



## Listed Buildings Advisory Group

### 1. Convenership

At the November 2010 meeting of the Listed Buildings Advisory Group, Hartley Oldham, who had convened the Group since 1994 indicated his wish to retire from the position. Noting that he had led the group with distinction since the introduction of the Ecclesiastical Exemption scheme, the Group expressed its warm appreciation: 16 years represented a substantial piece of service to the group and for the United Reformed Church.

The group resolved to nominate Peter West to Mission Council for appointment as Convener of the Listed Buildings Advisory Group.

### 2. United Reformed Church Control document:

#### a. Procedure

Currently the procedure states:

#### 5. Lodging and Processing of the Application

5.1 In order to apply for consent for the carrying out of any Works under this Statement of Procedure, the applicants shall:

5.1.1 Submit to the Secretary of the S.P.C. a completed application form in Form 1 and

5.1.2 At the same time deliver to the Secretary of the L.B.A.C. a copy of the completed application form, together with copies of all necessary designs, photographs, reports and documents giving particulars of the proposed Works and

However, in light of changed government policy which required pre-application consultation in all listed buildings applications, paragraph 5.1 should be deleted and the following inserted:

5.1 In order to apply for consent for carrying out of any Works under this statement of procedure, the Applicants, after the necessary pre-application procedures shall:

#### b. Appeals

The procedure governing the operation of the Ecclesiastical Exemption arrangements for listed church buildings contains a procedure for managing appeals against Synod decisions.

Currently the appeals procedure states:

*“4.4. The name and address of the Appeals Secretary shall appear in the Annual Church Year Book and on the Church’s website. “*

This formulation is proving inflexible in practice and it is proposed that the paragraph be extended to read:

*“4.4. The name and address of the Appeals Secretary shall appear in the Annual Church Year Book and on the Church’s website, or failing that from the office of the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church.”*

### **3. National Synod of Wales: Withdrawal from Ecclesiastical Exemption**

The Listed Buildings Advisory Group has noted with regret the decision of the National Synod of Wales to withdraw from the Ecclesiastical Exemption arrangements.

### **4. The disposal of fittings, furnishings and other historical objects from churches**

The group understands that the United Reformed Church, unlike other organisations with similar responsibilities, has no protocol guiding the disposal of objects of historical significance from churches, after appropriate research and record-making. These could include communion silver, war memorials or furniture, some of which may have intrinsic value, others historical significance.

They note this as a matter of concern, and propose to consider how local churches might be supported in appreciating the historical significance of such objects, and in making suitable records before disposal.

### **5. General**

The Listed Buildings Advisory Group which normally meets twice a year continues to co-ordinate a common approach within the United Reformed Church to the application of Ecclesiastical Exemption. Its officers and other members provide the link between the Church and other organisations, in particular English Heritage and the Department of Culture Media and Sport ensuring a two-way transmission of information, to the benefit of the churches.

The time is right to formalise the Group’s role and adopt terms of reference which recognise the developing prominence of heritage matters in the life of the Church and in public life generally. The proposed Terms are attached. (Annex A)

Mission Council is invited to:

- Note the retirement on 23 November 2010 of Hartley Oldham from the position of convener of the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee after sixteen years outstanding service to the Group.
- Confirm the nomination of Peter West for appointment as Convener with effect from 23 November 2010 (this will be dealt with in the Nominations Committee Report)
- Confirm the changes to the United Reformed Church Procedure for the control of works to buildings detailed at 2 above.
- Confirm Terms of Reference for the Listed Buildings Advisory Group as set out at Annex A.

# Annex A

The United Reformed Church  
Listed Buildings Advisory Group

## Terms of reference

### Listed Buildings Advisory Group

As a group accountable to Mission Council:

#### Role

- To advise Mission Council and Synods on operational matters relating to the Ecclesiastical Exemption, with particular reference to The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (England) Order 2010 or any subsequent re-enactment or variation thereof.
- To enable representatives from all Synods in England and Wales to meet together to co-ordinate a common approach to the application of the Ecclesiastical Exemption.
- To provide a platform for dissemination and discussion of information provided by English Heritage and other heritage bodies related to historic places of worship.
- To advise Mission Council, Synods and churches generally on matters relating to historic church buildings.
- To represent the United Reformed Church in discussions and negotiations with government and public bodies and other exempt denominations, including appointments to Heritage Groups and Forums.

#### Officers

1. **Convener.** The Convener will be appointed by the Mission Council on the recommendation of the Listed Buildings Advisory Group. Appointments will normally be for a term of three years; two successive terms being normally the maximum that may be served.
2. **Secretary.** The Secretary will be appointed by the Listed Buildings Advisory Group from within its membership. Appointments will normally be for a term of three years; two successive terms being normally the maximum that may be served.

#### Membership

Membership of the Group is open to the following persons:

- The Chairman/Convener and/or Secretary of the Listed Building Advisory Committee and Committee members from each Synod

- The Synod Property Officer and/or Trust Officer from each Synod
- Any Consultant (Legal or Technical) appointed by the Group
- A representative appointed by Mission Council and/or the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church.

It is anticipated that at least one representative of each Synod will attend each meeting.

### **Quorum**

The quorum of the meeting will be representatives of 5 Synods.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

The Group will normally meet twice a year, which might include a guest speaker. Between meetings information will be sent to members of any developments, information, issues of concern or papers requiring consultation via electronic communication.