MINUTES OF THE MISSION COUNCIL HELD AT HIGH LEIGH CONFERENCE CENTRE, MARCH 21 -23 2012.

Mission Council was constituted with worship led by the Rev Dr James Coleman, chaplain to Moderator Mrs Val Morrison.

Mrs Morrison welcomed everyone to Mission Council and introduced new members.

Welcomes:
Miss Judith Haughton, North Western; Rev Jacky Embrey, West Midlands; Rev Jenny Mills, East Midlands; Mrs Margaret Marshall, West Midlands; Mrs. Margaret Telfer, Wessex alternate; Ms. Melanie Smith, chaplain to Michael Jagessar; Mr. Danny Pigeon, Northern; Mr Gary Leighton, co-moderator of FURY.

Apologies: Rev Richard Church, Moderator North Western synod; Rev Graham Jones, Rural Consultant; Rev Mary Thomas, Wessex; Rev John Gordon, Southern; Rev Douggie Burnett, South Western.

SESSION 1
Rev Richard Mortimer, Deputy General Secretary, explained the agenda alterations.
Mrs Morrison reminded Mission Council of the protocol passed at a previous Mission Council meeting and asked all present to abide by it:

" We ask those present to agree to abide by a protocol that we will not circulate information from, or opinions about, Mission Council on social networking sites, or by any other means which has potential for widespread dissemination, until after reports have been communicated by the Communications team."

12/01 Minutes of the Mission Council
The minutes of the meeting held at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, November 25 – 27, 2011 were agreed with one amendment: the heading of minute 11/39 should read "Task" not "Talk".

12/02
Matters Arising from the Minutes
There were none.

12/03
THINK TANK 1
Rev Dr Kirsty Thorpe introduced Paper C, Reshaping the Budget. She was assisted by Mr John Ellis, Hon. Treasurer, who explained the process for discussion outlined in Paper O. He responded to questions.

12/04
Nominations Committee
Rev John Durrell Convener of Nominations presented the report on Paper E.

Mr Durrell read the statement offered by the Nominating Group convened by the Rev. Roz Harrison and proposed the resolution:

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints the Revd Simon Walkling to serve as Moderator of the Synod of Wales from 1 September 2012 to 31 August 2019.
Approved by acclamation

Mr Durrell also proposed**:**

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appoints Mr John Ellis and Mr Andrew McKenzie to serve on the COIF Advisory Board for the Ethical Fund.
Approved by majority vote.

The URC Trust
Paper E1 contained the proposed membership of the URC Trust. Mr Durell moved:

Mission Council agrees that the proposed membership of the United Reformed Trust shall be presented to General Assembly for approval.
Rev Elizabeth Nash noted a lack of women among the nominees for the Trust. The resolution was approved by majority vote**.**

12/05
Staffing Advisory Group.

Rev Rowena Francis spoke to Paper Q (tabled later).
She explained the interim arrangements made for human resources provision at Church House and reported progress on the review of the central secretariat. An HR assistant post is soon to become vacant and will be filled as soon as practicable**.**

The Moderator thanked the committees for their reports and gave a number of notices relating to the Conference Centre**.**

SESSION 2

Mission Council began its Budget 2013 discussion in small groups in which one representative from each synod went to each of four groups for the opportunity to ask questions about the budgets of particular committees. Mission Council then reconvened to hear general points of feedback from the groups. One group's report was postponed for lack of time.

Rev Rachel Poolman, Chaplain to Rev Dr Kirsty Thorpe, led closing worship. She thanked Rev John Marsh and the musicians for preparing music to enhance the worship.

Thursday March 22nd

SESSION 3
Mission Council met in closed session.

SESSION 4
12/06 Social Impact of Poverty and Inequality in the UK – a challenge to the church.

Rev Tracey Lewis, Convener of the Mission Committee, invited Simon Loveitt to introduce paper J3. He invited Paul Morrison, Policy Advisor from the Methodist Church, to speak to Mission Council on behalf of the Joint Public Issues Team. Mission Council agreed that the paper should go to General Assembly.

12/07 Drones: Ethical Dilemmas in the Application of Military Force.

Tracey Lewis invited Paul Morrison to introduce Paper J4, which was still under preparation. Comments were offered to enable the completion of the work before General Assembly. Mr Morrison responded to questions and Mission Council commended the passage of the report to General Assembly.

The Moderator welcomed the Anglican Representative to Mission Council, Rev Lee Batson.

Dr Thorpe took the chair.

12/08 Paper L, L1
Human Sexuality Task Group.
Dr Thorpe welcomed visitors who had come for this item of business:
Rev John Waller, Human Sexuality Task Group; Rev Dr David Thompson, Law & Polity Advisory Group convener; Mr Augur Pearce, Law & Polity Advisory Group secretary.

Mr Waller spoke of the importance of the Commitment agreed in 2007. It was essential that representatives be well informed about it prior to attending Assembly in July. A booklet plus a CD is available and Task Group members would be prepared to assist synods in briefing their representatives.

The Government has initiated a twelve week period of consultation on gay marriage, but time is too short for a considered response from the Task Group. There is much need for thinking about human relationships in general, including friendship and colleagueship as well as a range of issues regarding sexuality. It was agreed that rather than attempt to convene a special group to make a submission to the consultation on behalf of the URC, individuals should be encouraged to make their own submissions.

Dr Thompson responded to questions regarding the registration of civil partnerships.

On behalf of the Task Group Mr. Waller invited Mission Council to decide whether the reports L and L1 and the draft resolution on the registration of Civil Partnerships in church premises (with its supporting text), should be taken to General Assembly in July. Mission Council agreed by consensus that Paper L should go to Assembly; Mission Council decided by agreement that L1 and its resolution should go to Assembly.

Mrs Morrison took the chair.

12/09 Finance Papers C, C1, C2
The Hon Treasurer Mr John Ellis presented the Finance Committee report.

1) He stated that the **accounts** would be audited in time for circulation to General Assembly. They show that the projected deficit of £790,000 would be an actual deficit of £470,000 due to a lower than anticipated number of stipendiary ministers.

2) Legacy Fund for general legacies. Incoming donations meant that £200,000 pa is available for grants towards innovative projects. A maximum of three years' funding could be given, not to exceed £50,000. Applications should be made through synods, where synod funding of such projects was not available.

3) Ministers' Pension Fund
The most recent Pension Fund valuation showed a deficit of £20m, slightly improved since the previous valuation in 2009 of £23m. Mr Ellis explained that currently £3m p.a. is put into the Fund by the Church, made up of £2m from M&M and £1m donations from synods. The latest valuation should mean it would be possible to reduce the amount sought from synods. He stated that the Pension Fund Board would not ask for any further changes to the fund rules or increase in contribution from ministers.

4) Paper C Financial Safety Net for Synods
Since 1972 synods have financed themselves. The question has arisen, should M&M Fund be used if a synod should need assistance? Following instructions from Mission Council and consultation with the synods, Paper C was presented to offer a possible process to Mission Council in the event of such assistance being needed.

An amendment was proposed to Resolution A within the paper to add the words, "in a common format".
Mission Council requests all Synods to prepare three year budget plans, in a common format, as a matter of routine and to copy them to the Finance Committee, with the first plan being provided not later than the end of 2013.
In the amended form, this resolution was passed by agreement**.**

Mission Council continued in closed session.

SESSION 5

12/09
Finance Paper C

5) Mr Ellis introduced Resolution B
Mission Council recommends that the General Assembly agrees to a financial Safety Net for Synods of the form outlined in paragraphs 15, 16, 18 and 19 in paper C.

Mr Ellis responded to comments and promised to add an additional paragraph indicating that the process would be a last resort to support a minimum level of service offered by the synods.

Mission Council approved by consensus that the resolution should go to Assembly.

Elizabeth Nash asked that the Moderators' Think Tank consider the ecclesiological issue which had emerged in this discussion as to whether the URC was a single Church or a federation of 13 synods. Mrs Morrison stated that this was already part of the Think Tank agenda.

6) Paper C1 Assembly Sunday Appeal

The Clerk asked Mission Council to consider the appropriateness of taking a decision on this matter on the grounds that only Assembly could approve Assembly-wide financial appeals. It was agreed that this difficulty would be overcome if the words, "acting on behalf of General Assembly," were inserted into the resolution.

Mr Ellis reported that the synod treasurers were unenthusiastic about the proposal and would prefer that any appeal should be for the Pension Fund rather than M&M. A number of comments were made both in support and against the proposal; Mission Council had opportunity to discuss the issue in small buzz groups.

Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly, noting the pressures on the M&M Fund which finances stipendiary ministry:

i) agrees that the offertory at the Assembly worship on Sunday 8 July should be a special Appeal devoted to the M&M Fund;

ii) and invites all local churches to share in this offering on Assembly Sunday.

Because Mission Council was clearly divided upon the matter, the resolution was not put.

It was asked that further work be done to educate local churches about the M&M fund.

7) Paper C2 URC Investment Committee Revised Terms

Mr Ellis proposed the resolution

Mission Council:

- **welcomes the progress made through the Church Investors Group to bring an informed and united Christian voice to bear on issues of ethical investment and company behaviour;**
- **discharges its Ethical Investment Advisory Group with thanks to all those who have contributed to its work and especially to Frank Kantor, its most recent Secretary;**
- **revises the Terms of Reference of the United Reformed Church Investment Committee to those shown in the Appendix;**
- **instructs that if an issue relating to ethical investment should arise which, for reasons of urgency, potential wider implications or otherwise, falls outside the remit of URCIC, the Deputy General Secretary should take responsibility for convening an appropriate process for addressing the issue.**

Resolved by consensus**.**

Remit in appendix 1

12/04 Nominations

Rev John Durrell explained that the term of service for the Honorary Treasurer differs from other posts. Mr Ellis was appointed in 2007 for a period of six years, with a possible extension of a four year period. Mr Ellis is prepared to continue for a second period. Mr Durrell proposed that General Assembly should be invited to appoint Mr Ellis as Hon Treasurer for a further period of service from 2013 – 2017. Mission Council responded with acclamation.

12/10 Paper H CYDO Contract Review

Mr Duncan Smith spoke to Paper H. Following discussion, he indicated that he was willing to accept an amendment to the resolution, which then read:

Mission Council instructs the General Secretariat to consider the issues relating to the employment of Children and Youth Development Officers (CYDOs) set out in Paper H and bring a report to a future meeting of the Mission Council.

Proposed by Duncan Smith
Seconded by Rev Peter Meek

There were a number of comments made, and clear agreement emerged that the matter should be addressed as a matter of urgency.
Resolved by agreement.

SESSION 5
12/03 THINK TANK 2. UPDATE

Feed- back from the final group was received.
Further questions/comments followed. Frances Brienen commented that there had been no introduction to the proposal on the previous day.

Rev Clare Downing noted that Mission Council had asked MCAG to devise a process but had been presented with a Moderators' Think Tank paper. She asked about the status of the Think Tank. Mr Ellis responded that MCAG had invited the Think Tank to prepare the paper; members of the Think Tank had themselves raised the question of who took responsibility for any further work after Mission Council. MCAG would need to address this.

In response to a question as to why no savings were proposed from the central secretariat and finance departments, the small group reported that it had run out of time.

SESSION 6
Mission Council continued in closed session.

Discussion then took place in Synod groups focussing on the budget.

On reconvening Dr Thorpe reminded Council of the Communication Protocol. She then announced the resignation of Mr Lawrence Moore as Moderator Elect for 2012 – 2014.

Evening worship was led by Dr Coleman.

FRIDAY March 22nd

SESSION 7
Holy Communion was celebrated by the Moderators and their chaplains. Mrs Morrison preached the sermon.

SESSION 8

Rev Richard Mortimer gave an update on the agenda and explained the procedure for the group work which was to follow. This addressed Papers A – A6; B; D; F – F12; G; M – M1; N; and P.

SESSION 9

12/11 Ministerial Status

Rev Craig Bowman, Secretary for Ministries, made a statement.
"There clearly is no clarity about the employment /office holder status of ministers in the United Reformed Church." He spoke of recent court cases and the experience of partner Churches, reflecting upon the degree to which this was relevant for the URC. The question may only finally be decided by a challenge in a Court of Law. In the meantime we assert that our ministers are Office Holders.

12/12 Safeguarding

Rev Richard Mortimer reported work on Safeguarding, both Children and Vulnerable adults, which has been ongoing. Legal comments were delayed and the policies are therefore not quite ready. He proposed that drafts would be sent to synods by the end of May 2012 asking for replies by end of July. The policies would then be brought to Mission Council in the Autumn.

Group Feedback

12/13 Paper A MIND Advisory Group

Groups felt there was little to add. An error will be corrected before publication for General Assembly. *Appendix 2*

12/14 Paper B Requirement in Education for Ministry Phase 3
Supportive comments were made, although the question of how to enforce mandatory training was raised. It would be more straightforward if ministers had employee status.

The resolution was commended to General Assembly for decision by consensus

12/15 Paper D Westminster College Appeal

Mission Council noted the good progress of the appeal. Some members wondered if there might be valuable artefacts languishing in other churches, the value of which might be realised.

12/16 Papers F & F1 Faith & Order Reference Group

Considerable discussion arose from the consideration of these papers. A new Faith and Order Committee would need to have the ability to initiate pieces of work rather than just reacting to requests from other groups. The first bullet point was amended to address this concern.

Resolution:

1. **Mission Council resolves to create an Assembly Standing Committee to be called The Faith and Order Committee, with as its current membership those individuals serving on the Mission Council Faith and Order Reference Group.**

2. **Mission Council agrees that the remit of the Faith and Order Committee shall be:**

- **To address issues of faith and order on behalf of the URC, either referred to it or on its own initiative.**
- **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.**

3. **Mission Council thanks and discharges its Faith and Order Reference Group.**

Resolved by agreement.

12/17 Paper G Listed buildings Advisory Group

It was noted that Ecclesiastical Exemption included the National Synod of Wales, although the synod had expressed a wish to withdraw from the exemption.

Both architectural heritage and artefacts warrant proper safeguarding. Care should be taken when considering disposal of such items. Musical instruments and libraries of sheet music should also be disposed of with care and the checklist was amended to include these items. It was further amended to recommend consultation with synods which could assist churches in gaining valuations where appropriate.

Mission Council is invited to:

- **receive the annual report of the Listed Buildings Advisory Group**
- **adopt the Checklist on the care and disposal of artefacts attached at Annex A and commend it to synods and churches**

Mission Council concurred with the report and adopted the checklist as amended.

12/18 Paper M Remit of Equal Opportunities committee

Questions were asked as to whether the Equal Opportunities Committee was still necessary or if it might be amalgamated with Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministries. A new committee might be called "Equality and Diversity." Mission Council would support such a change of name but left it to the committee to bring a proposal when they had considered the matter properly. A new remit was offered and amended.

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, resolves that the remit of the Equal Opportunities Committee shall be to remind the United Reformed Church that equality is enshrined in its theology, life and work and to challenge the practice of the United Reformed Church where appropriate.

This shall include:

1. **Taking action to assist in the development of equal opportunities throughout the United Reformed Church within the context of a diverse society.**
2. **The monitoring of the Assembly's equal opportunities policy and proposing updates when appropriate**
3. **The promoting of training programmes in equality and diversity.**
4. **Promoting, supporting and encouraging the United Reformed Church's contribution to equality in the wider life of our society**
5. **Reporting to General Assembly**

Resolved by consensus

Paper M1 Guidelines for responding to allegation of bullying or harassment.

Supportive comments were made and some suggestions of rewording offered. These were accepted by Rev Elizabeth Nash and agreed by Mission Council. When the Guidelines had been rewritten to incorporate these changes, they would be published on the website and reported to General Assembly.

12/19 Paper N Resourcing Ministry.

United Reformed Church ministers are given a stipend to enable them to make their work possible. Many churches do not understand this principle or the Ministry and Mission Fund which supports and finances it. Much education is required to enable all church members to value and contribute to the fund. The suggestion of making block grant to synods so that local deployment can be worked out is an interesting possibility. Synods would need expertise to manage a new situation; it could mean inter-synod sharing resources. Ministries Committee intends to bring the paper to General Assembly and further comments would be welcomed.

12/20 Paper P Participation of those aged over 26 in the URC

There was considerable sympathy shown towards the sentiments in the FURY paper and an acknowledgement that over 26's do not always find a place within the local churches after playing significant roles within their youth organisations. The resolution presented did not have the clarity of intent needed and Mission Council encouraged the FURY Moderators to engage with the Clerk to bring a clearly focussed proposal to General Assembly.

This concluded the result of the work done in small groups.

12/21 Paper J Ecumenical Review

Rev Tracey Lewis presented Paper J on behalf of the Mission Committee. The review group offered a series of recommendations which Mission Council agreed. For the sake of greater clarity it was suggested to insert the word "Synod" in number 3.

1. That following the decision to part fund the Ecumenical Officers in the Synods of Scotland and Wales, in recognition of the work they undertake on behalf of the General Assembly, the Secretary for Ecumenical Relations and the Ecumenical Officers in the Synods of Scotland and Wales should be a recognised team of staff with expertise in ecumenism. They should be in regular contact with each other to exchange information, work together when appropriate and offer peer support (TofR 3 see appendix 2).

2. That priority should be given to re-establishing the Network of Synod Ecumenical Officers (SEO) augmented with Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEO) given the changes in synods following the demise of districts. The primary function of the Network should be to enable the resourcing of local expressions of ecumenism through the sharing of information and resources. The network should be encouraged to utilise a variety of communication tools and should meet face to face annually. (TofR2)

3. That the Synod Moderators should take note of the desirability of establishing a consistency of ecumenical practice across the 13 synods, in response to concerns raised by our ecumenical partners who find that different synods operate different policies in key areas of ecumenical engagement. Maintaining a good working relationship between Moderator, SEOs , DEOs and the Secretary for Ecumenical Relations be a key mechanism for ensuring the consistency of practice. (TofR2)

4. That as vision2020 is rolled out through the Councils of the Church, including the General Assembly indicators, links are made with the URC's three Ecumenical Principles through the sharing of case studies and stories. These links should be encouraged across the full range of vision2020 statements, not just that relating to Christian partnerships. There will be an ecumenical dimension to the fulfilment of many of the indicators presented to General Assembly. (TofR1)

5. That the Mission Committee works with the Faith and Order Reference Group on their work exploring 'what kind of church is the URC?' and 'where is God calling us?' ensuring there is input about emerging church models and fresh expressions of church. The Network of SEOs and DEOs should also be encouraged to share the pattern of ecumenism that is emerging locally as part of the process. (TofR1)

6. That responsibility for European Church partnerships becomes part of work of the Secretary for World Church Relations and that these partnerships are reviewed within the World Church Relations review. It is noted that currently there is no financial support given to these partnerships from the Ecumenical Relations budget. (TofR3)

7. That with regard to the international ecumenical organisations of which the URC is a member, the URC, through the Secretary for Ecumenical Relations, explore possibilities of shared representation (including sharing the costs of sending representatives) with some of our ecumenical partners as appropriate. For example, in the past The Church of Scotland and the URC had some shared representation at WARC with shared reporting back to both denominations and the representative to the WCC Central Committee from Wales represents all the Covenanted Churches. This type of model could be appropriate for representation with Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE), Conference of European Churches (CEC), World Council of Churches (WCC) and World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC).

8. That with regard to the ecumenical instruments in the three nations (ACTS, Cytun and CTE) the membership donation is continued to be paid from the General Assembly Ecumenical Relations budget and that further consultation is undertaken concerning the costs borne by Synods. For example, Scotland and Wales determine their own representation to ACTS/Cytun committees/working groups and meet the associated costs; in England, synods contribute to the costs of Intermediate Bodies; the General Assembly Ecumenical Relations budget meets the costs of representation to CTE committees/working groups. The membership subscription and costs of involvement in Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) would continue to be met from the General Assembly Ecumenical Relations budget.

12/22 Paper J1 Racial Justice and the United Reformed Church – An Unfinished Agenda, and J2 Multicultural church – intercultural habit.

Rev Dr Michael Jagessar, secretary for Racial Justice and Multicultural Ministries, explained that the two papers are prepared for General Assembly. Seven years on, contexts have changed. It is time to reframe our aspirations and how we live them out. Consequently a newly named focus: “multicultural church, intercultural habit” is proposed to underscore the on-going journey.

SESSION 10

12/23 Paper K Departmental structures at United Reformed Church House and Mission Council effectiveness.

The General Secretary, Rev Roberta Rominger, reported the feedback from the small groups which had met the previous evening. In addition to their financial recommendations, they had offered a number of comments. The following comments had come from more than one group.

Wider Issues:

- General Assembly/ Mission Council/Synod Structures
- Modernise communication techniques
- Modernise training techniques
- Concerns about URC fragmentation
- Buildings stock

Be more radical:

- End/radically review Mission Committee
- More cross-denominational working

- Find savings in infrastructure General Secretariat/Finance
- Deeper staff cuts
- More savings in Communications and Editorial
- Leave Church House

Process

- Should have started with more on "Who we are"/ our purpose
- Needed more time and listening in between Mission Councils
- Need to ensure reductions are reversible.

She assured Mission Council that MCAG would consider how best these suggestions could be taken forward. She then introduced Paper K which concerned the unfinished business of Assembly and Mission Council mandated reviews. On behalf of MCAG she proposed:

a) **Mission Council believes that the current organisational structure operating within Church House provides an adequate framework for the moment and places the responsibility for initiating any proposals for reorganisation with the Mission Council Advisory Group on the advice of the Moderators' Think Tank.**
b) **Mission Council believes that the review of the structures and the workings of Mission Council are best postponed to a time to be determined within the process of medium term planning now underway.**
c) **Mission Council resolves to report these decisions to General Assembly 2012.**

Resolved by consensus

12/03 THINK TANK 3

A good level of unanimity had emerged from the synod discussion groups meeting on the previous evening. A 14th group of some committee conveners and staff secretaries had submitted a counter-proposal to Paper O, but this was not considered due to lack of time.

The Think Tank members offered a resolution which summarised the areas of agreement of the synod discussion groups. However, objection was made to the level of detail it contained, with the recommendation that Mission Council should offer targets for Assembly approval but should leave the committees to work out how these targets might best be achieved.

Discussion was adjourned in order that Paper J5 could be considered at its appointed time. Mrs. Morrison took the chair.

12/24 Paper J5 Campaign of Radical Welcome

Rev Tracey Lewis invited Rev Roberta Rominger to speak to paper J5 and bring news of the campaign. Mrs Rominger spoke of the "Relaunch +1" events which had taken place in a number of synods. She thanked Fiona Thomas and Gil Nichol for all the work they had done and also the advocates in the synods who were helping to train Companions. She stated that 509 churches were 'exploring' and that there had been 50 requests for companions. The Steering

Group was ready to hold back the launch until September to enable churches to opt in and covenant.

Comments from the floor indicated considerable unease about the readiness or even the wisdom of launching the campaign at all. A number of Synod meetings had displayed lack of enthusiasm and the Rev Howard Sharp presented a resolution from the March meeting of the Mersey Synod.

"Mersey Synod recommends to Mission Council that due to lack of support the ZI Campaign be withdrawn and no more money spent".

Further discussion followed which showed broad support for the Mersey resolution. However, several speakers indicated that much good had been achieved because churches were actually discussing how to be more welcoming.

Rev Clare Downing and Rev Paul Whittle presented a form of words for a new resolution. It was agreed that the Mersey resolution should be amended by withdrawal of its text and substitution of the text offered by Mrs Downing and Mr Whittle.

Mission Council strongly encourages all churches to continue to work on developing their radical welcome, recognising the synergy with Vision2020 outcomes but discontinues the ZI Campaign with immediate effect.
Following further comments the resolution was passed by agreement. The Steering Group was asked to make provision for the handover of materials so that the churches' work on radical welcome could continue.

Mrs Lewis expressed thanks to the Steering Group. Noting how warmly some 500 local churches had embraced the concept of radical welcome, she said: "If it had not been for the work of the ZI steering group, which has been brave and risky on occasion, many would not have been introduced to radical welcome, which is bringing health and life into our churches. Let us remember this project has brought tremendous riches to our Church."

The Rev Fiona Thomas, member of the Steering Group and secretary for education and learning, reminded the gathering that there had been many affirmations of the quality of the toolkit created for those volunteering to act as Companions to churches. She also pointed to the affirmation shown of the value of the companion model, and stressed that these resources would be lost unless they were safely located in a specific department of the Church. She undertook to ask the Steering Group at its final meeting to discuss how to make these materials more widely available.

The Moderator proposed that:

Mission Council thanks the ZI Steering Group for all their work over the lengthy time they have been operating.
Resolved by consensus.

12/03 THINK TANK 3 – continued.

Mr Ellis presented a simplified version of the Think Tank's resolution. The introductory clause was amended to give fuller background information.

A. Mission Council, noting the budget priorities discussions at its November 2011 and March 2012 meetings, which all committee conveners have heard, recommends to General Assembly that :

- **the Education and Learning Committee reduces its net expenditure by at least £200K for its 2013 budget;**
- **the Ministries Committee reduces its net expenditure by at least £60K for its 2013 budget;**
- **the Mission Committee reduces its net expenditure by at least £150K for its 2013 budget;**
- **the Assembly Arrangements Committee reduces its net expenditure by at least £50K for its 2013 budget;**
- **the Youth and Children's Work Committee reduces its net expenditure by at least £100K for its 2013 budget;**
- **the Communications and Editorial Committee reduces its net expenditure by at least £40K for its 2013 budget.**

Resolved by consensus

Mr Ellis proposed:

B. Mission Council thanks the Assembly Committees for the careful and professional work undertaken so far and requests them to continue work towards producing a draft 2013 budget based on the recommendations in Resolution A by the beginning of July 2012.

Resolved by consensus

Members of Council were reminded that Paper O should remain confidential as it was for discussion at Mission Council and not for general publication. Efforts would be made to contact members who had already left the meeting to inform them.

12/25 Resignation of Mr Lawrence Moore, Moderator-elect of General Assembly
Dr Thorpe read the following statement.

On 22 March a meeting of the United Reformed Church's Mission Council accepted the resignation of Mr Lawrence Moore as Moderator-elect of the United Reformed Church General Assembly 2012-14.

Mr Moore is director of the Windermere training centre and was elected to the role of Moderator of General Assembly in 2010 at the Church's General Assembly in Loughborough. The United Reformed Church elects two assembly moderators who serve together for two years, one a minister and the other a lay person. Church rules specify that a moderator of

General Assembly serves until their successor is inducted. As a result Mrs Val Morrison, the current lay moderator, will continue in post until 2014. All existing moderatorial diary commitments and visits will be covered by a serving or past moderator.

She added that it was the intention to inform all churches and ministers of this information as quickly as possible.

20/25 Thanks and Farewells.
Mrs Morrison thanked all those who had completed their term of service on Mission Council:

Rev Alistair Smeaton, North Western; Rev Sally Thomas, North Western; Mrs. Barbara Bruce, Scotland; Rev Ed Cox, Mission Committee Convener; Rev Roger Paul, Church of England observer; Rev John Marsh, Immediate Past GA Moderator; Rev James Breslin, Assembly Clerk; Mr Simon Loveitt, Joint Public Issues Team; Rev Rachel Poolman and Rev Dr James Coleman, Chaplains to General Assembly Moderators

Closing worship was led by the chaplain.

Mission Council meets next in joint session with the Methodist Council October 17th – 19th 2012. Venue to be announced.

Appendix 1

URC Investment Committee Terms of Reference

1 The terms of reference of the United Reformed Church Investment Committee (URCIC) shall be as follows:

(i) The Committee shall provide guidance to the URC Trust and the URC Ministers' Pension Trust in relation to all matters relating to the investment of the assets held by these Trusts;

(ii) The Committee shall secure advice and support from investment specialists to enable clear recommendations to be made to the Boards of these Trusts;

(iii) The Committee shall take decisions on behalf of the Boards, subject to the authority of the Boards and within guidelines for delegation agreed with the Boards;

(iv) The Committee shall organise such training for its members as will enable it to carry out its duties in a professional manner;

(v) The Committee shall work with ethical investment guidelines agreed by the General Assembly and give advice on ethical investment matters to Mission Council.

2 The composition of the URCIC shall be as follows:

(a) Ex officio members:
- (i) the Chair of the URC Trust or another Director;
- (ii) the Chair of the URC Ministers' Pension Trust Board or another Director;
- (iii) the Treasurer of the United Reformed Church;
- (iv) the Treasurer of Westminster College;
- (v) the Convener of the Pensions Executive.

(b) A nominee of the Mission Committee

(c) Five members appointed by the General Assembly for four year terms, renewable once.

(d) Any additional members co-opted by the Committee

(e) Staff in attendance:
- (i) the Chief Finance Officer;
- (ii) the Clerk of the URC Trust and Secretary to the URC Ministers' Pension Trust, who shall act as Secretary of URCIC.

(f) A Convener appointed by the General Assembly from amongst those in groups (a) to (d), with the agreement of both Trust Boards, and who if not already a member, will attend each Board as an adviser.

3 A quorum for Committee decisions shall be a total of five members drawn from groups (a), (b) and (c) above.

Appendix 2 The Structure Proposed Changes

Mission Council presents the following amendments to the Structure for adoption by General Assembly meeting in July 2012. The proposed changes are shown in red.

Synod Functions

2(4)(A)(xvii) where the Synod, acting through its Moderator (or his/her duly appointed deputy) in accordance with either the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church (where the issues relate to perceived disciplinary breach(es)) or the Incapacity Procedure contained in Section P of the Manual (where the issues relate to perceived incapacity as defined in the Incapacity Procedure), considers that a minister or Church Related Community Worker is not or may not be exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E or Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II to the Basis of Union, as the case may be, to take the appropriate one of the following courses namely (i) to refer the case of that minister or Church Related Community Worker into the Disciplinary Process in the manner prescribed by that Process and to act in accordance with the provisions thereof as regards the suspension of the minister or Church Related Community Worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Process (reference to be made to Paragraph 7.5 of the Structure to ascertain the point at which a Disciplinary case shall commence) or (ii) to follow the Consultation Procedure prescribed by the Incapacity Procedure which could in its turn lead to the case of the minister or Church Related Community Worker being referred into the Incapacity Procedure and to act in accordance with the provisions thereof as regards the suspension of the minister or Church Related Community Worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Procedure (reference to be made to Paragraph 6.5 of the Structure to ascertain the point at which a case shall commence within the Incapacity Procedure) (the transitional overlap which occurs when a case is referred back from the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure leading to the commencement of a case within the other of them shall be a permitted extension of the Function).

2(4)(A)(xviii) to ensure that, where an Assembly Commission or an Appeals Commission following a Hearing under the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church or a Review Commission or an Appeals Review Commission following a Hearing under the Incapacity Procedure contained in Section P of the Manual appends guidance to its decision to delete the name of the minister or Church Related Community Worker from the respective Roll, any such guidance is brought fully to the attention of those responsible for exercising oversight of the minister or Church Related Community Worker and any others who might in the future be identified as being proper and appropriate persons to receive such information;

2(4)(A)(xxi) to consider the resignation of ministers or Church Related Community Workers not currently the subject of any case within the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O and in consultation with the moderator of the Synod to decide upon appropriate action;

2(4)(B) Remove this paragraph altogether.

2(4)(C) This paragraph now becomes 2(4)(B) and is amended to read as follows:

2(4)(C) No appeal shall lie against the decision by a Synod to initiate the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O or the Incapacity Procedure contained in Section P in respect of any minister or Church Related Community Worker under Function (xvii).

Area Functions

2(5)(A)(viii) to consider the resignation of ministers or Church Related Community Workers not currently the subject of any case within the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O and in consultation with the moderator of the Synod to decide upon appropriate action (see also Paragraphs 2(4)(A)(xxi) and 2(6)(A)(xviii));

2(5)(A)(xviii) to ensure that, where an Assembly Commission or an Appeals Commission following a Hearing under the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church or a Review Commission or an Appeals Review Commission following a Hearing under the Incapacity Procedure contained in Section P of the Manual appends guidance to its decision to delete the name of the minister or Church Related Community Worker from the respective Roll, any such guidance is brought fully to the attention of those responsible for exercising oversight of the minister or Church Related Community Worker and any others who might in the future be identified as being proper and appropriate persons to receive such information;

2(5)(B) Remove this paragraph altogether.

General Assembly Functions

2(6)(A)(xi) *[Changes to this paragraph were approved under Resolution 9 of General Assembly 2010 and require ratification by General Assembly 2012.]*

2(6)(A)(xviii) to decide upon questions regarding the inclusion on the Roll of Ministers and the Roll of Church Related Community Workers of the United Reformed Church which have been previously considered and transmitted with recommendations by synods (but excluding any matter which is dealt with in accordance with the Disciplinary Process referred to in Paragraph 7 of the Structure).

2(6)(A)(xxiii) in the absence of any reference into either the Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church (where the issues relate to perceived disciplinary breach(es)) or the Incapacity Procedure contained in Section P of the Manual (where the issues relate to perceived incapacity as defined in the Incapacity Procedure) by the appropriate Synod (the case of any minister who is the General Secretary, the Deputy General Secretary or a Moderator of Synod being necessarily dealt with under this provision) and where the General Assembly (or Mission Council on its behalf) (acting through the Deputy General Secretary or his/her duly appointed deputy) considers that a minister or Church Related Community Worker is not or may not be exercising his/her ministry in accordance with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E or Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II to the Basis of Union, as the case may be, to take the appropriate one of the following courses namely (i) to refer the case

of that minister or Church Related Community Worker into the Disciplinary Process in the manner prescribed by that Process and to act in accordance with the provisions thereof as regards the suspension of the minister or Church Related Community Worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Process (reference to be made to Paragraph 7.5 of the Structure to ascertain the point at which a Disciplinary case shall commence) or (ii) to follow the Consultation Procedure prescribed by the Incapacity Procedure which could in its turn lead to the case of the minister or Church Related Community Worker being referred into the Incapacity Procedure and to act in accordance with the provisions thereof as regards the suspension of the minister or Church Related Community Worker concerned pending the resolution of the matter under that Procedure (reference to be made to Paragraph 6.5 of the Structure to ascertain the point at which a case shall commence within the Incapacity Procedure) (the transitional overlap which occurs when a case is referred back from the Disciplinary Process or the Incapacity Procedure leading to the commencement of a case within the other of them shall be a permitted extension of the Function);

2(6)(A)(xxvi) without detracting from the general delegatory powers held by Mission Council, to give specific authority to Mission Council acting in the name of General Assembly to make with immediate effect such changes to any part of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process contained in Section O of the Manual or the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure contained in Section P as are recommended to Mission Council by the MIND Advisory Group (or such other Group or Committee as may in the future perform the functions of that Group), all such changes to be reported to the next meeting of the General Assembly.

2(6)(A)(xxvii) The existing Function (xxvi) becomes (xxvii)

2(6)(B) Remove this paragraph.

5. APPEALS

5(1) Remove this Paragraph.

5(2) This Paragraph to become Paragraph 5 and the opening words to read:

5. "The procedure for dealing with references and appeals falling outside Paragraph 6 (Incapacity Procedure) and Paragraph 7 (Disciplinary Process) is as follows:-"

The remaining 4 unnumbered paragraphs under the existing 5(2) are unchanged.

6. INCAPACITY PROCEDURE

S.1 After the words **"…consider that s/he is…"** insert the word "not" and after the words **"(in the case of CRCWs"** insert a closing bracket.

6.2 Add the following words at the end of this paragraph:

"…, and once so initiated that case shall be resolved in accordance with the Incapacity Procedure and not under Paragraph 5 above."

6.3, 6.4 These paragraphs are unchanged.

6.5 Add a new paragraph 6.5 as follows:

6.5 A case shall commence within the Incapacity Procedure when the Synod Moderator or the Deputy General Secretary shall send or deliver to the Secretary of the Review Commission* a Certificate of Entry* and a Commencement Notice* (the expressions marked * being defined in the Incapacity Procedure).

7. Insert new Section 7 as follows:

7. DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

7.1 The Provisions of this Paragraph 7 shall apply to cases proceeding under the Disciplinary Process (Section O of the Manual of the United Reformed Church) where the person responsible for initiating it in respect of a particular minister or Church Related Community Worker considers that s/he is or may not be exercising the ministry of word and sacrament or the ministry of church related community work as the case may be in accordance (in the case of ministers) with Paragraph 2 of Schedule E of the Basis of Union and (in the case of CRCWs) with Paragraph 2 of Schedule F, Part II thereto and perceives the issue as a disciplinary one not falling within Paragraph 6 above.

7.2 No right of appeal shall lie against any decision taken in accordance with Paragraph 7.1 above to initiate the Disciplinary Process in respect of any minister or CRCW, and once so initiated that case shall be resolved in accordance with the Disciplinary Process and not under Paragraph 5 above.

7.3 The decision reached in any particular case (whether or not on appeal) under the Disciplinary Process shall be made in the name of the General Assembly and shall be final and binding.

7.4 As soon as any minister or CRCW becomes the subject of a case under the Disciplinary Process, none of the Councils of the Church shall exercise any of its functions in respect of that minister or CRCW in such a manner as to affect, compromise or interfere with the due process of that case provided that the provision of such pastoral care as shall be deemed appropriate shall not be regarded as a breach of this paragraph.

7.5.1 In any case in which the Caution Stage (as defined in the Disciplinary Process) is invoked, that case shall begin with the calling in of the Synod Appointees as described in the Disciplinary Process.

7.5.2 In any case in which the Caution Stage is not invoked, that case shall begin with the calling in of the Mandated Group as described in the Disciplinary Process.