

Day three – 21 March

Session nine

Paper L1: URC Trust, report on properties

The Revd John Proctor, General Secretary of the United Reformed Church, presented Paper L1, which provided a report on the remedial works at Church House and on the steps taken towards the sale of the Windermere Centre building. The paper was received with no discussion.

Paper L2: The Church's risk review process

Mrs Jane Baird, Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources), introduced this paper, updating Mission Council on recent work and thinking surrounding the URC's risk review process. She explained that, over the years, the risk review register has become a cumbersome document and the time had come to simplify it. A panel, chaired by Mr Alan Yates, has been working to review and improve the register. Paper L2 updates Mission Council on progress, outlining their proposals to bring a new approach to the Church's risk management processes. The refreshed risk register is scheduled to be fully implemented in August 2019.

There was a short discussion with two specific questions from the synods: Might the refreshed register be made available to the 13 synods, and can synods also move from a one-year to a two-year cycle, as proposed in the paper relating to the denominational register. Mr Yates replying on behalf of the review group, said that both things were possible.

The resolution was passed by consensus.

Paper D2: Education and Learning, discipleship development

The Revd Professor Neil Messer, convenor of the education and learning committee, presented Paper D2 which introduced the committee's strategy for discipleship development.

Professor Messer spoke of the strategy's broad aims:

- Creating opportunities for church members to have access to a group within which they can share experiences, enrich life, learn and gain confidence.
- Providing online and face to face opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to have the chance to develop their faith; ensuring that discipleship is accessible to people of all ages with a range of needs, including childcare
- Exploring how to increase the awareness and confidence of members and leaders in mentoring roles
- Sharing resources, not just funding, but people, buildings and materials.

A detailed and lively discussion followed which included a debate on how the strategy would be funded; how the proceeds from the sale of the Windermere Centre building could be used for it; where mentors might be found; and the ecumenical impact of the strategy.

Point B in the draft resolution was amended to – Endorses the plans for further financial work, to consider the use of both the capital and income for the sale of the Windemere Centre, by the

education and learning committee, finance committee, and resource-sharing task group in conjunction with the synods.

Each resolution in the paper was passed by consensus.

Members were also told that congregations, interested in taking part in Stepwise at this early stage, could email their queries to stepwise@urc.org.uk

Paper P1: Complaints policy

Michael Hopkins introduced paper P1, reminding Mission Council that this was a follow-up to the paper and lengthy discussion held at the last meeting of the Mission Council. There were no questions, the item went straight to decision making and was passed by consensus.

Paper Z1: Criteria for doing things well

Paper Z1 came back to the floor of Mission Council on session nine, after it had been to facilitation.

Rosie Martin, on behalf of the facilitation group, introduced new wording for part (iii) of the resolution. After a short and lively discussion on the new wording, it was replaced by new wording to (ii) as follows: 'Synods, Mission Council and General Assembly be asked to consider the paper in relation to their work.'

There was a short discussion, with some members keen to alter the wording and others certain that such resolutions are unnecessary and over bureaucratic.

The resolutions were passed, accepting disagreement; the facilitation group were thanked for their work.

Paper P2: Law and polity advisory group, the standards for eldership

Following on from discussions on day two, the Revd Professor David Thompson, convenor of the law and polity advisory group, sought support to bring to General Assembly a modified version of the question in Paper P2, to be added to schedule B, Basis of Union. This was agreed.

Session nine concluded the business of Mission Council, Session ten will include farewells, thanks and closing worship.