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## Role of the Synod Moderator

The group reviewing the role of the Synod Moderator are a representative mix of clergy, lay and academic people from a variety of geographical locations. Three meetings have been held to date – the first being in April this year when the group was formed.

Part of our remit was to hold wide consultation. There was a recognition that data needed to be gathered from as broad a perspective as possible in order to understand the difference in roles and the typical workloads being undertaken by Moderators across the UK. We decided to survey to all Moderators and a representative group of local churches and ministers. At the time of writing over 200 replies have been received from the 813 questionnaires sent out and these are in the process of being analyzed. The anonymity of respondents will be maintained and trends highlighted rather than individual Synods being highlighted. To date many of the submissions include additional comments which will aid our deliberations as a Group.

Views from the church at large were sought via an article in REFORM, the FURY group and the URC website. Significant contributions had been received by the closing date which the Group is taking account of in their deliberations. Some of the responses received will be followed up to elicit further ideas.

As a group we have resolved to take a radical perspective on the remit given to us rather than just tinkering at the edges. We hope to make recommendations which will reduce the administrative load of Synods and enable Moderators to work more closely with local churches in our fundamental mission. We recognize that the Church is reducing in size and financial pressures are beginning to impinge and therefore our structures and processes need to reflect this in some way so that Moderators can lead the Church more effectively. We believe that different procedures and changes in the way we manage our affairs could be the way forward rather than further constitutional changes. We shall be meeting twice in February 2012 to prepare resolutions for Assembly.

The Group:

Stephen Orchard, Convener

Sue Bush, Secretary

John Humphreys

Linda Harrison

Sarah Hall

David Hamblin

Tony Berry (C of E and Consultant)