**URC local church template statement on same-sex marriage**

The members of **XX** United Reformed Church in **XX** voted at a Church Meeting on **X date** to register their church building as a venue offering full marriage services to same-sex couples. [*If applicable add:* The registration was confirmed on **X date** and the church is now able to offer these marriage services.]

**X URC’s** vote was made possible after the United Reformed Church General Assembly (the denomination’s highest policy-making body) agreed in July 2016 that decisions about whether to allow the marriage of same sex couples would be made by individual congregations, within the different legal systems of parts of the United Kingdom.

The URC General Assembly decision in 2016 followed legislation in 2013 and 2014 bringing recognition for same-sex marriage into law in England, Wales and Scotland. The legislation stipulated that religious organisations would have to ‘opt in’ if they wished to offer these marriage services.

Background information

1. Same-sex partnerships were first recognised in law in the UK by the Civil Partnerships Act of 2004.
2. The United Reformed Church General Assembly of 2012 granted consent for local churches within the United Reformed Church to register civil partnerships in their buildings.
3. United Reformed churches that wish to offer marriage services to same-sex couples believe that all couples in committed relationships who wish to solemnise their marriage vows before God should have the right to do so.
4. United Reformed churches are not obliged to register their properties for same-sex marriages. It is a matter for local ‘opt-in’, if the local church so decides.