

Paper 13

Mission committee
Greenbelt 2016 and 2017

United Church 2016
Church 2016
Reformed Church 2016
Church 2016



Paper I3

Mission committee

Greenbelt 2016 and 2017

Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Steve Summers steve.summers@urc.org.uk
Action required	Information is provided to circulate to local churches
Draft resolution(s)	None

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	To inform members about the United Reformed Church's association with Greenbelt and to build support for this involvement
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United Reformed Church has become an Associate Sponsor of Greenbelt for 2016 and, ideally, for 2017. • The Greenbelt Festival is from 26-29 August 2016 and 25-28 August 2017. • Individuals and local churches are invited to participate with the 'URC at Greenbelt' project.
Previous relevant documents	Mission Council discussions in 2014-15, most recently minute 15/3 from Mission Council May 2015
Consultation has taken place with...	Mission committee, communications department, General Secretariat, Chief Finance Officer

Summary of Impact

Financial	This project is fully-funded by a Legacy Fund grant.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	This involvement will expand our contacts and witness, in the context of a well-known and widely-supported Christian festival.

Greenbelt 2016 and 2017

1. Greenbelt is a collision of the arts, faith and justice. Engaged with culture, inspired by the arts, sustained by faith, Greenbelt aspires to be an open generous community reimagining the Christian narrative for the present moment. This vision is primarily lived out annually, over the August Bank Holiday weekend with a festival and rich programme of music, visual and performing arts, spirituality, comedy, and talks and discussion. The diversity of content not only demonstrates the commitment to the arts, faith and justice, but also to the underlying values of tolerance, dialogue and hope. Greenbelt's history is firmly rooted within a Christian tradition which is world-affirming, and politically and culturally engaged. The festival is family-friendly celebration, inclusive and accepting of all, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, background or belief. Since 1974, Greenbelt has equipped and re-energised Christians to be imaginative and effective disciples in local communities. The festival is held this year from 26 to 29 August at Boughton House near Kettering, Northamptonshire. Please see: www.greenbelt.org.uk for more information.
2. Greenbelt and the United Reformed Church have signed an agreement, making the denomination an Associate Sponsor of the Greenbelt festival for the first time. The partnership is a natural fit, building on the URC's rich Nonconformist history of exploration of radical Christian faith and working for justice, and the dynamic and creative energy of the Greenbelt festival.
3. Signing the agreement on 13 January 2016, Francis Brienen, The URC's Deputy General Secretary (Mission), said: 'Greenbelt is a joyful celebration and exploration of what the future of the Church might be, and how local churches can live out their mission as counter-cultural communities. We're excited by the creative potential of working together.'
4. Paul Northup, Greenbelt's Creative Director, said: 'I am delighted to begin this new partnership. Greenbelt and the URC share a dynamic faith that is creative, questioning and engages with justice.'
5. The aims of the 'URC at Greenbelt' project include:
 - to generously invest in, join with and contribute to a festival which has an outstanding and unique track-record for encouraging and equipping Christians with their discipleship and ministry for more than four decades. Greenbelt continues to provide a crucible for faith and praxis where people return home enthused and envisioned to develop their local churches, neighbourhoods and communities.
 - to accompany Greenbelt as we collectively explore God's mission for today, envision how we may be and do Church more imaginatively and discover how disciples of Christ might live out their faith more effectively.
 - to encourage, gather together and strengthen the sense of community for the numerous URC members who have been part of the Greenbelt movement for many years and also to provide a recognisable presence for URC members new to Greenbelt.

6. The potential outcomes for the 'URC at Greenbelt' project include:
 - a higher profile for the URC and increased recognition for its creative contribution to Church and society, especially around issues of justice and peace, and particularly to an audience who tend to be seeking a radical edge to their discipleship and ministry.
 - closer and stronger relationships between local churches and Church House by actively involving 'URC Greenbelters' in this project.
 - increased understanding about particular aspects of the URC e.g. CRCW ministry, *Reform*, Commitment for Life, Pilots, CreateTalk, Resource Centres for Learning, TLS, Discipleship, etc.
7. The theme for the 'URC at Greenbelt' project is 'Scrap the Church?', deliberately building upon the Windermere Online festival exploring the future of the church, which is in turn a follow-on from the 'It just Works' gathering. This project intends to connect with the Vision 2020 Community Partnerships initiative to gather stories about churches working in communities and in their neighbourhoods and will link with the evolving Missional Discipleship programme.
8. URC-organised activities at Greenbelt 2016 will include a 'scrap church' art installation that will be intentionally taken apart over the weekend and from its place a new creation will emerge; a 'Flash mob liturgy' with a number of 'eucharistic moments' happening around the village throughout the weekend, depicting different stories from the gospel that have eucharistic overtones; a discussion panel exploring the theme; 'Cake & debate' as part of the youth programme; and the 'URC Lounge' where people can come and relax, meet with others, look at resources, attend workshops and discuss key issues around the theme.
9. Individuals and local churches are encouraged to email the project coordinator: steve.summers@urc.org.uk if they would like to know more about this project, or be part of the planning team, or be part of the URC volunteer team at the festival itself, or simply expect to attend this year's festival. The URC's communications department has created a URC Greenbelt event on their Facebook page where the latest information about the 'URC at Greenbelt' project will be posted.
10. A short presentation about Greenbelt will be given to Mission Council.