

Paper V1

Resource Sharing Task Group
Inter-synod resource
sharing methods

United Church 2015
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Basic Information

Contact name and email address	Paul Whittle moderator@urceastern.org.uk
Action required	To rescind the resolution of November 2013 requesting the Resource Sharing Task Group to propose a mechanism for inter-synod resource sharing.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council affirms its commitment to inter-synod resource sharing. Recognising that the commitment to both voluntary generosity in giving and gracious acceptance in receiving are serving well, it affirms the importance of the continuance of that spirit, but rescinds the resolution of November 2013 requesting that a proposal be brought to provide a mechanism for inter-synod resource sharing.

Summary of Content

Subject and aim(s)	The Resource Sharing Task Group (RSTG) has carefully considered the resolution requesting a proposal for a resource sharing mechanism. It has concluded that such would not be helpful. RSTG thus asks Mission Council to re-affirm the principle of inter-synod resource sharing, but to rescind the resolution.
Main points	RSTG has explored a number of possible methods of applying a mechanism. It has heard requests from those responsible for finance in the synods to retain the present voluntary system, though with some additional robustness. It has concluded that a mechanism is not needed.
Previous relevant documents	Minute 13/47(2) of Mission Council of November 2013.
Consultation has taken place with...	Treasurers and finance officers in the synods.

Summary of Impact

Financial	None for Mission Council or General Assembly.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

Inter-synod resource sharing methods

1. At its November 2013 meeting Mission Council considered a number of matters affecting the life of the denomination under the report of the Medium Term Strategy Group. One particular matter was as to how we sustain the life of individual synods and the need to recognise that accidents of history have led to an unequal and unfair distribution of resources. This needs to be recognised and addressed as a matter of justice. It was recognised that inter-synod resource sharing has been part of our ethos for a while but, amid acclaim, it was suggested that this commitment should be strengthened and the Resource Sharing Task Group was asked to prepare and propose a mechanism that might be adopted and used for future resource sharing.
2. The Group explored a number of options and there was an interesting variance as to the financial impact on particular synods depending on which of these might be followed.
3. However, that variation, and any difficulty in settling which to follow has not contributed to the present proposal. Subsequent to our initial work, we consulted those with financial responsibility within the synods, primarily treasurers and finance officers. This was done both through the annual small group meetings of synods to consider each other's accounts and budgets and the annual consultation on Inter-synod resource sharing. Overwhelmingly the response was that the present voluntary system works and should be retained. Some synods receive from resource sharing, some contribute to it, and some do neither. With little qualification, those in all three categories supported the status quo, and the Biblical principle of generosity was cited more than once.
4. It was recognised that the lack of a mechanism should not be used in the future to provide an escape route from engaging with resource sharing. To that end, it was agreed that we needed to do something to make the system more robust to provide for any temporary shortfalls. Thanks, primarily, to a generous additional promised contribution from Thames North, and also the ability to retain some recent small surpluses, a significant sum has been put aside to ensure that resource sharing can cope with the unexpected.
5. RSTG recognises the generosity of those who are able to give, and do so willingly and generously. It values those who receive. It affirms sharing as a matter of justice. It has concluded, however, that a voluntary system has much to commend it – and invites Mission Council to endorse that by passing this resolution.

