.

### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	None.

## The policy

1. The purpose of an house for duty policy is to provide a property to a minister of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Worker (hereafter known as ministers) serving in a non-stipendiary capacity for the better performance of their ministry in places where it might otherwise not be possible. It is not to provide income for ministers but to enable ministry to be offered in places where it might not otherwise be possible.
2. Where a Synod Pastoral Committee (or equivalent) recommends that there are particular circumstances which do not make stipendiary ministry feasible in the short-medium term, or in a particular geographical area where it is difficult to provide ministry, a manse may be provided to a minister on a 'house for duty' basis. In the first instance this will be for a period of up to three years and in no circumstances beyond seven years. Before a minister occupies a property on this basis there must be in place an House for Duty License between the Minister and the manse trustees (normally the Synod Trust) and a clear arrangement for housing for the Minister at the end of the term.
3. House for Duty is defined as 'Sunday duty plus no less than two days per week' (or x sessions or x hours per week). The minister is provided with a house to live in rent free with the local pastorate (synod if a synod post) paying Council Tax, Water Rates and buildings insurance and being responsible for the maintenance of the property according to the synod manse scheme (if applicable).
4. House for Duty works best if it is seen as an integral part of a proper mission and deployment strategy, certainly at synod level, by which ministers work collaboratively to achieve set goals. It needs to be thought through by all concerned including the Synod Pastoral Committee (or equivalent) and the local pastorate.
5. As those offering themselves for House for Duty posts now come from a broad range of backgrounds and experiences and are of a wide age range, there is great potential for the development of these types of roles in the future. They can be seen as opportunities to take a new approach to ministry and mission in a particular area, introduce changes and prepare congregations for new ways of working in the future. This can include:
  - Pioneer Ministry
  - the development of Fresh Expressions
  - chaplaincy
  - a remit to work with specific societal groups or age ranges
  - work with children or young people
  - the development of community projects
  - the development and facilitation of lay ministry
  - training
  - as a trouble-shooter on fixed term basis to address specific problems.

It is important that the synod, local pastorate and minister should be actively involved in drawing up any ministry vision (role description) including a review at the outset so that all parties understand what is being agreed to in both the House for Duty Licence and the Terms of Settlement.

## 6. Tax liability

- 6.1 Discussions with the Inland Revenue have received the assurance that if a house for duty was provided to a URC minister for the better performance of the duties and the minister provided Sunday duty plus no less than two days per week (or X sessions or X hours a week) there would not be a tax liability for the Minister, Pastorate, synod or Trustee, as the house would be regarded as being provided for the better performance of the duties and Ministry and not a taxable benefit in kind (is traditionally one of those occupations for which this arrangement is permissible and would not be regarded as a benefit in kind).
- 6.2 If a person is in paid employment and wishes to live in the manse to undertake the duties but cannot satisfy the minimum expectations of time, then it would be regarded as a benefit and taxable.
7. Whilst it is intended that this policy will apply in England, Scotland and Wales, it is noted that when the date of enactment of the Renting Homes (Wales) (Amendment) Act 2021 is known, the URC will need to take further legal advice.

## Appendix 1

### House for Duty Licence Template

1. This licence made on the XX day of two thousand and XX

#### Between

The Licensor: ..... [add the names of the trustees or of the Trust company]

and

The Licensee: [add the name of the Minister]

2. The Licence relates to the property at XX [add the address of the property]
- 2.1 The Property belongs to the Licensor and the Licensee is required to reside therein for the better performance of his/her ministry.
- 2.2 The Licensor permits the Licensee without payment to occupy the property from XX until the termination of this License as provided in Clause 5.

### 3. It is agreed as follows:

#### The Licensee agrees with the Licensor:

- 3.1 To notify his/her occupancy to all relevant suppliers of services to the property and to promptly pay all accounts for the supply of such services;

- 3.2 That the property is provided as a single private dwelling house for the exclusive occupation by the minister, [**his/her**] immediate family and temporary guests and not to use it or any part of it for any other purpose;
  - 3.3 To be responsible for repairing any uninsured damage to the contents of property, other than normal wear and tear;
  - 3.4 To return the property in the condition it was received when the property is vacated, viz. clean, tidy and empty of personal possessions;
  - 3.5 To keep all gardens belonging to the property in a good and tidy order;
  - 3.6 To co-operate with the pastorate and synod in allowing reasonable access to the property for maintenance and annual inspection;
  - 3.7 To report to the [**Elders' Meeting/Synod**] any matter that could lead to the deterioration or damage to the property;
  - 3.8 To report any defect to the property that may present a Health and Safety risk to occupiers or visitors to the Manse;
  - 3.9 Not to operate a business from the Manse unless specifically agreed in writing by the Licensor;
  - 3.10 Not to allow or permit any nuisance or annoyance to be created on the property;
  - 3.11 To give to the Licensor promptly a copy of any notice received concerning the property.
4. This License is personal to the Licensee and is not assignable by them.
  5. This license will terminate in the following manner and circumstances:
    - 5.1 Without notice, one month from the date on which the Licensee ceases to be a minister of Word and Sacraments or a Church Related Community Worker serving in a non-stipendiary capacity;
    - 5.2 Immediately upon service of a notice in writing by the Licensor or the specifying of a serious breach of the Licensee's obligations;
    - 5.3 Immediately without notice if the Licensee shall cease to reside in the Property or
    - 5.4 Upon 3 months' notice given to the Licensee by the Licensor or vice versa whichever shall be the earlier and upon termination of the License the Licensee shall remove all their possessions from the Property and shall give vacant possession of it to the Licensor.
  6. The management and control of the Property shall remain vested in the Licensor and nothing herein contained shall create the relationship of Landlord and Tenant between the Licensor and the Licensee or derogate from the rights of the Licensor and all persons authorised by them to enter the Property from time to time to main and repair the same.

Signed: Licensor [Trustee/ Director for and on behalf of the licensor]

Signed: Licensee/Minister

# Paper I1

## Walking the Way: Living the Life of Jesus Today – update on work

### Walking the Way Steering Group

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Francis Brienen <a href="mailto:francis.brienen@urc.org.uk">francis.brienen@urc.org.uk</a> Adrian Bulley <a href="mailto:adrian.bulley@urc.org.uk">adrian.bulley@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	For information.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	N/A

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	This paper provides an update for Assembly Executive on the work of the Walking the Way steering group and project manager, including work so far on the implementation of resolution 36 of General Assembly 2021.
<b>Main points</b>	In response to resolution 36 of General Assembly 2021, the Walking the Way Steering Group and Project Manager are devising SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Agreeable, Realistic, Time-specific) to help implement the content of the resolution. Other work continues, and is being redirected as appropriate to focus on the above.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Mission Council 11/15 papers M1 and M2 Mission Council 3/16 paper M1 General Assembly report 2016, p.11 Mission Council 11/18 paper I2 Mission Council 11/19 paper I3 Mission Council 03/20 paper I3 General Assembly report 2020, p.195 Mission Council 11/20 paper M1 Mission Council 03/21 paper I4 General Assembly report 2021, p.166.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Mission Communications



	<p>Education and Learning</p> <p>General Secretariat</p> <p>Church House Connective.</p>
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## Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Following the passing of resolution 36 of General Assembly 2021, the Walking the Way steering group and Project Manager will be funded until the end of the calendar year 2022.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Consultation and events considering whole-of-life discipleship with ecumenical partners, including Churches Together in England and Christian Aid, continue.

### 1. Long-term, whole-of-life discipleship for all

- 1.1 In passing resolution 36 at its meeting in July 2021, General Assembly affirmed whole-of-life discipleship as the primary long-term focus of the United Reformed Church, calling for a range of actions to be taken to embed the whole-of-life discipleship ethos of Walking the Way across the Church.
- 1.2 As part of this, General Assembly instructed the Walking the Way Steering Group and Project Manager to continue their work until the end of the calendar year 2022, whereupon the Deputy General Secretaries for Discipleship and Mission will take full responsibility for this embedding.

### 2. Next steps

- 2.1 In the remaining time in which the Steering Group and project manager will be in place, there is clearly much to do, not least in strengthening the relationships and trust needed for whole-of-life discipleship to remain firmly at the heart of everything everyone does across the denomination, building on existing networks and shared priorities across denomination, getting truly alongside synods in their approaches, sharing and using lessons from the LICC accompaniment programme, and using the great wisdom which continues to emerge from the stories of discipleship which the Steering Group gathers.
- 2.2 In response, the Walking the Way Steering Group and Project Manager took time at their September 2021 residential meeting to consider whole-of-life discipleship at different levels of Church Life within the United Reformed Church, sharing the following comments:
  - a) *Local Churches* – In all considerations and decisions of local churches, the question “What does this mean for discipleship?” is relevant to everything. Clarity of message is especially important for local churches as they work to develop a whole-of-life discipleship ethos. This involves strong, direct relationships with churches, literally walking alongside them in their own contexts. This requires strong leadership and accompaniment support, especially from ministers of Word and Sacraments, which can be difficult for them amidst other pressures and responsibilities. Having synod and Church House support which takes local need into account is vital. Using opportunities, such as the URC’s upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> jubilee and the popularity of the Walking the Way prayer cords, to promote whole-of-life discipleship, could help.

- b) *Synods* – Every synod is active in embedding a whole-of-life discipleship ethos across its life and work, at least in the short to medium term. This needs to be celebrated and built on collaboratively so that the wisdom of the varied approaches within synods may be shared more widely. This will be especially important as synods develop their own responses to resolution 36 in maintaining whole-of-life discipleship as a long-term focus. As key advocates for whole-of-life discipleship, not just in the life of synods, but of the whole denomination, synod teams, including Synod Moderators, Training and Development Officers (TDOs), Mission Enablers and Children’s and Youth Development Officers (CYDOs) and their equivalents, must be supported in their work and enabled to share wisdom and good practice in joining up the dots of the various approaches taken across synods in embedding a whole-of-life discipleship ethos. This could involve the extensive networks and contacts which synod teams already have, as well as considering where discipleship fits in the job descriptions of synod team members and volunteers.
- c) *General Assembly* – It is hoped that, in time, all General Assembly staff and committee members will recognise whole-of-life discipleship as the core of their remit, reflected in the work, decisions and resources produced in every area of General Assembly’s work. Various tools could help with this, including a very concise summary of Walking the Way’s messaging, a GA proforma asking committees to consider the discipleship implications of any report or resolution proposed, staff events and activities such as the all-staff meeting, collaborative work using new Church House procedures, prayer time at Church House, and potential LICC learning hub/accompaniment support for Church House and committees.

2.3 Work is ongoing to refine these insights into SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Agreeable, Realistic, Time-specific) which the Steering Group, Project Manager and Deputy General Secretaries for Discipleship and Mission can work towards. Whatever goals are developed, it is clear that collaborative relationships will be key in enabling everyone involved with the United Reformed Church to play their part in embedding whole-of-life discipleship across the life of the denomination.

2.5 One certainty to be repeated continually, is that the upcoming end of the Steering Group and Project Manager roles does not mark the end of Walking the Way or missional discipleship as a priority within the URC, only the end of the phase of the journey which required a Steering Group and Project Manager. The journey very much continues and will need everyone’s support if we are to continue *Walking the Way: living the life of Jesus today*, long into the future as a denomination.

### 3. Other work

3.1 The Steering Group has continued its work under the following headings, redirecting work as appropriate in order to prioritise the implementation of resolution 36 of General Assembly 2021:

- a) *Resources and communications* – The Walking the Way webpage ([www.urc.org.uk/wtw](http://www.urc.org.uk/wtw)) has been streamlined to make it easier to navigate whilst the new URC website is being developed. Walking the Way’s social media accounts have been closed down in order to focus on the production of more discipleship content for the URC’s official social media accounts.

The second series of the URC podcast is being planned, focussing on the discipleship implications of various issues.

- b) *Accompaniment* – The pilot accompaniment programme in Southern Synod has been so successful that the synod is now running it again without funding from the steering group. The pilot has also begun in Mersey Synod, with positive reports from participants.
- c) *Online discipleship* – Work is ongoing to collate all papers, notes and information from various meetings which the Walking the Way project manager and members of the steering group have held with parties interested in online discipleship. These will be passed to the General Secretariat to assist the Church in working out how to develop this exciting area of work. It will be interesting to see how the new Minister for Digital Worship post, once appointed, might be able to assist this work.
- d) *Stepwise* – The Steering Group and Stepwise Development Group continue to enjoy representation in each other's meetings to ensure that Stepwise can benefit from the Steering Group's insights and vice versa.
- e) *The URC's 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee* – The Planning Group, for which the Walking the Way Steering Group has responsibility, is continuing its work. Please see paper N1 for more information.
- f) *Networking* – Given the centrality of collaborative relationships in embedding whole-of-life discipleship across the denomination, networking has taken on an even greater significance. Further virtual meetings of synod and network contacts are being planned, as well as physical visits by the project manager alongside other Steering Group members and Church House colleagues.

# Paper 12

## Update on current work

### Mission Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Ms Sarah Lane Cawte, Convenor of Mission Committee <a href="mailto:slanecawte@gmail.com">slanecawte@gmail.com</a> Francis Brienen, Deputy General Secretary (Mission) <a href="mailto:francis.brienen@urc.org.uk">francis.brienen@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	For information.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>None.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Update on the work of the Mission Committee.
<b>Main points</b>	Updates on Church and Society/JPIT work, Ecumenical and Interfaith matters, Global and Intercultural Ministries, and Mission.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Paper 11 to Mission Council, March 2021.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Costs to Assembly of the various items in the paper are covered by the Mission Committee budget.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	

## 1. Church and Society/Joint Public Issues Team

- 1.1. **Reset the Debt:** This JPIT-led campaign is continuing to shine a spotlight on the issue of household debt and calls for a comprehensive solution, rather than simply short-term support or delaying measures. The team worked with MPs to secure a backbench debate on this issue in July and mobilised people to ask their MPs to speak. They also held a meeting with Treasury Minister John Glen. Find out more at [www.resetthedebt.uk](http://www.resetthedebt.uk)
- 1.2. **Staying alert to justice:** JPIT continued to advocate for a continuation of the £20 a week uplift in Universal Credit, with the government's own analysis suggesting that the planned cut in October would have a "catastrophic" impact on many on low incomes, and cause poverty, homelessness and foodbank usage to soar. JPIT also ran short campaigns to mobilise church members in support of the 0.7% international development budget commitment ahead of votes in parliament; it was very disappointing that the cut to 0.5% was approved by MPs in July. A statement was put out from church leaders including the URC General Assembly Moderators condemning this decision as "unfair, unwise and immoral".
- 1.3. **Climate justice:** The Joint Public Issues team has promoted and supported key initiatives in the lead up to COP26, including Climate Sunday, the Youth Christian Climate Network (YCCN) relay from G7 to COP, and interfaith advocacy work through Faith for the Climate/Make COP Count. The URC Moderators were signatories to the Glasgow Multi-Faith Declaration ahead of COP, which was published in September and signed by more than 50 faith leaders.

The Secretary for Church and Society, Simeon Mitchell, has supported the URC's Environmental Task Group in developing a draft updated Environmental Policy for the Church. The policy will be brought to the 2022 General Assembly.

## 2. Ecumenical and Interfaith matters

- 2.1. **Israel Palestine follow up:** The passing of the Israel-Palestine resolutions by General Assembly provoked a good deal of positive correspondence, including a letter from Kairos Palestine, signed by Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah and Rifat Kassis. The Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, Philip Brooks, was interviewed on BBC Radio Merseyside in the week following Assembly. One letter of concern was received, from the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Francis Brienen and Philip Brooks will meet two of their representatives on 25 November to discuss their concerns.
- 2.2. **Church of Scotland, Methodist and URC Israel-Palestine Group:** At the beginning of September, the first meeting of this three-denominational group took place. It was agreed to share information and co-operation on Israel-Palestine work, building on the agreement between the Church of Scotland and the URC, which Mission Committee endorsed last year.
- 2.3. **Local Ecumenical Partnerships:** Mission Committee at its meeting in September discussed the place and potential of Local Ecumenical Partnerships. The discussion focused in particular on how we assess the way in which URC membership in LEPs is recorded, and formed part of preparatory work towards a new URC ecumenical policy for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the URC.

- 2.4. **URC/Pfalz Partnership:** the URC's good friend and head of the 'Pfalz friends of the URC', Pfarrer Martin Henninger retired at the beginning of October. Philip Brooks attended his farewell service in Frankenthal as an invited guest and spoke on behalf of the URC.
- 2.5. **Greenbelt:** after the disappointment of the cancelled 2021 Festival, we look forward to bringing an increased URC presence to Boughton House next year. This is also part of our 2022 programme of events to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the URC.

### 3. Global and Intercultural Ministries

- 3.1. **Legacies of Slavery:** the Legacies of Slavery (LoS) task group has found renewed focus under the convenorship of David Reynolds, Professor Emeritus of International History at Cambridge University. Emphasis has been placed on planning and delivering the process of consultation requested by Mission Council in autumn 2019. Presentations were made at most of the autumn 2021 synod meetings to share the work to date, to gauge the degree of support for the direction of travel, and to seek feedback on a draft apology. The presentations were intended as a launch for further conversations in and with local churches.
- 3.2. **Anti-Racist Church resolution:** having had conversations with colleagues outside the URC about the possibilities for an independent racial justice audit, the Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries, Karen Campbell, is following up ideas from within the denomination including the call for a Commission on Racial Justice. She is seeking to listen to the various ideas to discern where they intersect and where they differ before proposing a concrete course of action.
- 3.3. **Anti-Racist Church – Equalities Committee resolution:** following the General Assembly's acceptance of resolution 15, instructing the Equalities Committee to form a small group to explore how the URC might implement a policy of 'affirmative action' to address the persistent underrepresentation of black and ethnic minority people in Assembly-appointed posts; and to explore the possibilities and practicalities of a recruitment policy which actively engages with and seeks to correct the current racial imbalance in Assembly-appointed post, the Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries and the Convener and Secretary of the Equalities Committee have started the process of assembling the small group.
- 3.4. The Global and Intercultural Ministries team continues to support the ministries of our **Partners in Mission**. Alison Gibbs (Zambia) is due to retire in December 2021, and arrangements are being completed for her return to the UK. The Revd Yufen Chen (London) is in the third year of an initial three-year commitment with the URC. Conversations have begun with the Council for World Mission (CWM) about extending Yufen's service to a second term, and the project being relocated from Lumen to Islington. Selena Tai left her post as Mandarin chaplaincy assistant with St Peter's House Chaplaincy in Manchester at the end of July. The balance of the URC's funding will be used to support a new Mandarin assistant on a fixed-term contract. After that URC funding will cease.
- 3.5. Melanie Smith and Mark Meatcher, URC ministers serving in Thames North Synod, have been called to work with the Pacific Theological College in Fiji through CWM. Following interview with the International Exchange Reference

Group and extensive conversations with the relevant Church House colleagues and CWM, the Memorandum of Understanding is now being finalised. It is hoped that all formalities can be completed in time for a start on 1 December 2021. Mission Committee is grateful to the Revd Paul Whittle in particular, for all his support in the process.

#### 4. **Mission**

- 4.1. The survey to gather information on the impact and future of the **National Rural Officer post** and how to resource rural churches in the future was completed over the summer. Mission Committee discussed the responses at its meeting in September and will take any final decisions on future resourcing of rural mission and ministry in February 2022.
- 4.2. The **Fresh Expressions Enabling Group**, a task group of Mission Committee also comprising members from Ministries, Education and Learning, Children and Youth Work and the Pioneers network, has worked on a paper to generate discussion on pioneering and fresh expressions in the URC. The paper will be offered to the Assembly Executive for discussion, with a view to bringing resolutions on the ways forward for fresh expressions and pioneering in the URC to General Assembly in 2022.
- 4.3. Mission Committee at its meeting in September considered further analysis of the **vision 2020** evaluation data, with a view to bringing this to the Assembly Executive in November. However, as the accompanying films could not be completed in time due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the evaluation will now be presented to the General Assembly in 2022.



# Paper J1

## List of nominations

### Nominations committee

#### Basic Information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Helen Lidgett <a href="mailto:hnlidgett@gmail.com">hnlidgett@gmail.com</a> George Faris <a href="mailto:nominations.secretary@urc.org.uk">nominations.secretary@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) <b>Assembly Executive notes the changes set out in Section 1 of the report to the list of Nominations agreed at the July 2021 meeting of General Assembly.</b></li><li>2) <b>Assembly Executive notes and approves the changes set out in Section 2 of the report to the list of Nominations agreed at the July 2021 meeting of General Assembly.</b></li><li>3) <b>Assembly Executive appoints according to the nominations in Section 3 of the report.</b></li><li>4) <b>Assembly Executive appoints according to the nominations in Section 4 of the report.</b></li></ol>

#### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) To clarify various details of the nominations list.</li><li>2) To appoint and reappoint members of various committees and representatives of the Church.</li><li>3) To note proposed appointments to be made at General Assembly 2022.</li></ol>
<b>Main points</b>	
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Nominations list as at July 2021: <a href="http://www.bit.ly/URCNom">www.bit.ly/URCNom</a> .
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	All synods are represented on the Committee.

#### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Some roles involve ecumenical contact and collaboration.



## 1. Amendments to published list of nominations to be noted

Assembly Executive is asked to note the following amendments to the Nominations list that was agreed at the July 2021 meeting of General Assembly.

### 1.3 Listed Buildings Advisory Group

The Revd Ray Anglesea (1) has resigned.

### 2.2.1 Panel for General Assembly appointments

The death of Dr Jim Merrilees (13) is noted with regret.

### 2.7 Safeguarding Advisory Group

The group has the maximum number of three nominated members so there is no vacancy.

### 5.5 URC Trust

The directors have appointed the Revd John Macauley to improve the ethnic balance of the Trust.

### 11.4 Congregational Memorial Hall Trust

The Revd Melanie Smith has resigned.

### 11.12 World Day of Prayer – England, Wales and Northern Ireland National Committee

The Revd Dr Ana Gobledale has resigned.

## 2. Amendments to published list of nominations for approval

Assembly Executive is asked to note and approve the following amendments to the Nominations list that was agreed at the July 2021 meeting of General Assembly.

### 4.4 *Walking the Way* Steering Group

The Training and Development Officer representative is Mr Derek Graham.

## 3. New appointments and re-appointments

Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Assembly Executive makes the following appointments:

Ref	Committee/Group	Name	Role	From	To
3.1	Mission Committee	The Revd Stuart Nixon (3)	Member <sup>††</sup>	Jan22	GA26
4.1.1	Accreditations (CRCW and SCM) Subcommittee	The Revd Alison Micklem	Member <sup>**</sup>	Nov21	GA25
5.5	URC Trust	The Revd Julian Macro	Member <sup>††</sup>	Nov21	GA25

Key: \*\* = new appointment, † = extension of term of service, †† = further term of service after a break

## 4. Disciplinary process appointments

General Assembly 2021 Resolution 42b instructed the Nominations Committee to bring nominations for Assembly appointees under the new Disciplinary Process to the Assembly Executive in November 2021 so that all those appointed can receive initial training in the new procedures before the remainder of the process comes into force. Members of the Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel and the Disciplinary Investigation Panel are appointed for unlimited terms. The convenor of the Assembly

Commission for Discipline Panel and the Senior Member of the Disciplinary Investigation Panel serve in those roles for seven year terms.

**Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Assembly Executive makes the following appointments:**

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Committee/Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Nigel Adkinson	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Bill Bowman	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Andy Braunston	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Mr Ian Corless	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Mrs Barbara Ellis	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Mrs Cathy Glazier	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Marcus Hargis	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Dr David Jones	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Mrs Mary Kelly	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Sue McCoan	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Alan McGougan	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Ms Morag McLintock	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Sarah Moore	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Wilbert Sayimani	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Angela Steele	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Mrs Janet Virr	Member**
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Mr Gordon Wanless	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	The Revd Derek Hopkins	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	The Revd Lesley Moseley	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	The Revd Craig Muir	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	The Revd George Mwuara	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	Mr Mark Rigby	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	Mr Andy Russell	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	Ms Cathy Simpson	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	The Revd Martin Spain	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	The Revd Dr Janet Tollington	Member**
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	The Revd Geoff Wright	Member**

Key: \*\* = new appointment

**Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Assembly Executive makes the following termed appointments:**

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Committee/Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	The Revd Nigel Adkinson	Convenor**	Nov21	GA28
2.5	Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Dr David Jones	Deputy Convenor**	Nov21	GA28
2.6	Disciplinary Investigation Panel	The Revd Dr Janet Tollington	Senior Member**	Nov21	GA28
2.3	MIND Advisory Group	The Revd Chris Copley	Secretary <sup>†</sup>	GA22	GA26
2.3	MIND Advisory Group	Mr Philip Laws	Secretary to the Assembly Commission for Discipline <sup>†</sup>	GA22	GA26

Key: \*\* = new appointment, <sup>†</sup> = extension of term of service

## 5. Appointments to be made at General Assembly 2022

The Nominations Committee advises that the person listed below has accepted an invitation to serve from the end of next year's General Assembly, which will be asked to appoint her. This is a provisional list - there will be further nominations for consideration at General Assembly.

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Committee/Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
2.2	Nominations Committee	Mrs Margaret Marshall	Secretary**	GA22	GA26

Key: \*\* = new appointment, † = extension of term of service, †† = further term of service after a break.

# Paper N1

## The URC at 50 – it's almost time...

### URC 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Planning Group

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Francis Brien <a href="mailto:francis.brien@urc.org.uk">francis.brien@urc.org.uk</a> Andy Jackson <a href="mailto:andy.jackson@urc.org.uk">andy.jackson@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	For information.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	N/A

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	This paper provides an update for Assembly Executive on the work of the URC 50 <sup>th</sup> Jubilee Planning Group.
<b>Main points</b>	As 2022 fast approaches, this meeting provides the last opportunity to update the Assembly Executive on plans for the URC's 50 <sup>th</sup> Jubilee before the year of celebration begins. Members of Executive are encouraged to prepare themselves and the synods or networks they represent to make the most of the local church packs, worship resource competition, books, merchandise and events which will be on offer alongside celebrations which synods, local churches and other groups will, it is hoped, organise themselves.
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Mission Council 03/21, Paper I3 Mission Council 11/20, Paper O1 General Assembly report 2021, p.162.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Mission Communications Education and Learning General Secretariat Church House Connective.

## Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	Using monies from existing budgets, planned income from resource and merchandise purchasing, and sponsorship from organisations such as Edwards Insurance Brokers, the planning group has appropriate financial plans in place.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Ecumenical partners will be formally invited to contribute to the celebrations in various ways, including attending jubilee events.

### 1. It's almost time...

- 1.1 As 2022 fast approaches, this meeting provides the last opportunity to update Assembly Executive on plans for the URC's 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee before the year of celebration begins.
- 1.2 Members of Executive are encouraged to prepare themselves and the synods or networks they represent to make the most of all that will be on offer, as well as prepare to celebrate this significant milestone in their own ways.

### 2. Local church packs

- 2.1 In early 2022, a pack of resources will be sent to every local congregation in the United Reformed Church containing, amongst other things, worship resources, resources for organising a quiz event, resources for organising a drama performance, and more information about merchandise, events and other significant opportunities to celebrate, such as the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Reform* magazine.
- 2.2 Local churches, alongside all other groups and networks associated with the United Reformed Church, are encouraged to begin preparations for celebration, including looking out for these packs.

### 3. Worship resources competition

- 3.1 All choirs, bands, individuals, songwriters, composers, and poets are invited to submit their entries for the 50<sup>th</sup> jubilee worship resource competition, which has four categories: traditional hymn/song; poem; contemporary hymn/song; and rap. The deadline for entries is Friday 8 April 2022. More details can be found at [www.urc.org.uk/50](http://www.urc.org.uk/50).

### 4. Books and merchandise

- 4.1 New publications on the history of the United Reformed Church will be available from the URC Bookshop, alongside a new publication on hymnody. Publication dates will be advertised when available.
- 4.2 In addition, various 50<sup>th</sup> jubilee merchandise items will be available to purchase, including candles, story stones, ties, pin badges, Better Cotton Initiative socks, scarves, tote bags and soap bars. Some items will be for personal use or to use as gifts, whilst others will be for local churches to sell for a profit for their own fundraising activities. This is something that churches and their publishing houses

have done before, but all of the items in this part of the range will be available to buy in bulk or individually from the URC Bookshop.

## 5. Events

- 5.1 In terms of a main jubilee event, there are plans to open Church House to visitors in the morning on Saturday 1 October 2022, ahead of a worship service in the afternoon at Methodist Central Hall, Westminster.
- 5.2 Church House will be open from 10am to 1pm, and will host a “Living Library” where visitors will be able to interact with a wide range of people who have a story, experience or knowledge of the United Reformed Church to share. It is hoped that a great diversity of people from across the denomination will be able to participate in this “Living Library” as well as visit it.
- 5.3 In the afternoon, visitors will be encouraged to walk from Church House to Westminster ahead of the worship service, or use public transport, and will be provided with a guide containing different routes and points of interest which are significant to the denomination’s story.
- 5.4 At 3pm, the worship service will begin, welcoming a large congregation of people from across the United Reformed Church, including our ecumenical partners.
- 5.5 In order to manage numbers of worshippers, a booking system is being devised. More information about this will be advertised when available.
- 5.6. In addition, other events such as the Ministers’ Gathering, Greenbelt and URC Youth Assembly will provide diverse audiences with the opportunity to celebrate and reflect on this important milestone as they explore the jubilee’s specific significance for their own lives and ministries, individually and collectively. All of these events will play a key role in making this a year to remember.

## 6. Local and regional celebrations

- 6.1 It is hoped that local churches, synods and other groups will find different ways to celebrate this important milestone which mark its significance for their own particular context or locality. The 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Planning Group would love to hear about these. Please email [50@urc.org.uk](mailto:50@urc.org.uk).

## 7. Finance

- 7.1 Using monies from existing budgets, planned income from resource and merchandise purchasing, and sponsorship from organisations such as Edwards Insurance Brokers, the planning group has appropriate financial plans in place.

## 8. Tickets

Free tickets for the Open Church House Event, the Walk to Westminster and the Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving are available from Eventbrite:  
[www.bit.ly/urc50](http://www.bit.ly/urc50)

# Paper P1

## Update on progress regarding property matters

### Law and Polity Advisory Group

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Neil Mackenzie <a href="mailto:ravelston20@hotmail.co.uk">ravelston20@hotmail.co.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	To note.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	None.

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Following a Constitutional Review, reported to Mission Council in May 2019, detailed guidance on a variety of property matters is being prepared to bring to General Assembly 2022.
<b>Main points</b>	<p>Following an Assembly Commission decision regarding a dispute arising from a disposal of church premises and the application of the proceeds thereof, the Law and Polity Advisory Group were tasked to issue practical guidance with regard to disposal of church premises which might be adopted uniformly across the United Reformed Church, but not before consulting widely. With the aid of a consultation paper which included a questionnaire all a consultation exercise was completed.</p> <p>The interpretation of trusts relating to church premises by synods and Trust Companies and the practices adopted with regard to synod funds vary between synods to the extent that the Group needed to instruct and receive advice from a barrister of long good standing and experience in charity law. The Group has further work to do and will again consult with synod officers, the chairs of Trust Companies, PLATO members and other interested parties.</p> <p>The Group will bring its practical guidance to General Assembly in 2022.</p>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Paper M1 of May 2019.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	Synods and Trust Companies were consulted and invited to complete a wide-ranging questionnaire. The Group also consulted Synod Clerks, Synod Moderators, members of PLATO, and the chairs of Trust Companies. This consultation

	will continue as the guidance is drafted, so that when it is presented to General Assembly 2022 those most closely involved will have been involved in getting the material to that stage.
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## Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	Reduction in risk of reputational damage through fewer problems arising.



# Paper R1

## Amendments to New Disciplinary Process

MIND (Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline)  
Advisory Group

### Basic information

Contact name and email address	
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Acting on behalf of the General Assembly, Assembly Executive rescinds resolution 40 2021.</li><li>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.</li><li>3. Acting on behalf of the General Assembly, Assembly Executive rescinds resolution 42 (a) and (b) 2021.</li><li>4. Requests the General Secretary to make any necessary consequent changes to lettering/number necessary in the light of these changes.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(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.</li><li>(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.</li></ol></li></ol>

## Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Remove provision of the Synod Standing Panels for Discipline and replace with an Assembly Panel for Discipline.
<b>Main points</b>	
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	General Assembly 2021 Book of Reports Papers R1, R3 and R5 Papers appended to the report of Mission Council prepared for General Assembly 2020 Papers T1-T4 Mission Council March 2020 Paper T1 Mission Council March 2019 Paper T1 for Mission Council November 2018.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	MIND Advisory Group Synod Moderators and Synod Clerks.

## Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	None. The cost of the pre-hearing part of the process shall continue to be borne by synods, and the Commission stage from central funds.
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	None.

1. Following the agreement of the General Assembly to the proposed changes to the Disciplinary Process in July 2021, the MIND Advisory Group has met twice. Firstly to 'road test' the new process whereby it explored how the new process might work in practice in respect of several fictitious cases. Secondly within its regular meeting cycle where it reflected further on the outcomes of its earlier meeting.
2. At these two meetings it emerged with further consideration that the proposal that each synod should appoint its own Standing Panel for Discipline (SSPD) is problematic. The issues are sharpened in smaller synods, are practical in nature and include the following:
  - a) Number of volunteers required
  - b) Ensuring consistency across the denomination particularly since SSPDs are likely to be required to serve on an irregular basis giving to rise to insufficient confidence and experience to be able to execute their task.
3. Instead of each synod appointing its own SSPG it is proposed that the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline (ASPD) be strengthened with its membership increased to six. Synod Moderators retain their role as already agreed and will operate alongside two members of the ASPD rather than a SSPD. Unless there is a conflict of interest or other reason, the members of the ASPD will work on a rotation as new cases arise, e.g. members a and b will work with the Synod Moderator on case 1, c and d on case 2, e and f on case 3, a and b on case 4 etc.

4. The role of the Assembly Representative for Discipline (ARD) is unchanged.
5. The proposals to amend the Structure that are currently in progress are unaffected by these changes.
6. The new Ministerial Disciplinary Process is laid out in a framework document and a series of appendices. The framework and the appendices are of equal standing in respect of the operation of the process.

The proposed amendments to the framework are detailed below. Provisions to be removed are indicated using strikethrough text. The amended provisions are in italics. The lettering of the appendices have not been changed, consequent changes will be made to lettering if the resolutions are passed.

<p>3. <b>Allegations</b>  <del>(1) Convening the Synod Standing Panel for Discipline Pertaining to a Minister under Synod oversight</del>          Any allegation suggesting a failure to meet the expectations in paragraph 1 amounting to misconduct within the meaning of paragraph 2 must be referred to the moderator of the synod exercising oversight of the minister concerned. Concerns coming to the notice of the Moderator without a report from any complainant may be treated as allegations of misconduct. A report of a criminal conviction, arrest or police caution is to be treated as though it were an allegation of misconduct.</p> <p>On identifying any allegation as one of misconduct, the Moderator <i>must inform the Assembly Representative for Discipline (ARD) or their duly appointed deputy. The Assembly Representative for Discipline will appoint two members of the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline who, with the Moderator, will form the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline for the case. The Moderator must seek safeguarding advice pertaining to the case and share it with the standing panel.</i> <del>call together the Synod Standing Panel for Discipline ('SSPD') and seek safeguarding advice, which must be passed on forthwith to the remaining members of the SSPD.</del></p> <p><del>(2) The Assembly Representative for Discipline and Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline Pertaining to a minister under the direct oversight of the General Assembly.</del></p>	<p>The synod which exercises oversight of a minister is to be identified in accordance with Appendix C.</p> <p>Rules on double jeopardy appear at Appendix E.</p> <p><del>The composition of the SSPD is set out at Appendix F.</del></p> <p>'Calling together' does not necessarily imply a physical meeting.</p> <p>The interplay of the Process with the Church's Safeguarding Policy, the participation of safeguarding professionals in the work of the SSPD ASPD, and the circumstances in which early steps in the Process may be deferred during external investigation are explained at Appendix G.</p> <p><b>The identity of the ARD and the composition of</b></p>
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<p>Allegations respecting a minister treated under this Process as falling under the direct oversight of the General Assembly are to be referred to the Assembly Representative for Discipline ('ARD') who (if they are identified as allegations of misconduct) is to call together two members of the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline ('ASPD'), who, with the ARD, will form the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline for the case. <del>The ARD must seek safeguarding advice pertaining to the case and share it with the standing panel.</del></p> <p>(3) Striking out</p> <p>The <del>SSPD</del> ASPD may strike out allegations that are, in its view, patently frivolous, malicious, vexatious or unrelated to the expectations, stating why it considers that to be the case. Otherwise it must pass the allegations and any supporting evidence on for further consideration in the Investigation Stage.</p> <p>(4) Decisions of suspension</p> <p>As soon as it is aware of the allegations the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD may suspend the minister, with the consequences set out in the Basis of Union. The Moderator may suspend, acting alone, on first receiving the allegations if there is delay in calling together the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD and the Moderator considers immediate suspension necessary. However, neither the Moderator <i>acting alone</i> nor the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD should proceed to suspension without <i>first</i> considering whether an alternative course of action is available. If <del>the SSPD</del> it is believed such an alternative could be <del>considered appropriate but</del> and an interview with the accused minister would assist the decision, the minister must be offered the opportunity to meet with at least one member of the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD before the suspension decision is taken. Decisions to suspend or not to suspend must be accompanied by reasons and reviewed by the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD on first convening and regularly thereafter: they may be revised at any time.</p>	<p><b>the ASPD are set out at Appendix H. References to a Synod Moderator and to the <del>SSPD</del> apply equally to the ARD and ASPD.</b></p> <p>Rules concerning suspension and extracts from Schedules E and F to the Basis of Union, listing its consequences, are set out at Appendix J.</p> <p>In a case concerning a minister under the discipline of the General Assembly, references to the Moderator in this framework apply to the ARD throughout the case.</p>
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<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Pastoral care</b>  <b>(1) of the accused minister</b>          When a minister is suspended (or, if there is no suspension, when allegations of misconduct are passed on to the Investigation Stage) the Moderator must arrange as soon as possible for another experienced person to offer ongoing pastoral care to the accused minister. The role of the pastor so appointed is only to offer pastoral care and support. They are to operate independently of the Moderator, to have no involvement in any aspect of the Process and to observe the Church's normal practice regarding the confidentiality of pastoral conversations. The Moderator's own pastoral responsibility for the minister is suspended so long as the case remains under the authority of the SSPD ASPD. The Moderator must also inform the accused minister of the contact details of the person appointed to give guidance under paragraph 8.6.</p> <p><b>(2) of others</b>          The Moderator must also consider what pastoral care is available to the accused minister's dependants, the complainant(s) and others directly affected by the case, including the members of local churches within the accused minister's pastorate, and must seek safeguarding advice if it appears possible that children or adults at risk may be involved.</p>	
<p>5</p>		
<p>5.1</p>	<p><b>(1) Investigation and report</b>          The purpose of the Investigation Stage is for the original allegations (and any further allegations of misconduct which this stage may bring to light) to be fairly and expeditiously investigated by an Investigation Team, whose findings are to be reported to the SSPD ASPD. At this stage, the Team is concerned with three issues: (i) the facts of the case, and in particular whether there is a <i>prima facie</i> case for full investigation; (ii) the seriousness of the allegations if proven, and (iii) whether the case can be appropriately disposed of by a caution. It may also, at any time, recommend the suspension of the accused minister or the lifting of a current suspension.</p>	<p>The composition of an Investigation Team, and of the Disciplinary Investigation Panel from which it is drawn, are set out at Appendix K.</p> <p>The work of the Investigation Team is explained at Appendix L.</p>

	<p><b>(2) Decisions by the SSPD ASPD</b> Based on the Team's report and the accused minister's response <i>to this report</i>, the <del>SSPD</del> <del>(acting in the name of the synod)</del> ASPD <i>(acting in the name of the General Assembly)</i> decides, giving reasons, whether to end the Process, initiate proposals for an agreed caution, or send the case to the Hearing Stage.</p> <p>The role of the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD during this stage is judicial. As such it takes no part in the investigation but weighs impartially the facts and arguments presented by the Investigation Team and by the accused minister.</p>	
5.2	<p>If the Investigation Team concludes that the allegations against a minister do not amount to a <i>prima facie</i> case, or that even if proven they would not merit formal disciplinary sanctions, the Team will report accordingly to the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD. On receiving such a report the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD must take safeguarding advice, and must then declare the Process and any suspension terminated from that point, save that it may refer the report back to the Team on one occasion for reconsideration.</p>	
5.3	<p>If the Investigation Team believes its investigation into allegations against a minister reveals a <i>prima facie</i> case, on the basis of which, if the allegations were proven, it would seek the imposition of a disciplinary sanction, the Team will report accordingly to the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD. The <del>SSPD</del> ASPD is to send the accused minister a copy of the Team's report and to be advised the minister of the time allowed for a written answer.</p> <p>On considering the report and any answer the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD must do one of the following: (i) refer the report back to the Team on one occasion for reconsideration and further investigation, (ii) declare the Process and any suspension terminated from that point, if (after receiving safeguarding advice) it does not agree that the report supports the Team's conclusions, (iii) (after receiving safeguarding advice) propose an agreed caution in accordance with paragraph 5.4, or (iv) pass the report, any answer and all supporting evidence on for consideration at the Hearing Stage.</p>	<p>The time allowed for the minister's answer is to be 14 days unless another period is set by the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD.</p>

<p>5.4</p>	<p>An agreed caution may be an appropriate outcome in disciplinary cases where ministers accept the allegations against them (other than any allegations which the Investigation Team would not pursue for the reasons in paragraph 5.2), display convincing remorse and are willing to undertake appropriate precautions against recurrence.</p> <p>A caution may be considered at the close of the Investigation Stage if the Investigation Team recommends this in its report, or if the SSPD ASPD, on receiving that report and the minister's answer, proposes a caution on its own initiative.</p> <p>Safeguarding advice must be taken on the terms of a caution as finally negotiated.</p> <p>A caution is not appropriate where a minister denies allegations being pursued by the Investigation Team; nor, normally, in the case of allegations similar to allegations found proved on an earlier occasion under this Process or an earlier version of the Disciplinary Process.</p> <p>If a caution is agreed by the minister, the Investigation Team and the SSPD ASPD, delivered formally by the SSPD ASPD and acknowledged by the minister, the Process and any suspension are terminated from that point.</p> <p>If a caution is recommended by the Investigation Team or proposed on the SSPD's ASPD's own initiative, but the SSPD ASPD is satisfied it will not be possible to reach agreement on a caution in appropriate terms and within a reasonable time, then the SSPD ASPD must pass the Team's report, any answer and all supporting evidence on for consideration at the Hearing Stage. Correspondence entered into (subsequent to the Team's report) in connection with the proposal and attempted negotiation of a caution is not to be passed on, and will not be admissible at the Hearing Stage.</p>	<p>Appendix M sets out how a caution is to be drafted, negotiated and finalised.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>The Hearing Stage</b></p>	
<p>6.1</p>	<p>As soon as the SSPD ASPD passes a case on to the Hearing Stage, an Assembly Commission for Discipline ('ACD') is</p>	<p>The composition of an ACD, and of the Commission Panel from</p>



	constituted to oversee and hear the case. Once a Commission is in being for a particular case, authority over that case passes from the synod to the General Assembly, in whose name the Commission acts. Any procedural directions, or decisions regarding suspension of the accused minister, are thereafter to be given by the Commission (after receiving safeguarding advice in respect of any lifting of suspension).	which it is drawn, are set out at Appendix N.
6.2	Having satisfied the SSPD ASPD of a <i>prima facie</i> case against the accused minister at the close of the Investigation Stage, the task of the Investigation Team in the Hearing Stage will be to present the evidence in such a way as to assist the ACD in determining the truth of the allegations on a balance of probabilities, and to make submissions regarding the seriousness of the case and an appropriate sanction. Unless the Team abandons the allegations, its investigation will continue for this purpose until the date for submitting case material.	Rules for the timetable of the Hearing Stage (including a date for submission of the Investigation Team’s case material) are set out at Appendix O.  Abandonment of allegations during the Hearing Stage is governed by Appendix P.
8.	<b>Miscellaneous provisions</b>	
8.7	The costs incurred in the work of a SSPD ASPD prior to any hearing stage shall be charged against funds of the United Reformed Church under the control of the synod. The costs incurred by an ASPD or by any Commission or Secretary of Commissions in operating the Process and the reasonable expenses of any witness attending a Hearing shall be charged against funds of the Church under the control of the General Assembly.  After a case is referred into the Hearing Stage and an ACD appointed, the accused minister and the Investigation Team may each apply to the Commission for the approval of costs to be incurred in connection with that Stage, and any costs so approved may also be charged against funds of the Church under the control of the General Assembly. If this includes the fees of one or more experts, the parties are required to consult with a view to calling (if possible) a single expert by agreement.	Necessary travel and meeting expenses of the Investigation Team will normally be allowable; but neither party shall be entitled to claim the cost of professional advice in formulating their position at any stage of the Process, nor costs of preparing the case for Hearing or professional representation at that Hearing.
8.8	<b>(1) Restriction of simultaneous appointments</b>	Further provision about the Panels, List and Secretaries to which this paragraph refers is made in Appendices F, H, K, N, U and V.



	<p>Save as permitted by Paragraph 8.8(2), no person may simultaneously do more than one of the following:</p> <p>(a) be included on the Disciplinary Investigation Panel  <del>(b) serve on a SSPD</del>                  (b) serve on the ASPD                  (c) be included on the Commission Panel                  (d) be included on the Appeal Commissions List                  (e) serve as SACD, or                  (f) serve as Secretary of Disciplinary Appeal Commissions ('SDAppC').</p> <p><b>(2) Exceptions</b></p> <p>(a) A person may be included simultaneously on the Disciplinary Investigation Panel and on the Commission Panel, but may not be appointed to any ACD hearing a case against a minister after having, in that or any previous case, served on an Investigation Team regarding allegations made against that minister.</p> <p>(b) The same person may be appointed as SACD and SDAppC.</p>	
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<b>Appendix B</b>	Ministers under other denominational jurisdictions
<p>Allegations against such a person which would, in the case of a minister of the United Reformed Church, lead to the calling together of the <del>SSPD</del> ASPD may be reported to the Moderator of the Synod of the province or nation where the person serves. The Moderator is to transmit that report to the officer of the home denomination competent to initiate proceedings under that denomination's disciplinary procedure. The Moderator may recommend to that officer that the person concerned should be suspended from ministry pending investigation of the allegations.</p>	
<b>Appendix C</b>	Oversight – deleted in its entirety as the Council of oversight for all disciplinary cases is now the General Assembly. Synod Moderators serve for cases in their synod, but do so as members of the ASPD.
<b>Appendix D</b>	Moderators' recorded warnings
<p>3. The issue of such a warning is to be recorded locally (that is, in a form to which only the Moderator or ARD and any successor or deputy to that person will have access). Should misconduct on the part of that minister later be alleged, of a nature to which the recorded warning is relevant, the Moderator or ARD may inform the Investigation Team that such a warning was issued, and of the reasons for it. The mere giving of such factual information will not</p>	

disqualify a Moderator or ARD from exercising his / her role on the SSPD / ASPD.	
<b>Appendix E</b>	Double jeopardy
<p>1. A minister may not be subjected to the Disciplinary Process a second time in respect of allegations which were previously made against him or her, if those allegations were disposed of by an agreed caution or were passed to the Hearing Stage (whatever the outcome in that Stage). If the SSPD ASPD or any Commission is satisfied that all allegations referred to it are excluded from consideration by this paragraph, it is to terminate the Process and any associated suspension forthwith.</p> <p>3. If allegations were made against a minister but did not pass beyond the Investigation Stage because the Investigation Team or the SSPD ASPD was not satisfied of a prima facie case or that formal disciplinary sanctions would be warranted, the same allegations may only be considered again within the Process if new evidence is offered and the SSPD ASPD is called together on the renewed allegations within six years of the termination of the earlier proceedings.</p> <p>4. References in this Appendix to an agreed caution, the Hearing Stage and the SSPD ASPD apply respectively to a caution, the Commission Stage and the Synod Moderator in proceedings brought under an earlier version of the Disciplinary Process.</p>	
<b>Appendix F</b>	Composition of the synod Standing Panel for Discipline
Delete in entirety. The amended process will not include Appendices F or I.	
<b>Appendix G</b>	The Disciplinary Process and Safeguarding
<p>2. c) the Church's safeguarding professionals are involved as detailed below in the deliberations of the SSPD ASPD on a particular case;</p> <p>4. Where the Disciplinary Process requires safeguarding information or advice to be given to a SSPD ASPD, it is to be given first to the Moderator and transmitted by the Moderator to the other members of the Panel with as little delay as possible. If the Moderator is for any reason not serving on the SSPD ASPD in a particular case the person who replaces the Moderator for the purposes of this Process <del>under paragraph 8 of Appendix F</del> <b>G</b> is to notify his / her contact details to safeguarding professionals, and all subsequent references to the Moderator in this Appendix are to be read as meaning that person.</p> <p>6. The Process begins when one or more allegations coming to the notice of a Synod Moderator are identified as allegations of misconduct as defined in paragraph 2 of the Framework. The SSPD ASPD is then convened (paragraph 3 of the Framework) and considers whether the allegations should be struck out as patently frivolous, malicious, vexatious or unrelated to the expectations. The SSPD ASPD (or in case of urgency the Moderator) also decides whether it is necessary to suspend the accused minister pending investigation. The SSO is to participate in the discussion on these questions by whatever communication method the SSPD ASPD adopts, seeing the same papers as the Panel members see, and having the chance to express a view before they come to any decision. Safeguarding professionals may offer any</p>	

information or advice which appears, in the light of the allegations made, relevant to those decisions. Information regarding the accused minister which is not relevant in the light of the allegations made should not be sought or given at this stage, in order not to prejudice the Panel against the accused.

7. If the SSO, in the discussion of a case with the police or other external statutory authorities, is advised that those authorities wish their initial investigation to proceed without the minister being aware of the situation, the SSO is to report this to the ~~SSPD~~ ASPD, which can defer suspension or reference to an Investigation Team until the external authorities are ready for the minister to be informed.
9. If it appears to safeguarding professionals that none of the allegations made against a minister raise any issue of safeguarding within the scope of the Church's Policy, they may advise the ~~SSPD~~ ASPD accordingly. Subsequent requirements of the Framework to seek safeguarding advice need not then be followed, unless additional facts coming to light during the investigation suggest to the Panel or the Investigation Team that (a) the minister's behaviour could after all raise a safeguarding concern or (b) advice is needed on the treatment of a vulnerable complainant, witness or other person affected by the case.
10. After the appointment of an Investigation Team, the ~~SSPD~~ ASPD is to notify both the Team and the accused minister of any information or advice received from safeguarding professionals. The Team may at any time seek further advice from safeguarding professionals, but any advice included in the Team's report to the ~~SSPD~~ ASPD must also be copied to the accused minister.
11. The SSO is to participate (in the same sense as in paragraph 6 above) in the deliberations of the ~~SSPD~~ ASPD before it a) lifts a suspension previously imposed (Paragraph 3 of the Framework); b) terminates the Process after receiving an Investigation Team report that allegations are not susceptible of proof or do not merit formal sanctions (Paragraph 5.2); or c) terminates the Process, overruling an Investigation Team's submission of a prima facie case (Paragraph 5.3)
12. If the ~~SSPD~~ ASPD gives permission for negotiation of an agreed caution (Paragraph 5.4), the Investigation Team must liaise with safeguarding professionals on the terms of such a caution. If the Team reports to the SSPD that agreement has been reached with the accused minister, it must also report the safeguarding advice received regarding the submitted terms.
13. Any safeguarding advice or information received by a ~~SSPD~~ ASPD (except advice given during negotiations for a possible caution which did not in fact result) is to be included in the material passed to an ACD at the beginning of the Hearing Stage.

**Appendix H            The Assembly Representative for Discipline and the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline – The whole original appendix is replaced by the below.**

1. *The Assembly Representative for Discipline ('ARD') discharges the functions in the Disciplinary Process normally assigned to the Moderator of a synod, in*

*cases where the accused minister is treated under Appendix C as falling under the Assembly's direct oversight.*

- 2. The General Assembly appoints the ARD for a period of five years and may renew the appointment. The ARD must be a member of the United Reformed Church but may not be a person who would, under Appendix C, be treated as falling under the Assembly's direct oversight.*
- 3. The ARD convenes the Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline (ASPD) appointing members of the Panel to Panels to serve in particular cases.*
- 4. The Assembly Standing Panel for Discipline ('ASPD') comprises: a) the ARD, b) six members of the United Reformed Church appointed by the General Assembly, three of whom must be elders and three ministers or CRCWs and c) the Moderator of each Province or Nation. It is desirable, but not essential, for one member of the ASPD in each case to have a legal qualification or comparable experience.*
- 5. The appointment of the ARD and of the other two members should for preference be made by the Assembly in plenary session or by the Assembly Executive, but in case of urgency may be made by the Officers of General Assembly.*
- 6. It is not necessary for the members of the ASPD to be members of General Assembly. Paragraph 8.8 of the Framework restricts simultaneous appointments of one person to different roles in connection with the Process.*
- 7. The appointed members serve on the ASPD, for renewable terms of five years.*
- 8. If the ARD or an appointed member of the ASPD dies, resigns or ceases to be a member of the United Reformed Church before the end of the term of office, a fresh appointment for a fresh term of five years is to be made at the next session of the Assembly Executive, or in cases of urgency by the Officers of General Assembly. However, if the ASPD is convened to consider an actual case and the term of office of a member (including the ARD) ends by expiry before the case is disposed of under paragraph 5.3 of the Framework or an agreed caution administered under paragraph 5.4, the member concerned may continue to serve on the ASPD (in respect of that case only) pending such final disposal. An ARD member in this situation must inform the Clerk of the General Assembly within seven days of his/her term of office ending whether he is willing to continue to serve on the ASPD in this way.*
- 9. For each case referred to the ARD they will appoint one Synod Moderator and two other members of the ASPD to serve for that case. The panel for each case will always contain at least one Elder or lay member. The Moderator with pastoral responsibility for a minister under synod oversight will serve as a member of the ASPD for that minister's case.*
- 10. Where there is doubt as to which Synod Moderator should serve in a case involving a minister under synod oversight, the Assembly Representative for*

*Discipline will determine the matter in consultation with the relevant Synod Moderators.*

- 11. No member of the ASPD is to serve in a case in which his / her relationship with the accused minister or a complainant could give rise to a reasonable suspicion of bias. However, such disqualification shall not follow merely by reason of a person knowing the accused minister or the complainant or by residence in the same province or nation. A member of the ASPD holding relevant Church responsibilities may provide to an Investigation Team verifiable factual statements regarding the accused minister and his or her record of ministry, without being considered as taking part in the investigation. These must be provided in writing and copies supplied to the accused minister. If the Investigation Team requires expressions of opinion on such matters, it should if possible seek them from a source not connected with the ASPD. However if it appears to the Investigation Team essential that a member of the ASPD provide opinions or evidence in the case going beyond a written factual statement, that person shall not serve on the ASPD in connection with the case. Where a Synod Moderator cannot serve for these reasons in a case, the ARD will appoint an alternative Synod Moderator to serve for the case.*
- 12. If, for a reason mentioned in the foregoing paragraph or because of prolonged absence or other incapacity, a Synod Moderator is unable to serve as such for a particular case, or to continue until the case passes out of the hands of the Panel, a replacement for that case shall be made as follows:*

  - a) if the Moderator is generally prevented from acting as Moderator of the synod (or if there is no Moderator) and arrangements are in place for another person to serve as Acting Moderator, that person shall also replace the Moderator on the ASPD.*
  - b) if the Moderator is otherwise prevented from serving on the ASPD (or if there is no Moderator and no current arrangements for an Acting Moderator) a replacement shall be appointed by the Officers of General Assembly, being either a minister resident in the province or nation or the Moderator of another synod.*
- 13. If, for a reason mentioned in paragraph 12 or because of prolonged absence or other incapacity, any member of the ASPD for a particular case is unable to serve as such for a particular case, or to continue until the case passes out of the hands of the Panel, a replacement for that case shall be appointed by the ARD from other members of the ASPD.*
- 14. If the ARD fails to call together the ASPD as required by paragraph 3 of the Framework, either of the other members of the ASPD may notify the General Secretary or the Moderator of the Assembly. That person, if satisfied that the ASPD ought to be called together, is to call upon the ARD to do this. Should the ARD not call together the ASPD within 48 hours of this requirement, the Officers of Assembly are to appoint a replacement for the ARD under paragraph 9 above and that replacement is to call together the ASPD.*

15. *If an Officer of the General Assembly is the accused minister, the complainant or an essential witness in the case, decisions required to be made by the Officers of Assembly shall be made without that person.*
16. *Decisions of the ASPD may be made by a majority if consensus cannot be achieved.*

**Appendix J Rules and consequences of suspension for a minister**

3. Any decision to suspend a minister must be communicated immediately by the Moderator making the decision, any member of the SSPD ASPD making the decision, or the SACD if the decision is made by a Commission. It must be accompanied by a brief statement of reasons. Suspension takes effect immediately upon notification by any method. If the decision is initially communicated orally, a note is to be made of the time of the communication, and written confirmation signed by the person notifying the suspension must be delivered to the minister as soon as practical thereafter.
4. Any notification of suspension must warn the minister concerned of the relevant provision of Schedule E or Schedule F, as appropriate, to the Basis of Union, and that any violation of that provision may form the subject of a separate disciplinary allegation or be taken into account by the SSPD ASPD or a Commission in its disposal of the allegations already made. It must also state that suspension does not, in itself, imply any view about the correctness of any allegations; nor will it affect the minister's remuneration or pension entitlement.
5. If a decision to terminate suspension is made by the SSPD ASPD or a Commission, it must be notified in writing as soon as practical, by a member of the SSPD ASPD or by the SACD as appropriate, and takes effect on such notification. Again, brief reasons must be given. If suspension terminates automatically under the provisions of this Process by virtue of any other event, written confirmation must be delivered to the minister as soon as practical after that event.

**Appendix L The work of Investigation Teams**

1. The material transmitted by the SSPD ASPD to the Senior Member of the Disciplinary Investigation Panel is to be passed on to the members of the Investigation Team as soon as they have accepted appointment. At the same time the accused minister is to be notified in writing by the SSPD ASPD of the nature of the allegations to be investigated.
6. If the Team becomes aware that criminal charges (or any other statutory investigation) are pending against an accused minister which cover the same facts as, or are otherwise relevant to, the disciplinary allegations, it shall suspend its work (subject to paragraph 7) until the outcome of the criminal prosecution or statutory investigation is known, save for monitoring any court proceedings and securing a certificate of conviction or acquittal when they conclude, or a concluding report from any other investigating body. Suspension of an investigation for this reason is to be reported to the SSPD ASPD if it happens during the Investigation Stage, or to the SACD if it happens during the Hearing Stage.



7. Criminal charges are considered pending from the time when a minister is arrested or remanded on such a charge or receives a summons from a court of criminal jurisdiction, or if the Team reasonably believes that the minister is a suspect in an investigation by the police or comparable public authority from which criminal charges or charges under another statutory procedure may follow. They remain pending during the currency of any appeal against conviction, though not in the event of an appeal against sentence only. Charges in Northern Ireland or abroad have similar effect to those pending in Great Britain or the Islands. A statutory investigation is considered pending from the time when the allegations about a minister are passed to a statutory authority (whether its functions are adjudicatory or investigative), until all statutory authorities have concluded their work or indicated that the Church's disciplinary process can proceed. However, the SSPD ASPD or Commission under whose authority the case is proceeding may authorise earlier resumption of the investigation or other steps under this Process if it is satisfied (a) that such steps would not unreasonably prejudice the statutory or criminal proceedings, and (b) that delaying in the Disciplinary Process until the conclusion of such proceedings would itself be prejudicial to the complainant, the accused minister or the Church.
8. The Team may at any time recommend to the SSPD ASPD or Commission under whose authority the case is proceeding that the accused minister be suspended or that any current suspension be lifted.
9. The report submitted by the Team to the SSPD ASPD at the close of the Investigation Stage will be in accordance with either Paragraph 5.2 or 5.3 of the Framework. A report in accordance with Paragraph 5.3 may include a recommendation for negotiation of an agreed caution, and the Team's initial position on what this caution should contain. If, after receiving safeguarding advice, the SSPD refers a report under Paragraph 5.2 back for reconsideration, the Team is to consider any comments made by the SSPD ASPD and any safeguarding advice available to it, before resubmitting the report.

**Appendix M                      Cautions**

1. An agreed caution is a possible outcome of the Investigation Stage in the circumstances set out in Paragraph 5.4 of the Framework. It may be recommended by the Investigation Team in its report to the SSPD ASPD, or proposed by the SSPD ASPD of its own motion after considering the report. Accused ministers cannot themselves initiate consideration of a caution as a procedural step, though an Investigation Team can pursue a minister's proposal if it thinks fit.
2. On the part of the accused, there are three elements involved in disposing of disciplinary allegations by a caution: he / she must admit the facts to which it relates, must satisfy the Investigation Team and SSPD ASPD of an appropriate level of remorse, and must undertake to observe the precautionary steps set out in the caution to obviate or minimise the risk of such conduct ever being repeated. The term 'negotiation' in the Disciplinary Process refers to a 'without prejudice' discussion (in the sense of paragraph 9 below) between the Investigation Team and the accused, designed to make clear whether these elements are present, and if so to agree the wording of the written caution to be proposed to the SSPD ASPD.

3. Before opening the possibility of a caution to formal negotiation, and again before settling the final form of any caution, the SSPD ASPD is to consider safeguarding advice. The SSPD ASPD must not allow negotiation of a caution if it considers at least one of the allegations so serious, for any reason, that a caution could not be an appropriate outcome if it were admitted or proved.
4. If the SSPD ASPD allows negotiation of a caution, it is to decide whether it will take the lead in proposing a caution text, seeking the agreement of the accused minister and the Investigation Team, or whether the Investigation Team is to take the lead, seeking the agreement of the accused minister and the SSPD ASPD.
5. Negotiation is then to proceed accordingly, with a view to drafting a written text which expresses the extent of the accused minister's admission of the allegations made (or such as the SSPD ASPD considers necessary to be disposed of before the Process can be ended) and the steps to be taken or conditions to be observed to remedy any harm and ensure the admitted misconduct is not repeated. Time limits may be attached in the caution text to these steps or conditions. The text should also express some degree of remorse, although this should be in the minister's own words and not the subject of negotiation.

**Appendix O Hearing Stage Timetable**

3. After the period for objections has expired, the members of the Commission shall agree amongst themselves for one member to serve as Convenor of the Commission. At the same time the SACD is to send to the ACD members the material transmitted by the SSPD ASPD and seek an indication from them of possible dates for the Hearing of the case. The SACD shall then select and notify a date from that range (not less than 35 days from the date of notification) on which a suitable venue will be available. The accused minister and the Investigation Team are to be consulted regarding a convenient date, with particular reference to the availability of any witnesses, but neither side shall be permitted to exclude any date absolutely. The availability of a representative of the professional legal advisers to the denomination shall also be taken into account.

**Appendix X Non-co-operation and resignation**

3. The minister must also not attempt to influence any complainant or potential witness through contact prior to any Hearing. It is preferable that any contact with potential witnesses which is necessary for the preparation of the minister's defence should take place through a neutral intermediary. If the SSPD ASPD (or, after reference to an ACD, the SACD in consultation with the Commission members) believes there is a serious danger of such interference or that safeguarding grounds exist to prohibit any direct contact with a given person, they may issue a written direction to the minister to that effect; in which case contact may only take place through a neutral intermediary.
4. If proposals for an agreed caution are opened to negotiation the accused minister may indicate that he or she is not prepared to take that route and would prefer the case to pass directly to the Hearing Stage. However if the minister enters into negotiation for a caution, it is expected that this will be done in good faith and that proposals by the SSPD ASPD or the Investigation Team will be responded to without delay.



7. A failure on the part of an accused minister to co-operate with the Process in any of the respects set out in paragraphs one, three, four or five above or to observe the restrictions imposed by a suspension as set out in the Basis of Union and Appendix J may, in an extreme case, amount to a contempt for the authority of the Church sufficient to found a fresh disciplinary allegation. If the Investigation Team takes this view it may include such conduct during the Investigation Stage in its report to the ~~SSPD~~ ASPD. Fresh allegations concerning conduct during the Hearing or Appeal Stage must be made in the same way as disciplinary allegations on an unrelated charge. Alternatively, without making an accused minister's conduct the subject of fresh allegations, the Investigation Team may refer to that conduct during its final submissions at the Hearing or appeal hearing, and the Commission may take it into account in any decision made regarding a sanction.

**Appendix Y Confidentiality, dissemination of information, and retention of records**

**Table one** [relevant content only]

a suspension is imposed before the <del>SSPD</del> or ASPD is called together	the Moderator
any decision of a <del>SSPD</del> or ASPD	the Moderator or ARD serving on that panel ...





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