

To: Members of Mission Council,
staff in attendance and observers

October 2018

Dear Colleagues,

**Mission Council
Friday to Sunday 16 to 18 November 2018
The Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire.**

I look forward warmly to seeing you at Mission Council, and write now to mention several practical matters as we prepare for the meeting.

1. There will be an introduction session at 12 noon on the first day for new Mission Council members, to outline processes and procedures, introduce the Assembly officers, and explain some items of business. Old timers who would like to attend are welcome too. A full version of our rules for doing business is in the 'Standing Orders' (which are also used at General Assembly). These can be found on the URC website at www.urc.org.uk/about-mission-council
2. At General Assembly and Mission Council meetings we take certain business *En Bloc*. The fact that an item is listed as *En Bloc* does not make it less important than timetabled items. Rather, the *En Bloc* list contains those items where the Moderators think that decisions might be reached responsibly without further discussion. You will see that the agenda includes a slot when these items will be voted on.

I suggest you read the *En Bloc* papers first. This will give you time to contact the author of a paper if you have questions. Authors' names and email addresses are noted on the cover sheets. If you think any of these papers need discussion at Mission Council, particularly if you disagree with a proposed course of action, you may ask that a piece of business be removed from *En Bloc*. A sign-up sheet will be available at the meeting, where you can list the paper you wish to be withdrawn. If an item gets three signatures by close of business on the first day, it will be withdrawn from *En Bloc* and added to our agenda, with time given for discussion.

I need to remind you too that we really rely on every Mission Council member to read the papers and take note of information to relay back to their synods. In using the *En Bloc* method of decision-making there is no wish to bury information or to avoid discussions which Mission Council ought to have. We must all ensure the appropriate flow of information from Mission Council to the synods.

3. You should already have several papers from the first mailing: a cover letter, an expenses form, directions to our venue, a list of members, and (for new members) 'What we are about in Mission Council.' If any of these are missing, please contact Helen Munt at Church House, 020 7916 2020, helen.munt@urc.org.uk
4. Observers and URC staff who are not members of Mission Council should not participate in decision-making. Staff members are welcome to speak but, like observers, they should not use orange and blue cards.
5. I remind you that we are not expected to post on social media sites during business sessions. This restriction only applies when Council is in session; members may join in online debates during breaks, about business that is completed (although not on business that has only been adjourned to a later

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session of the meeting). As ever, everything shared on these sites is the responsibility of the author and subject to the same defamation laws as any other written communication.

6. All bedrooms are en-suite. To comply with the venue's health and safety regulations, please do not bring food from outside into the Centre, nor take food from the dining room to your room.
7. Below are the papers expected at the meeting, listed according to the ways the Moderators presently mean to address them:

Category A: En Bloc

I1	Mission committee update
J1	Nominations
L1	URC Trust: Windermere and Church House
M3 and U2	The General Secretariat
M4	Record of an Assembly commission
N1	Task group on General Assembly
O1 and O2	Human resources advisory group
P1	Marriage in Jersey
T1	Ministerial discipline
Z1	Church House management group

Category B: Majority voting

None

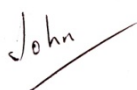
Category C: Consensus decision making

B1-B3	Children's and youth work	
D1	Education and learning	
G1 and G2	Finance	
H1 and H2	Ministries	
I2	Walking the Way	
J2	Supplementary nominations	*
M1 and M2	Listening and strategy	M2*
R1-R3	Safeguarding	
U1	Greenbelt	
U3	The Jubilee in 2022	*

8. One paper – G1, on 2019's budget – is designated by the Moderators as urgent. This is because we need to start the new year with a clear budget, and if consensus eludes us, we shall seek decision in another way.
9. A number of papers, which have to be prepared late, are marked above with an asterisk.* These will be available online a few days before the meeting and, if you have requested hard copy, on arrival at the meeting.
10. As always, please come to share, listen, reflect and discern together, and to support each other in fellowship outside the formal timetable. Let us treat one another with grace as together we seek the guidance of God.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



Mission Council

The Hayes, Swanwick,
Derbyshire
16 to 18 November 2018



The
United
Reformed
Church



www.urc.org.uk

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on behalf of Mission Council.

Groups – November 2018

The first named person in each group is asked to act as group Leader and the second named person in each group as Reporter

<p>A</p>	<p>Ian Hardie Alan Yates Jane Baird Melanie Campbell Ruth Dixon Simon Fairnington Robert Jennings Anne Lewitt Andrew Mills David Salsbury Simon Walkling</p> <p><i>Leader</i> <i>Reporter</i></p>	<p>B</p>	<p>John Piper Val Morrison Sal Bateman James Breslin Katherine Buckland James Coleman Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor Jacky Embrey Keir Hounsome Peter Knowles Shirley Miller John Samson</p> <p><i>Leader</i> <i>Reporter</i></p>
<p>C</p>	<p>Alan Spence David Pickering Francis Brienen Natalie Gibbs Andy Jackson Brian Jolly Rosie Martin Sally Martin Chris Parker Fiona Thomas Nigel Uden</p> <p><i>Leader</i> <i>Reporter</i></p>	<p>D</p>	<p>Ray Adams Tony Haws Derek Estill Rita Griffiths Jenny Mills Marilyn Piper Andrew Prasad Nicola Robinson Steve Summers Pam Tolhurst Paul Whittle</p> <p><i>Leader</i> <i>Reporter</i></p>
<p>E</p>	<p>Fran Kissack Bill Gould Craig Bowman Susan Durber Nicola Furley-Smith Margaret Marshall Charles Mather Peter Meek Neil Messer Myra Rose Victor Russell Reuben Watt</p> <p><i>Leader</i> <i>Reporter</i></p>	<p>F</p>	<p>Andrew Evans Bill Robson Ioannis Athanasiou Philip Brooks Elaine Colechin Clare Downing Katie Henderson David Herbert Barbara Jones Philip Nevard Chris Reed Marion Tugwood</p> <p><i>Leader</i> <i>Reporter</i></p>
<p>G</p>	<p>Sam Richards George Faris Bernie Collins Joan Grindrod-Helm Michael Jagessar Gwen Jennings Helen Lidgett Romilly Mickleem Andrew Middleton Peter Pay Phil Wall Kevin Watson</p> <p><i>Leader</i> <i>Reporter</i></p>	<p>H</p>	<p>George Watt Elizabeth Clark John Bradbury Susan Brown Adrian Bulley Richard Church David Coaker David Greatorex David Grosch-Miller Simeon Mitchell Maureen Shepherd Ruth Whitehead</p> <p><i>Leader</i> <i>Reporter</i></p>

Mission Council agenda

16 to 18 November 2018, The Hayes, Swanwick

Notes: (a) This running order can only be provisional. The Moderators will adjust it if items get dealt with more quickly, or take longer, than we initially expect.

(b) Rooms for any group work in this agenda will be made known when you arrive.

Friday 16 November		
12:00 to 12:45pm	Introduction session for new MC members	
12:00 to 12:45pm	<i>Registration in the Main House reception area</i>	
1:00pm	Lunch	
Session one		
2:00 to 3:30pm	Worship and Bible study Introductions and admin (inc. election briefing – Clerk) Minutes and matters arising Children’s and youth work review (introduction)	B1-B3
3:30pm	Tea break <i>Access to rooms available</i>	
Session two		
4:15 to 6:15pm	Ministries Children’s and youth work (continued)	H1 and H2 B1-B3
6:30 to 8:00pm	Dinner	
Session three		
8.00 to 9.00pm	Safeguarding advisory group (introduction) Greenbelt	R1-R3 U1
9.00pm	Evening prayers	
Saturday 17 November		
8:15	Breakfast	
Session Four		
9:15 to 11:00am	Worship and Bible study Safeguarding advisory group (continued)	R1-R3
11:00am	Coffee	

Session five 11:30am to 1.00pm	The URC's direction of travel: Alan Yates, Derek Estill and Nigel Uden – including group work	M1, M2
1:00 to 2:00pm	Lunch	
Session six 2:00 to 4:00pm	Free time or remaindered business	
4.00pm	Tea available	
Session seven 4:30 to 6:30pm	En bloc resolutions Matters removed from en bloc Nominations, supplementary paper Financial planning Education and learning, including group work	J2 G2 and G1 D1
6:30 to 8:00pm	Dinner	
Session eight 8:00 to 9:00pm	Walking the Way Planning for URC Jubilee in 2022 – group work	I2 U3
9.15pm	Evening prayers	
Sunday 18 November		
8:15am	Breakfast	
Session nine 9:30 to 10:45am	Worship, including Bible study and Holy Communion (with commissioning of Mr Andy Jackson, head of communications)	
10:45 to 11:15am	Coffee	
Session ten 11:15am to 12:45pm	Remaindered business Election, thanks and greetings	
1:00pm	Lunch and departures	
1:45 to 3:00pm (max)	Meeting of committee convenors	

Paper B1

Children's and youth work committee

Executive summary of CYWC review report

Church 2018
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2018

Paper B1

Children's and youth work committee

Executive summary of CYWY review report

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Jenny Mills (committee convenor) revdjmill@btinternet.com
Action required	
Draft resolution(s)	See children's and youth work review report 2018.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Summary of children's and youth work review report 2018.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	See children's and youth work review report 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	See children's and youth work review report 2018.

Summary of impact

Financial	See children's and youth work review report 2018.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	See children's and youth work review report 2018.

Executive summary of CYWC review report

1. Matthew 18:1-19:14: Jesus puts a child in the midst of his disciples and challenges them to become like, welcome, not cause to stumble in faith or lose any of the young.
2. Review aims: enabling local churches to engage with children and young people in ways meaningful for their own contexts and advocating (within and beyond the URC) for the denomination's agreed aims for children's and youth work – by asking:
 - What are we doing?
 - Why are we doing it?
 - Is it effective in meeting our core objectives?
 - Is it helpful in equipping the whole URC in working with children and young people as equal partners (with adults) in the life of the Church?
3. Previous reviews highlighted ongoing issues:
 - **Intergenerational ethos** – training of all ministries for engagement with children and young people
 - **Accessibility** – how to get appropriate support and resources to local churches
 - **Team** – how Church House staff and the CYDO programme work together – management and processes, synods opting out
 - **Context** – changing context within and without local church – fewer and older members, impact on volunteering
 - **Communication** – voices of children and young people being heard and considered throughout whole church.
4. Present review: was conducted by core group of four over eight months with wide consultation.
5. Context: conditions in the UK are negatively impacting children and young people, particularly the more vulnerable, in terms of poverty, relational resources and provision of care and opportunities. Families are not the remit of any department within the URC.
6. Children and young people in education: most schools welcome the interest of local people and encourage wider community involvement. The URC has direct links with eleven schools and many churches have built links with their local schools. There is no oversight or resourcing of this area of work within the URC.
7. Further education: is a neglected area of potential engagement with young people aged 16 to 19.

8. Higher education: many students will experience personal, social and emotional challenges whilst going through HE. Student services provision and the support from university chaplains can be complemented by local churches offering community support. URC has fewer than ten university chaplains and contributes to many ecumenical chaplaincy teams. There is no oversight of this area.
9. The United Reformed Church: with an inclusive ethos, URC advocates that the needs of children and young people should be catered for in all areas of the denomination's life and work. At denominational level there is a head for children's and youth work and support staff, whose work is directed by a committee headed by a convenor. At synod level there are children and youth development workers (CYDOs), though not all synods employ CYDOs. At local church level there is the role of children's and youth elder, though not all congregations have this role or give it much attention. In 1990 the URC adopted a Charter for Children in the Church, although its implementation is varied.
10. Review focus: the URC has a long-standing and well-developed commitment to children and young people and is engaged in a wide variety of activity with children and young people in and through local churches. There is a lack of connection and coordination between different elements and groups. The 'missing generation' of 20 to 40s is symptomatic of a variety of difficulties in faith development and church connection in a changing environment.
11. Quantifying what we are doing in the local churches: the numbers of churches recorded as engaging in particular activities with children and young people are given.
12. Hearing from children: children share what they like about church and what they would like church to be more like: *'wish that my school friends were here to enjoy the fun with me'* *'Church for most of our children is not on a Sunday but during the week.'*
13. Hearing from young people: they want *'people to go on this journey with.'* **'take us seriously!'** and to share *'our ideas – most may have improvements the church could take up if we were given the opportunity to share.'*
14. Hearing from local churches: their greatest joy in relation to children and young people was largely the children and young people themselves, who they were, what they brought to the church. Many saw themselves offering a safe, welcoming space where faith could be encountered and explored within a loving community, an extended or second family. A number of churches identify as having 'no children and young people'. Most URC churches have good facilities beyond a worship space, including rooms or halls, kitchens and accessible toilets. Most are enabling work with children and young people to happen in their community through being a good landlord, providing space for other organisations and groups to meet and offer their services. Guiding and Scouting and Messy Church were the most common activities, alongside junior church and all-age services, followed by Girls and Boys Brigade. Gaining the Child Friendly Church Award has been a significant process for some.
15. Hearing from Pilots: the URC programme for children and young people aged five to 18, run by dedicated volunteers in local churches. Numbers of companies and average size have declined in recent years. There is a clear appetite to retain the ethos of Pilots whilst revising the form for those looking to set up new provision for children and young people.

16. Hearing from synods: synods expressed positive appreciation of their appointed lead workers (CYDOs and other appointments), and delight in what was happening alongside a sense of a growing number of churches with no or few children or young people, and the need to support churches in relating to children, young people and families beyond the traditional Sunday-based activities.
17. Hearing from CYDOs: there is a chequered history in the relationship between synods, CYDOs (and their previous incarnations) and Church House staff and CYWC, and currently only eight of 13 synods have CYDOs in post. CYDOs have expressed appreciation of a more consultative, delegation-focussed culture and would like to see real working partnership with both the CYWC and the church house CYW team develop that is inclusive of other synods.
18. Wider URC perspectives: There is a *'need to connect ministerial training to all-age work all the way through'* in relation to ministers of word and sacrament, CRCWs, lay preachers, elders, and to consider the training and induction of children's, youth and families workers.
19. Hearing from the general secretariat: they recognised the need to incorporate children and young people in whole church initiatives. *'There needs to be a clear and realistic vision for the children's and youth work of the church, which needs to be seen in the light of wider societal needs. New ways of helping children and young people on the road of discipleship are needed, and an emphasis on mission alongside ministry.'*
20. Conclusions: children's and youth work needs a unifying sense of purpose within which local churches, synods, networks and Assembly level work can have a sense of contributing to a shared goal.
 - **Vision:** children and young people playing their part in the mission of God
 - **Mission:** missional discipleship with children and young people that encompasses experiencing, exploring and expressing the Way of Jesus in, through and beyond the church.
 - **Strategy:** enact this through thriving local URC congregations with inclusive, intercultural and intergenerational ethos – both growing those inside and reaching those outside.
 - **Aims:** strengthen and support local congregations in five key areas in sharing life in all its fullness with children and young people: faith, community, identity, engagement and growth/change.
 - **Actions:** URC has most of the key structures and elements to enable this to happen, but they are currently experienced as dying embers rather than heat generating fire in the life of the church.

2 Timothy 1:7 FAN INTO FLAMES the gift of God that is within you

21. URC Yearbook statistics on children (under 18s)
22. Pilots statistics
23. Review consultation processes

Paper B2

Children's and youth work committee

Children's and youth work
review report 2018

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper B2

Children's and youth work committee

Children's and youth work review report 2018

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Jenny Mills (committee convenor) revdjmillis@btinternet.com
Action required	
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children's and youth work committee: review report. Mission Council welcomes the 2018 review of children's and youth work in the URC and reaffirms its longstanding commitment to enabling children and young people to play their part in the mission of God and its desire for this to be integral to the whole life of the United Reformed Church. 2. Children's and youth work committee: future strategy. Mission Council directs the children's and youth work committee to strengthen and support local congregations in their engagement with children and young people through the implementation of the proposed strategy. 3. Children's and youth work committee: reshaping the 'CYDO Programme'. Mission Council encourages all synods to play an active part in developing, delivering and benefitting from Assembly-level resources, programmes and events in conjunction with the children's and youth work committee through a reimagined CYDO+ Programme. 4. Children's and youth work committee: future of Pilots. Mission Council authorises children's and youth work committee, through Pilots management committee, to develop a fresh expression of Pilots as part of the 'mixed economy' of United Reformed Church children's and youth work. 5. Children's and youth work committee: resources and staff team. Mission Council reaffirms its commitment to the current level of resourcing and staffing for children's and youth work, and directs children's and youth work committee to utilise these creatively to fulfil its remit.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Report on the review of children's and youth work undertaken over eight months in 2018, which aims to understand the current situation and develop a clear vision and strategy for the next five years.
Main points	
Previous relevant	2002 Review of children's and youth work 2008 Review of the YCWTD programme

documents	2011 Review of the CYDO programme 2016 Review of the Head of CYW role 2008 Vision document 2013 five year plan.
Consultation has taken place with...	General Secretariat CYDOs Synods Individual churches Young people Children Education and learning RCLs.

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Potential to increase partnership working with ecumenical and parachurch partners, impacting children and young people beyond the URC.



Children's and youth work review report 2018

1. Matthew 18:1-19:14 New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised (NRSVA)

Jesus put a child in the middle of his disciples and said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.' [(Matt 18:3-5)

'If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.' (Matt 18:6)

'Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven.' (Matt 18:10-11)

'So it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.' (Matt 18:14)

Even so shortly afterward he had to prevent his disciples from turning away people bringing children to him: 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.' (Matt 19:14)

How hard it is to put into practice the values we endorse in theory, to treat others in truly counter-cultural ways, to be as inclusive, intercultural and intergenerational as Jesus.

2. Review aims

The core objectives of the United Reformed Church's General Assembly programme of children's and youth work involve:

- enabling local churches to engage with children and young people in ways meaningful for their own contexts
- advocating (within and beyond the URC) for the denomination's agreed aims for children's and youth work, expressed in such items as the Charter for Children in the Church, the URC Youth Mission Statement, the Pilots Promise and the Child Friendly Church Award (CFCA) main criteria, ensuring that the needs of children and young people are catered for in all areas of the URC's life and work, especially in light of the denomination's renewed focus on intergenerational, lifelong missional discipleship through '*Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today*'.

To ensure the effective continuation of these objectives, the following issues need to be addressed:

- continuing effects of the 2012 funding reductions on staffing and capacity
- continuing concerns surrounding the CYDO programme

- the place of children and young people in the life of the URC and efforts to cater for their needs across all areas of the denomination's life and work
- overall decline in organised children's and youth work in society reflected in our local churches
- perceived rise in the number of local churches without any children or young people involved in any way with the life of the congregation.

These concerns need to be assessed, in close detail, through a review which asks:

- What are we doing?
- Why are we doing it?
- Is it effective in meeting our core objectives?
- Is it helpful in equipping the whole URC in working with children and young people as equal partners (with adults) in the life of the Church?

3. Previous reviews

Children's and youth work has been subject to a number of reviews in the past 16 years, during which time there have been significant changes within the URC as a whole, and wider society. As a result Yardley Hastings closed, FURY was restructured as URC Youth, Pilots has seen growth and then serious decline, Safeguarding has become a more distinct service, the DfES funded YCWT programme has become synod funded CYDOs, and the URC as a whole has reduced in size. During this time CYW has moved from three senior posts to one with Programme Officer support, and reduced administrative support. The 2002 Review asked the same three core questions (what are we doing, why are we doing it, is it effective); the 2008 Review was of the YCWTD programme; the 2011 Review again focused on the CYDO programme as it had become; the 2016 Review of the Head of CYW role was in response to the post-holder's resignation. Alongside these in 2008 a vision document was created, and in 2013 a five year plan at the time of the major restructuring. There is a consistent focus on resourcing and supporting the local church. Alongside this is a desire for professional expertise, advocacy and to enable young people to engage at all levels of church and society.

Within these reviews there are a number of core issues which appear to remain unaddressed or unresolved:

- **Intergenerational ethos** – training of all ministries for engagement with children and young people
- **Accessibility** – how to get appropriate support and resources to local churches
- **Team** – how Church House staff and the CYDO programme work together – management and processes, synods opting out
- **Context** – changing context within and without local church – fewer and older members, impact on volunteering
- **Communication** – voices of children and young people being heard and considered throughout whole church

Overall it is unclear if many of the recommendations have been implemented or evaluated. This appears to reflect a lack of clear vision and strategy, as well as a rapidly changing context (committee, staff, wider URC structures, etc) and the need to be responsive to the needs and concerns of children and young people. It also reflects the reality of URC ecclesiology (no hierarchical power to enforce change), and the desire to do as much or more with reduced resources.

4. Present review

This review was recommended in the 2016 report and approved by Mission Council. Terms of reference were agreed by CYWC in November 2017. It has been conducted over eight months (January to August 2018) by a core group of four: the Revd Mary Hawes (CofE national children and youth advisor), the Revd Samuel Silungwe (URC minister), Steve Summers (URC CRCW development worker) and Dr Sam Richards (URC head of children's and youth work). We are grateful to everyone who contributed through questionnaires, meetings, phone conversations, visits, and enabling us to hear the perspectives of children and young people. We would like to thank Helen Corbett, Heather Wilkinson and Lorraine Webb for their administrative and wider support.

5. Context

Poverty in Britain is at post-war highs and is set to increase yet further. There were four million children living in poverty in the UK in 2015 to 2016; 30% of children, or nine in a classroom of 30.¹ According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies², inequality is projected to rise between 2015 and 2022. Food bank queues are growing, levels of severe deprivation have been rising, and increasing numbers of children are left with their most basic needs unmet. The demise of children's centres has withdrawn essential parental support for young families. The pressures on parents and carers to go to work while also finding quality time for their children can seem insurmountable. Furthermore, over 90,000 children and young people do not live in families but are looked after, with the number being adopted falling by 20% while the incidence of foster care placements breaking down increases steadily.³

Case studies – *Youth Genesis in Brixham, South Devon has launched a young-people led project to raise awareness of domestic violence. St Andrew's with Castle Gate, Nottingham, is one of a number of URC churches that host a contact centre to enable non-custodial parents to have supervised access with their children.*

According to the joint public issues team (JPIT), God's people are always called to be a prophetic presence in the world.⁴ Our lives and interactions with one another in churches are not just a matter of internal community relations but are intended to be an example to the wider world of God's ideal for society. According to the Office for National Statistics, the quality of family relationships is one of the three most significant aspects of life that contribute to children's overall sense of well-being, and children with good social relationships with both family and friends are more likely to have higher well-being.⁵ How might individuals and churches intervene in today's context in order to model a generous lifestyle and to support and develop children, young people and families? Recognising that childcare and housing are two of the costs that take the biggest toll on families' budgets,⁶ how might churches respond?

Grandparents and extended families are either less accessible due to geographic dispersal or relied on heavily for regular support with childcare. It is often grandparents or childminders

¹ Households Below Average Income, An analysis of the income distribution 1994/95 – 2015/16, Tables 4a and 4b. Department for Work and Pensions, 2017. From www.cpag.org.uk/child-poverty-facts-and-figures

² IFS (2017) *Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2017-18 to 2021-22* www.ifs.org.uk/publications/10028

³ See: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/440401/SFR22-2015_Text.pdf

⁴ Jump, P (2018) *Reflection on God's provision of enough* www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/enough-bible-study.pdf

⁵ from: www.wordonthestreets.net/Articles/519041/Children_s_well.aspx

⁶ Hirsch, D and Valadez, L (2015). *How much does the official measure of child poverty under-estimate its extent by failing to take account of childcare costs?* From www.cpag.org.uk/child-poverty-facts-and-figures

Grandparents and extended families are either less accessible due to geographic dispersal or relied on heavily for regular support with childcare. It is often grandparents or childminders who take children to activities, including church. Families (with all the complexity and variety that term encompasses) are not the remit of any particular department in the URC.

Case studies – *Wellingborough URC Toddler Group re-started two years ago, run by a group of older volunteers who have become a community of friends and ‘grannies’ to the families that come, particularly appreciated by some Polish mums far from their own families. St John’s Orpington Toddlers Group has run for over 25 years, now largely by those who brought their children over 20 years ago (only a couple of whom are church members). The children are from local families not connected to the church, brought by mums, grandparents and childminders in equal measure. They share the problem of finding the next generation of volunteers as parents do not have time anymore and need to return to work.*

In a recent article⁷, Naomi Thompson examined how Sunday schools emerged two centuries ago to generally meet children’s needs, not as a Sunday-morning class for the children of churchgoers. It was a radical movement and faced criticism from churches for teaching on the Lord’s Day and, more widely, for teaching working-class young people to write, lest they gain the power to change the social order. Mark Griffiths has described how Sunday schools connected with the ‘social currency’ of their time and place: the need for basic education.⁸ What might be the ‘social currency’ of our times in order for churches to connect with children and families?

Working parents and carers are spending more time at work with adverse consequences on family life and their own wellbeing.⁹ This in turn impacts volunteering:

‘People lead busy lives, seem to be or to perceive themselves as increasingly time-poor and struggle with competing demands ... with people wanting to combine ‘doing good’ with a hobby or interest. It is also likely to lead to more family volunteering opportunities that prevent people from having to choose between spending time with their family and volunteering.’¹⁰

This is the context within which church activities are positioned and it can provide insight and relevant opportunities for family-based, purposeful initiatives by churches.

Youth services offer facilities and environments within which young people can relax, have fun and feel secure, supported and valued through non-formal and informal educational opportunities and experiences. Young people seek safe spaces where their key questions can be addressed. In 2010/11 local government spending on youth services in England was £1.2bn, by 2013/14 it had fallen to £712m (a 40% drop)¹¹ as a result of ongoing austerity policies. How might churches work alongside young people to create appropriate facilities and initiatives in places where local authority provision is no longer available?

Case studies – *Christ Church Manchester and Chesham URC are running TLG Make Lunch programmes, offering meals in the school holiday to children who normally receive free school meals. Livingston United Parish, Scotland asked local families how they could best support them and identified that offering one day holiday*

⁷ Thompson, N. (2018). *From grass-roots education to Sunday child-minding*. Church Times, 12.1.18

⁸ Griffiths, M (2009). *One Generation from Extinction*, Monarch

⁹ www.workingfamilies.org.uk/publications/mfindex2018_summary/

¹⁰ NCVO (2018). *The Road Ahead: A review of the voluntary sector’s operating environment* p25.

¹¹ See: www.nya.org.uk/2017/11/youth-services-last-line-defence/

clubs on INSET days would be more helpful than adding another week in the holidays.

There is so much to celebrate and be thankful for! Throughout history, inspired Christians have collaborated for the common good, striven for justice, shared the Gospel and ultimately got involved with God's work. Young Christians from diverse backgrounds have been called to be faithful innovators and change agents of this generation. With support, they will shape the future through communities of faith. How should local churches and individual disciples recognise and encourage these change-makers? ¹²

6. Children and young people in education

All children and young people are required to be in education from five to 16, in further education, training or employment from 16 to 18, and nearly 50% engage in higher education. Most churches or church members have contact or the opportunity for contact with a local school, college or other educational establishment, places where children and young people, and those who work with them, spend many hours of their time each week.

The provision for schools is a complex arena. Local authorities still have responsibility for the strategic overview of education in their area, including pupil place planning, special educational needs and setting up a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).¹³ The Free Churches Group will be producing an informative report on schools later this year.

Most schools welcome the interest of local people and encourage wider community involvement, and an open approach to a head teacher asking whether individuals or the church can support in any way usually builds mutual trust and positive relationships. This can lead to opportunities to volunteer time, skills, experience, and the resources of the faith community in a wide variety of ways, often exercising an element of 'chaplaincy'. There are many excellent resources and organisations that churches and individuals could link with. The URC has direct links with eleven schools and many churches have built links with their local schools. There is no oversight or resourcing of this area of work within the URC.

Case studies: *Herringthorpe URC, Rotherham emailed local schools to offer assemblies and other help – now take monthly assemblies, support groups in school and have seen children come to holiday club and join the church's High 5's club – building relationships has been key. Pilgrim URC in Plymouth, which has no children or young people in the regular congregation, learned that local government school uniform grants had ceased, and has worked with five local primary schools to provide free school uniform for disadvantaged young people moving to secondary school.*

7. Further Education

Further Education (FE) seldom attracts the public attention or political concern attributed to schools and universities and the extensive and wide-ranging activity and contribution of FE is not commonly known or understood. The importance of a sector which currently educates more 16 to 19 year old full-time students than maintained school sixth forms should not be underplayed. The nature of FE, as outlined in the report '*Serving the Marginalised; Free*

¹² The Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE) is a leadership incubator that inspires young people to make a difference in the world through Christian communities www.fteleaders.org/

¹³ See: www.gov.uk/types-of-school

Churches vision and policy for Further Education,¹⁴ makes clear the significant part FE plays for developing young people and for the communities where churches are based. There is a clear resonance between the values that drive FE and the core values at the heart of the Free Church heritage and continuing commitment to local communities, mission, outreach and social justice. FE colleges are places where young people from all backgrounds are brought together, many needing support and mentoring, and those in urban settings have a higher proportion of students from minority ethnic communities.

The report includes the recommendation to ‘Encourage local congregations to consider the potential opportunities of working with and supporting their local FE college and other FE providers’ and also aims to ‘Produce practical guidance for local congregations’. An excellent accompanying resource¹⁵ suggests the kinds of opportunities for local churches’ intentional engagement with FE.

Case study – *FE College student Reuben (URC Youth Southern rep) has been fighting to have a CU in his college. The college have refused to provide a meeting space (due to their anti-radicalisation policy), so a local church has stepped in. The CU are exploring how to be good news in the college and advertise their existence.*

8. Higher education

The comprehensive ‘Hope in Higher Education’ report¹⁶ emphasises how *‘Higher education (HE) is a massively significant part of contemporary society, with an enormous cultural, social and economic impact on individuals and societies.’* Overall, the HE sector is growing, vibrant and has a massive impact on individuals and communities throughout the UK and in 2017, there were 162 HE institutions in the UK in receipt of public funding employing 419,710 staff and educating 2.32 million students¹⁷. Universities impact on nearly half the total young adult population, and congregations and churches can help resource engagement with universities for the benefit of students, staff and communities.

Many students will experience personal, social and emotional challenges whilst going through HE. International students may be coping with particular pressures as they seek to adapt to a different culture and climate. Student services provision and the support from university chaplains can be complemented by local churches offering community support. URC has fewer than ten university chaplains and contributes to many ecumenical chaplaincy teams. There is no oversight or resourcing of this area.

Case study – *Mike Peat, free church chaplain at Bristol University – works with the university in supporting family and friends of students who have died, in particular working with students on memorial events. There has been increased risk and reporting around mental health issues and suicide in recent years. University staff also need support. Sam Sheehan, Special Category Minister to Generation Y, is exploring why there is a missing generation of 18 to 25s absent from local churches through a five year project, involving Leeds University Chaplaincy.*

¹⁴ Handscomb, G.; Wise J; and Iles, S (2017) *Serving the Marginalised, Free Churches vision and policy for Further Education*. Free Churches Directors’ Group.

¹⁵ Wise, J.; Handscomb, G.; Alderman, A.; Freckleton, L.; Iles, S.; Smeaton, A. and Spittle, B. (2016) *Serving from the Margins: The Free Churches and further Education*. A working group report for the Directors of the Free Churches Group. Free Churches Group.

¹⁶ Hope in Higher Education (2015) *The Free Churches and Higher Education: a report and recommendations from the Free Churches Group Higher Education Working Group*

¹⁷ www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/Pages/higher-education-data.aspx

9. The United Reformed Church

By call, identity and nature, the URC as a denomination has an obligation to ensure that its ministry and mission are absolutely inclusive. That is, taking into account the aspirations and needs of all age groups. This task calls for a collective responsibility at all levels of the life of the church. The essence of the children's and youth work review is to enable the church to look at God's mission through the lenses of children and young people.

The Council for World Mission (CWM) to which the URC is affiliated affirms a local church as a focal point for the church's mission. That is, all the primary functions of the church are best, and effectively executed at a local church level. The URC children's and youth work review is an attempt to examine how the denomination views and supports children and youth work. The main question being: How does the URC enable its local churches to engage with children and young people in ways meaningful to their own context? The URC advocates that the needs of children and young people should be catered for in all areas of the denomination's life and work. In response to this, at denominational level there is a head for children's and youth work and support staff, whose work is directed by a committee headed by a convenor. At synod level there are children and youth development workers (CYDOs), though not all synods employ CYDOs. At local church level there is the role of children's and youth elder, though not all congregations have this role or give it much attention. In 1990 the URC adopted a Charter for Children, that was a milestone. The question is: How many of our local churches adopted the charter as part of their mission priority?

10. Review focus

What are we doing?

The URC through local churches, synods and the Assembly level programme is doing a huge quantity and variety of things with and for children and young people. However, the provision is patchy, disjointed and very often out of sight. As the case studies above have illustrated there are many hidden gems within the URC's children's and youth work – sometimes unrecognised or appreciated by the local church, often out of the sight lines of the synod, and invisible to the URC as a whole. It was a common experience of the review to 'trip over' a fantastic innovative piece of work going on in one church that could be inspirational to many others if only they knew about it. Many areas have felt cut off and on the outside of the URC's children's and youth work.

Why are we doing it?

The URC has a long-standing and well-developed commitment to children and young people. This strong ethos has found expression over the years in the longstanding resourcing of Pilots, the development of the Charter for Children in the Church adopted in 1990, and the continuity through change evidenced by the transition from FURY to URC Youth with its executive and annual Assembly. The ethos and values are widely articulated and shared, with a clear sense that children and young people matter in the church and the kingdom, as expressed in the series of theology booklets produced over recent years by CYWC. This has led to some activity happening because we can, some because we should, and some because we always have.

Is it effective in meeting our core objectives?

The short answer is both yes and no. The number of children and young people in the URC is declining at about the same rate as the number of all ages; but the number of children and young people associated with the life of the church beyond Sunday worship is declining much more rapidly – in 2018 it was less than a third of the number in 2002. Children and

much more rapidly – in 2018 it was less than a third of the number in 2002. Children and young people under 18 make up just over a quarter of the regular worshipping congregation in URC local church main services. On average the churches of the URC have around ten under 18s in their regular congregation and around another 20 under 18s associated with the life of the church more widely according to church returns. Of course, the spread in reality is far from even, with many churches having thriving groups for children and young people, and others having none. Under 26s are clearly represented at General Assembly with each synod sending two, and the URC youth moderator has a high level of visibility within the structures. The head of children's and youth work is consulted over the implementation of new initiatives such as Stepwise, and in some synods CYDOs and children's and youth work are located within integrated committees with strategic oversight.

Nonetheless children and young people still require active advocacy as in practice they are generally not physically present in meetings where decisions are made which impact the whole church. As children are not financial contributors to the church they are rarely involved in conversations about the deployment of resources. The church's engagement with public life tends to ignore areas which particularly impact them, such as education, and children's and youth services. Their lived experience as 'natives' of the emerging culture is rarely considered. There is a tendency to focus on the separate provision for children and young people rather than shared provision for all ages, on 'doing for' rather than 'doing with'. Some of the negative impact of this can be seen in the 'missing' generation of 20 to 40s and their difficulties in engaging with the church locally, synodically and denominationally. The URC has mirrored wider trends with an increasing average age of members and declining numbers of children and young people. Robert Raikes, founder of the Sunday School movement commented, 'the world marches forth on the feet of children.'

11. Quantifying what we are doing in the local churches:

Girls Brigade – 50 URC Groups in England and Wales (40 URC, ten joint/LEP) – approximately 1,000 girls

Boys Brigade – 57 Companies in England, Wales and Scotland – 1,300 boys

Scouts and Guides (all ages) – 318 URC churches have groups (2017 church data) – URCSF

Messy Church – 283 registered at URC (includes joint/LEP) churches

Pilots – 42 Companies affiliated – 577 Pilots

Deckhands for five to six year olds –	130
Adventurers for seven to ten year olds –	343
Voyagers for eleven to 14 year olds –	89
Navigators for 14 to 18 year olds –	15

Open the Book – 13 URC registered teams, and many ecumenical teams include URC members

Child Friendly Church Award – the URC started the CFCA Scheme in 2006 – 112 churches have gained a CFCA with 63 current.

Afterschool clubs – 44*

Toddler groups – 390* – two visited

Holiday clubs – 144 * – one visited

Mid-week children's clubs – 81*

Youth camps – unknown – one visited

Youth groups – unknown

Young adult groups – unknown

* taken from Find a Church on URC website (2017)

A wide range of other groups and activities also taking place.

All this is supported by synod groups, events and activities, and the Assembly level programme (Youth Assembly, Pilots events, ecumenical and overseas opportunities etc).

12. Hearing from children

Under 11's review activities were sent to 1,000 churches believed to have children. Responses were received from over 350 children in 27 churches. In addition, seven returns stated there were no children in their church.

Trinity Bromley, Kent – 'we are disappointed that we have no children at all but are at the planning stage of beginning a completely new work with individual children and families. It will be some considerable time before we are able to make a start. The simplified version of the charter for children is much less likely to be misconstrued by adults too – it is clear and straightforward.'

Charlestown – 'I wanted to let you know that we value our young people age ranging from 18 months to 13 very much. We call them God's seeds being given to us so that we can nurture them and watch them grow in God's love.'

Children are involved in a wide range of roles within church worship (welcoming, lighting candle, reading, leading prayers, leading action songs, helping with hymn books, choir, stewarding) as well as participating in services, particularly Messy Church, parade services and key festivals, and Junior Church. They were also involved in church run groups for their age groups (toddlers, uniformed groups) and a range of wider church activities (BBQ, rambles, AGM, gardening, weekend away).

'Our children were keen to have their say'

'Our children like their inclusiveness in church and the way they get to do things they like and take services'

'We are a Child Friendly Church and have been involving the children in meetings and decisions. Their negative responses to meetings will need to be addressed'

'All age Family Church is popular with the children – we must remember this when it is criticised by adults'

'Messy church normally attracts larger numbers. All enjoy it but those 10+ are asking for a games room'

'Church for most of our children is not on a Sunday but during the week'

'The children felt that, generally, church meetings were not relevant to them. They enjoyed all age services if they were aimed at younger people ... most weekly activities clash with school/hobbies'

Children were invited to share 'Two Stars and a Wish' (two favourite things and one thing they would like). There was a very wide spread of responses including:

Stars: going outside, singing and praying in church, meeting friends, the range of activities, leaders and church members kind and friendly, breakfast at the beginning of messy church, stories, songs, learning about stories from the Bible, being able to be part of the Nativity play, colouring and painting/craft, that we get to make things on our own and are taught how to do it, acting, Fete every year, boys brigade, Bouncy Days, biscuits, communion, taking part in services, playing with the toys and playdough, imaginary play, themed activities, joining in with the singing, the church looks after people, lots of activities, church hall, pictures on the wall, drinks and biscuits after services.

'I think the community is good' 'learning new things about Christianity'

'I like eating the bread and grape juice' 'I like learning about Jesus and Sunday School'

'Church parades and the nice people' 'I like it because we worship God respectfully'

'We can share feelings' 'they care for people who need it'

'We always get food and games related to the theme from the Bible' 'I play my ukulele'

'Using the flags in church' 'It involves all ages and everyone can feel included'

'Being involved in the service, taking the offering'

'I always feel welcome and included in church' 'I like sharing my feelings about God'

Wishes: a common theme was wishing they did more outside, that groups/activities happened more often, that more children came. Others wished for a younger version of a specific church group, x box or games room, more plays, a book corner, a bigger garden, more outdoors activities, more use of technology. Some wishes were more imaginative: a bouncy castle, a swimming pool, a monthly party where we could bring our pets, a hot tub, a pony, more ice cream, poo emoji cushions.

'Less singing, more talk' 'a quiet place to pray alone'

'I wish there were arts and crafts for all ages, not just the younger ones'

'I wish there was more aimed at children – singing, acting'

'I wish to go on trips to places to learn about God more'

'I wish we could watch about God' 'I wish that children had more of a voice'

'Wish that my school friends were here to enjoy the fun with me'

'I wish there was more variety of instruments instead of just organ and piano'

'I wish there were non-boring meetings' 'I wish there were no all-age services'

'I wish church had communion more often' 'I wish I could see and hug God'

13. Hearing from young people

Young people were asked three questions at Youth Assembly and The Big Speak Out:

- a) What is it that you need from the church (local, synod and whole URC) to help you grow in your faith and walk with Jesus in daily life?
'Guidance. People to go on this journey with.' *'A chance to meet other people (youth) of the same age range who also have faith.'* *'I definitely think we need more guidance/ encouragement. This is because though we have our own say in the way we walk with Jesus and having him in our lives, it would be nice to know verbally/ physically, we are being supported and guided.'* *'Churches within the synod need to communicate better. Staying in the loop.'*
- b) What is it that you need from the church (local, synod and whole URC) to help you engage in mission and service to make a difference in God's world?
'Make services more relatable for young people and allow children to play a bigger part in services and church as a whole.' *'Events which give us the opportunity to help others such as community work.'* *'More youth events that allow non-Christian youth people to come along and begin to understand faith and who Jesus is. But do it in a way that they won't be put off.'* ***'take us seriously!'***
- c) What is it that the church (local, synod and whole URC) needs to receive from young people? What do you have to offer that you have no way to give at the moment?
'Our ideas – most may have improvements the church could take up if we were given the opportunity to share.' *'Better technology.'* *'Leadership; young people are often overlooked in their churches but many have the skills required to fill many roles not generally offered to them.'* *'The young people need to find their voice and use it well in ways which will benefit them and also the church depending on an issue they may want to raise. They deserve to be heard and their opinions taken into account on matters they comment on.'*

Previous Youth Assembly Moderator: "the key question for young people – do they have to wait for the old to die? The goal should be to enable and equip young people for life of faith, not just preparing people for committees."

URC Youth spans a wide age range, from 11 to 25. In practice most of the activities under this label are for 18 to 25s, with Youth Assembly currently for 14 to 25s. The 2018 Youth Assembly passed a resolution to explore lowering its age limit. For URC Youth to realise its ambition of broadening engagement to be more representative of the diversity of young people connected to the church it would appear helpful to enable a sense of identity as URC Youth to develop earlier. Programmes and events with overlapping age ranges might enable increasing numbers of young people to find a place and supportive peer group within this. The habit of applying the language of 'young people' to those aged 18 and over is problematic. It can perpetuate paternalistic attitudes towards those who in any other context would be deemed adults. The relative youth of young adults in the context of the church should not lead to their conflation with young people under 18, as their life circumstances, needs and contributions can be very different. The church should be fostering participation and responsibility beyond the 'chosen few' who make up the Youth Exec or GA Youth Reps, as well as the deep listening and relationship building highlighted in the recent 20 to 40s report.

14. Hearing from local churches

A questionnaire was sent to every church. 94 responses from a wide variety of churches whose engagement with children and young people ranged from large thriving groups to none. 28 churches were visited.

Their greatest joy in relation to children and young people was largely the children and young people themselves, who they were, what they brought to the church. It was sometimes particular moments, like requests for baptism, their participation in worship or church life, or seeing them grow in faith. Pilots groups were particularly mentioned by a few churches. The deepest issues were commonly a lack of children and young people in the worship congregation; losing them as they grew older; or a lack of volunteers to work with the children and young people they did have.

Churches took children's and youth work very seriously, many run or support a range of activities, sometimes with ecumenical partners, and had hopes for future developments. Some were struggling to support the very few they currently had contact with. Many commented on having groups use the church premises but not engage with the church very much. Many saw themselves offering a safe, welcoming space where faith could be encountered and explored within a loving community, an extended or second family. They also mentioned hope, teaching, moral values, prayer, worship, pastoral care, discipleship, fun, friendship.

'church for our children is not on a Sunday'

Churches which described themselves as having 'no children or young people' were often apologetic about this and referred back to earlier times when they had families, or Junior Church. On deeper enquiry it became apparent that all have members with children and young people in their extended families or other connections through their work or community engagement. However, these children and young people in the hearts and minds of regular worshippers are not considered in the worship or life of the church, and there is no support offered for this engagement as discipleship or mission. Others have groups of children or young people using their premises (for example Guiding and Scouting, dance classes), and even ran occasional parade services. Some have schools visiting the building annually for lessons or carol services. Nonetheless, their identity is that of 'no children and young people'. CYWC produced 'Some thoughts for churches which have no children as part of their lives' in 1990 – this could fruitfully be revisited as an area of immediate impact.

Case studies – *Parkminster URC, Cardiff talked of when they had 52 members of Junior Church (now none) and referred to the large junior sports club that meets on a Sunday morning in the fields backing onto their building 'if we opened the windows we would hear them' – and responded warmly to the suggestion that they pray for those children, young people and families each Sunday, and began exploring offering refreshments. Chandlers Ford URC is actively building links with the neighbouring primary school, with elderly members volunteering to hear children read, and clearing a pathway between the two buildings so the children do not have to go on the public road to visit the church.*

Some churches are investing significantly in work with children, families and young people by employing part-time or full-time staff to lead in this area. Often these workers do not have a URC background and are not familiar with URC structures and networks. There is no induction to link them with the children's and youth work office or wider programme, and they are unfamiliar with it. It may be that those churches with the strongest work in this area are the least in need of, and the least connected to, the resources of the denomination as a whole.

Case study – *Wade Street, Lichfield (Joint URC / Baptist) employs two workers, who did not know which synod they were in, have never heard of Pilots and had no connection with Youth Assembly which occurs only a few miles away – but have good connections with Urban Saints, Messy Church, and local Schools Work Trust, and thriving children's and youth work.*

Many churches are offering a wide range of support and opportunities to children and young people. The 94 questionnaire responses reported the following:

- 61 groups for the church's children
- 43 groups for the church's young people
- 53 connect with local schools
- 62 have all-age worship
- 39 have uniformed organisations connected
- 9 run a Pilots company
- 24 run holiday clubs
- 50 run groups for non-church children
- 30 run groups for non-church young people
- 51 run toddler groups
- 30 run Messy Church
- 37 work in partnership with other to provide children's and youth work
- 19 were involved in other work with children and young people.

Between them, they employed seven full-time and 23 part-time children's and youth workers, and of course had very many volunteers involved. The greatest barriers to them were having enough volunteers, particularly leaders, and time. An extraordinary quantity and quality of work is being undertaken, mostly supported by dedicated and passionate volunteers to enhance the lives of children and young people. Much of this is invisible to the Sunday congregation.

Most URC churches appear to have good facilities beyond a worship space, including rooms or halls, kitchens and accessible toilets. Most are enabling work with children and young people to happen in their community through being a good landlord, providing space for other organisations and groups to meet and offer their services, and these can provide opportunities to develop relationships further. In particular, almost a quarter of URC churches have Guide or Scout groups associated with them (and this may be higher) but very few are linked with the URC Guide and Scout Fellowship. Local churches could be resourced to foster these links and offer appropriate Parade Services and other opportunities such as support with faith badges, opportunities to serve, shared fundraising events and so on. Similarly, around a tenth of all Girls and Boys Brigade Companies are associated with URC churches, but the quality of relationship is variable and there is no link to these organisations beyond the local church level.

Messy Church has become established within the URC as a positive initiative, with 20% of local churches registered as running it. This can vary from a monthly to very occasional event. The well documented strengths (all age, craft-based, building relationships through sharing food, accessible ways into simple worship for non-church families) and weaknesses (disconnection from 'main' congregation, difficulty in moving to discipleship, losing contact as children grow up) are apparent in URC settings. A number of churches are exploring interesting ways of developing Messy Church to address these, but this learning is not being shared across the denomination.

Case studies – *Christ Church Lewes has replaced its holiday club with a series of weekly Messy Church sessions over the summer holiday, and worked with Brighton City Mission. Bulwell URC's all age worship on the first Sunday of the month links to the Messy Church the day before. It starts with breakfast, then a 45 minute service – three quarters of the families from Messy Church come along, and this enables older church members to get to know Messy Church people. They have also twice run the Start Course for parents/carers.*

Gaining the Child Friendly Church Award has been a significant investment of time and energy by a number of churches. Interestingly almost half have not renewed their award.

The process is seen as overly bureaucratic by some, but important and rigorous. There is no regular contact with those churches who have received this beyond a reminder when renewal is due. There is no development or progression built into the renewal process. The CYDO team are interested in revising this process.

15. Hearing from Pilots

Pilots remains the URC programme for children and young people aged 5 to 18. It is run by dedicated volunteers in local churches and PMC /PPB with limited support from church house and synod staff. It forms a strong community of people within the URC passionate about sharing faith with children through a regular fun club. It has a proven track record of engaging children and young people with no church background and discipling them through sustained relationships over a number of years, as well as supporting children from church families in their faith and connection with church. It is a flexible resource easily adapted to local context. It is often experienced as ‘church not on a Sunday’ for those who attend. Companies are significantly smaller on average than Girls Brigade or Boys Brigade, perhaps indicating that Pilots is well placed to serve churches with lower numbers of children and young people.

75% of Pilots groups responded to the Review Questionnaire. Existing Pilots Companies believe it is most effective with 5 to 10s and least effective with 15 to 18s. The older age range is now very small. The opening and closing prayer, the Pilots promise, and games are used by most Companies. The projects and faith and worship are also prominent in most companies and could be adapted to fit. The raising of the flag, crest work and log books are the least used. Pilots Companies use the Overseas Voyage and Worship material but not necessarily when it is produced.

There has been a serious decline in number of companies and number of children and young people. Companies appear to close due to lack of leaders rather than lack of Pilots. Churches setting up new children’s work rarely consider Pilots due to lack of knowledge and understanding about it, its old-fashioned image, and unappealing name. Resources dedicated to Pilots have reduced considerably in terms of Assembly level staffing, and many synods do not appoint Regional Pilots Officers. Pilots is currently rather costly in terms of staff and committee time, and resources produced, in relation to the number of children and young people benefitting. The relationship to URC Youth is unclear.

There is a clear appetite within the Pilots community to adapt and widen the appeal of Pilots, whilst enabling existing companies to continue operating in ways that work for them. PMC is supportive, as evidenced by the recent Pilots sponsorship of The Big Speak Out event for all young people. It remains a significant means by which some churches engage with families in the local community.

‘Pilots is the best thing our church has ever done.’

16. Hearing from synods

Questionnaires from Mission Council members, meetings with synod children’s and youth work committees.

Synods expressed positive appreciation of their appointed lead workers (CYDOs and other appointments), and delight in what was happening.

'Local church stuff like Messy Church/ Pilots/tots groups/youth clubs etc. Dedicated leaders unpaid and paid.' *'Increasing number of children and young people attending some local churches and increased participation by some of these in the activities of the wider URC.'*

However, there was a clear sense of a growing number of churches with no children or young people, and the need to support churches in relating to children, young people and families beyond the traditional Sunday-based activities.

'Difficult to answer as there are no children in any of the ten or so churches I have taken services over the last two years.' A sense that *'compromise needed, changes needed'* to tackle *'the sadness of churches who feel they have no young people and the need to support isolated YP in their churches;'* and to *'help children and youth feel part of a Christian community that is relevant and meaningful to their lives.'*

In terms of strategy, synods often referred to their CYDO or other appointed staff, with a couple having clear aims.

'Greater experimentation/ exploration of new ideas and ways of serving the needs of children and young people in our communities.'

In terms of what was needed key areas were highlighted:

'In most places when a reasonable nucleus of children disappear hope for recovery is low. So we ought to be investing in places currently with a group of children and young people – plus aiming to grow new communities through carer and toddler or messy church groups.'

'I think that resources and ideas which are simple to implement for churches with a few or occasional children/YP are always welcome (especially if free resources) – CYDOs do already do this, of course.'

'Very variable from church to church – but experience and best practice tends not to be shared.'

Case studies – *Northern Synod has created youth opportunities – paid part-time roles for young adults in churches with a community focus, with churches paying expenses and the synod covering employment costs. Wessex Synod is on a journey to 'To become a "child friendly synod" and to "Walk the Way" all ages together.'*

17. Hearing from CYDOs

Interviews with CYDOs, CYDO and group discussion

There has been a chequered and at times painful history in the relationship between synods, CYDOs (and their previous incarnations) and Church House staff and CYWC. The allocation of CYDO time to Assembly-level work has been problematic and a source of dispute and poor quality management at times. Of the 13 synods today eight have CYDOs in post (one has two), one is reviewing the post following staff departure, one has appointed two very similar posts, one has a part-time Children's Work Advisor and is looking to appoint a part-time Youth Work post; one is recruiting to two very part-time posts, one has a part-time Church Development Worker. Like much of URC life, synods are increasingly creating

variations on the original theme to best respond to their synod context and needs. As a result there is no URC-wide CYDO 'programme' or 'team'.

'aware of the lack of a person acting as focus/place holder for C&YW in our synod – feel the synod has suffered from this'

Already there are moves to change the working culture and to be more inclusive of equivalent 'CYDO' posts. The allocation of tasks is being more skills and passions based. CYDOs are being offered training opportunities on behalf of the whole group. CYDOs have appreciated a more consultative, delegation-focussed process and would like to see real working partnership develop with both the CYWC and the church house CYW team. Synods without CYDOs are becoming more aware of the disadvantages of being outside the loop of learning, reflecting and planning for Assembly level work in this area and the potential impact on their engagement with children and young people. At the same time the denomination as a whole is not able to benefit from the innovative work they are developing such as Scotland's parallel Youth Synod meeting and Northern's Youth Opportunities programme of paid part-time internships.

18. Wider URC Perspectives

Training of ministers – interviews with RCLS, EM2&3

All three RCLs aim within EM1 to include some specialist input around children and young people, often drawing on CYDOs to contribute. Where ministerial students do not have prior experience in this area of work, it is likely that one of their placements will include children and young people. However there is no requirement from the URC or curriculum to be followed in this area, and this is still predominately seen as a separate (and optional) area rather than an integrated aspect of all training, pertinent to all subjects and areas of ministry and mission. Boundary training and safeguarding are the only compulsory elements at all levels of ministerial training which are likely to include children and young people, with the risk that they are only considered as either vulnerable victims or potential 'accusers', in other words from a deficit or problematic perspective.

EM2 and EM3 have no fixed curriculum, being issue rather than content driven. As sessions are confidential, and there is no data base of study topics it is not possible to know if children and young people are ever covered. Unless chosen by a ministerial student as their area of study, children and young people, and intergenerational approaches do not appear to be addressed. In synod spring and summer schools, CYDOS are sometimes asked to provide optional sessions. In addition, CYDOs offer a variety of training in all-age worship, children's and youth work across those synods which have CYDOs, but this training tends to be attended by volunteers working specifically with children and young people rather than ministers and lay preachers, or wider eldership. There is a *'need to connect ministerial training to all-age work all the way through'*.

There are currently no obvious ways for young people to access the RCLs, few opportunities for young adults wanting to explore theology more deeply without entering one of the training programmes for a recognised ministry. *Stepwise* (the replacement for TLS) is being designed to be more accessible for young people. There needs to be a commitment to engaging them in the roll-out and monitoring the impact of this. There is no place for training in children's, families or youth work/ministry within the RCLs or *Stepwise*. As a result, all training offered in these areas is ad hoc and does not create a sense of the URC having a community of people trained at a variety of levels in this area (young leader, volunteer helper, volunteer leader, coordinator/elder, employed early career, employed experienced etc) apart from the CYDOs.

URC churches are supposed to have a nominated Children's and Youth Elder, and the CYW office sends mailings to these people twice a year. However, in practice a number of churches do not have anyone in this role, so all information goes to the church secretary. In a number of churches, the person in this role does not appear to be connected to the volunteers engaging with children and young people, and material and information does not get passed on or brought to the church's attention. CYW office created some guidelines for this role in 2002, however these are in need of updating to re-envision those taking this important position within local congregations.

19. Hearing from the General Secretariat

The General Secretariat recognised that there is a perceived anxiety about the visibility of children and young people when the work with them doesn't result in numbers in churches. However, they acknowledged that a lack of children in church does not necessarily mean that there are no children associated with the life of the church. They identified issues around the process of becoming a member for young people and belonging more generally, and the disconnect between large events and local church life for isolated young people. They suggested that young people have not been enabled to explore vocation since the demise of Ginger Group and other such projects.

In many ways the denomination is at the mercy of its ecclesiology – synods can depart from national policy (as can individual churches). So it is vital that the CYW team and CYDOs have the synods' respect. Coordination is needed between local-synodical-denominational levels so all are working together. CYDOs have dispersed role often combined with a safeguarding role. The CYDO programme needs clarity over roles and responsibilities. There are difficulties around management in synods, who sometimes lack appropriately skilled people with an understanding of line-management, creating anxiety about accountability and support. They agreed there is a need to incorporate children's and youth work in *Walking the Way* and develop an intergenerational approach.

'There needs to be a clear and realistic vision for the children's and youth work of the church, which needs to be seen in the light of wider societal needs. New ways of helping children and young people on the road of discipleship are needed, and an emphasis on mission alongside ministry.' DGS

20. Conclusions

Children's and youth work needs a unifying sense of purpose within which local churches, synods, networks and Assembly level work can have a sense of contributing to a shared goal.

We propose the following statement, taken from the CYDO role descriptor:

Vision: children and young people playing their part in the mission of God

Mission: *Missional discipleship with children and young people that encompasses experiencing, exploring and expressing the Way of Jesus in, through and beyond the church* – clear links to *Walking the Way*

Strategy: enact this through thriving local URC congregations with inclusive, intercultural and intergenerational ethos – both growing those inside and reaching those outside. This will in turn enrich and enliven those local congregations.

Aims: Strengthen and support local congregations in five key areas in sharing life in all its fullness with children and young people: faith, community, identity, engagement and growth/change

Actions: In our review of the children's and youth work of the URC it appears that most of the key structures and elements are present to enable this to happen, but they are currently experienced as dying embers rather than heat generating fire in the life of the church. The strap line for the future strategy is therefore taken from 2 Timothy 1: FAN INTO FLAMES the gift of God that is within you.

Priority areas to FAN INTO FLAMES include strengthening supportive networks for existing work (such as Guiding and Scouting, Girls and Boys Brigade, Pilots); refocusing on the youngest age groups and supporting families and carers; encouraging all churches to identify ways of engaging with issues impacting children and young people in connection with Action for Children, TLG and others; working in partnership with Messy Church, LICC, Bible Society and others to develop new approaches to discipleship; offering training to those engaging with children and young people; and deepening the engagement of children and young people with the breadth of the mission of God. Central to how this will be achieved is re-constructing the CYDO Programme to be more flexible, inclusive of all synods, and more focussed on being a dispersed team working on projects and priorities in conjunction with CYWC and church house staff. They in turn need to work constructively with volunteer-led networks and groups such as Pilots, URCGS, Crossfire and others.

Pilots has a place within the 'mixed economy' of children's and youth work in the URC, both in its existing form as a means of consistent mission and discipleship, and in a new accessible form to enable churches to supplement Messy Church and other monthly or occasional all-age services with a group to disciple small groups of children.

Children's and youth work committee should review its work through the lens of this mission and strategy annually and seek to deploy resources accordingly. The staffing level and budget should remain at their present level for on-going work, and the current short-term posts be reviewed to support the longer-term focus. It is anticipated that a few new initiatives, such as developing discipleship through Messy Church and Pilots, and enabling churches to engage with education, may seek additional grant funding.

Children's and youth work committee also reminds the URC that at all levels it should support individuals of all ages in their discipleship roles with children and young people beyond church activities, for example, as grandparents, godparents, foster-carers, adoptive parents, school visitors, child contact centre volunteers, educators and so on.

We conclude with a wide-ranging question for whole church to consider:

How to effectively resource local churches and develop inclusive, intercultural and intergenerational ethos which are both growing those inside and reaching those outside?

"Tradition is not worshipping the ashes but tending the flame"

(Gustave Mahler – possibly based on Thomas More)

21. URC yearbook statistics on children (under 18s)

Year	Data collected	Average congregation including children	Children worshipping at main service	Children associated with the life of the Church (excluding those in main service)
2018	31/12/2016	53379	14188	30784
2017	1/1/16 to 31/12/16	55979	14778	33978
2016	1/1/15 to 31/12/15	56134	15108	38758
2015	1/1/14 to 31/12/14	58347	16273	41124
2014	1/1/13 to 31/12/13	59828	15473	42076
2013	30/10/2011	62430	16018	47744
2012	27/10/2010	65802	14735	53279
2011	26/01/2010	70306	15997	57310
2010	13/11/2008	70711	17142	67691
2009	16/08/2007	74087	17849	67658
2008		76438	18476	66775
2007		79324	20018	70269
2006		80446	21852	72384
2005		82613	22843	84928
2004		86336	23718	89451
2003		87798	25559	89769
2002		89473	25773	93386

Year	Number of companies	Number of Pilots	Average (mean) company size
2006	86	1639	19
2007	87	1584	18
2008	90	1486	17
2009	87	1378	16
2010	81	1193	15
2011	88	1260	14
2012	81	1139	14
2013	75	1161	15
2014	65	1059	16

2015	61	845	13
2016	59	839	14
2017	50	627	12
2018	42	597	14

22. Pilots statistics

Year	Deckhands (5 to 6 years)	Adventurers (7 to 10 years)	Voyagers (11 to 14 years)	Navigators (15 to 17)	Total
2006	331	868	375	65	1639
2007	337	840	372	45	1594
2008	288	765	378	55	1486
2009	261	753	305	59	1378
2010	218	616	298	61	1193
2011	242	679	256	83	1260
2012	216	610	241	72	1139
2013	236	612	234	79	1161
2014	208	550	243	68	1059
2015	178	446	173	48	845
2016	176	431	183	49	839
2017	156	392	123	33	627
2018	135	353	94	15	597

23. Review consultation processes

Synod children's and youth work committee (or other appropriate committee) visited:
East Midlands, Yorkshire, Mersey, South Western, Northern, Southern

Synods visited/contacted – other:
Wales, Wessex, Scotland, West Midlands, Thames North

Churches visited:
Herringthorpe URC, Rotherham – Youth and children's worker – Nic Blackmore
Sheffield team ministry (14 churches)

Kingston Park St John LEP, Newcastle – children's worker – Hannah Middleton
 Redland Park URC, Bristol
 Harrold URC, Bedfordshire
 Taunton URC
 St Andrew's Roundhay, Leeds – Children, youth and family worker – Beverley Gilbert
 Chandler's Ford URC, Hampshire
 United Church, Winchester
 Bulwell URC, Nottingham – Children's youth and families leader – Eleanor Rice
 Wade Street, Lichfield – Youth Worker – Anthony Narain and Children's and Families Worker
 – Ann Richardson
 Wellingborough URC
 St John's Orpington, Kent
 Trinity, Abingdon
 Sedlescombe Chapel, E Sussex
 Christ Church, Lewes
 Clapton, London
 Well St United, Buckingham
 Parkminster URC, Cardiff
 City URC, Cardiff
 East Kilbride, East Mains, Righead and Hamilton (by phone)

Pilots Companies visited:

Ilford, Gosport, Chesham and The Michael, Sheffield

Community Youth Projects:

Genesis – Jon Oliverio, South Devon
 The Edge, Bradford

Also met with:

General Secretary and Deputies
 CYDOs – four individually, and whole group discussion
 Karen Morrison – previous HCYW
 Simon Peters – previous Programme Officer
 Dan Morrell – past YA Moderator
 Sarah Lane-Cawte – FCG Education Officer
 Mark Steel – Crossfire
 Congregational Federation
 Methodist Church
 Open the Book
 Wayne Hawkins CWM
 Lucy Moore Messy Church / BRF
 Boys Brigade
 Girls Brigade
 URCSF
 URC Youth Exec

Questionnaire responses: (and return rates)

Youth Assembly – 11 (approx. 10%)
 The Big Speak Out – 16 (approx. 35%)
 Pilots Management Committee – 7 (approx. 75%)
 Mission Council – 24 (approx. 30%)
 All churches – 94 (approx. 7%)
 General Assembly – 29 (approx. 9%)
 Under 11s – 27 churches (and 7 'no children') (approx. 3.5%)
 Pilots Companies – 30 (approx. 75%)

Paper B3

Children's and youth work committee

CYWC outline strategy

Church 2018
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2018

Paper B3

Children's and youth work committee

CYWC outline strategy

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Jenny Mills (committee convenor) revdjmill@btinternet.com
Action required	
Draft resolution(s)	See children's and youth work review report 2018.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	CYWC outline strategy in response to review report.
Main points	Sets out a vision and strategy for the next five years for children's and youth work in the URC.
Previous relevant documents	See children's and youth work review report 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	See children's and youth work review report 2018.

Summary of impact

Financial	None
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Potential to increase partnership working with ecumenical and parachurch partners, impacting children and young people beyond the URC.

CYWC outline strategy

Fan into flames

- already have the glowing embers – need to encourage, rekindle
- tradition is not worshipping the ashes but tending the flame

URC – aim: thriving local congregations with inclusive, intercultural and intergenerational ethos which are growing those inside and reaching those outside

Purpose for CYWC: **children and young people playing their part in the mission of God**

Strategy: support and strengthen local congregations in five key areas:

- Faith – sharing spiritual resources
- Community – sharing relational resources
- Identity – sharing stories, events, connections
- Engagement – sharing in the life of the local context
- Growth – sharing new, creative, risky change (to develop potential)

Five-year strategy: key tasks

1. Re-unite all the parts children's and youth work
2. Initiate deliberate culture change – non-competitive intergenerational whole life missional discipleship throughout whole church
3. Focus on churches with 'no' children and young people
4. Focus on under 5s, then 5 to 11s, then 11 to 18s, then 18+
5. Reshape CYDO programme – all synods and Church House as learning community and team
6. Reshape Pilots – including project with Messy Church
7. Develop accessible go-to resource bank with links to URC people
8. Develop communication – reinvest in face2face
9. Celebrate!!

Detailed five-year strategy

1. Re-unite all the parts children's and youth work

- Clear vision and focus – every part see where it fits in this
- Connect URCSF, BB, GB, Pilots, Crossfire, Messy Church etc – cross fertilisation
- Integrated diary of events across whole URC (CYDOs as QA process for this)
- Integrated flow between age ranges – cross over, shared identity

- Connect with other areas of URC to impact positively the lives of children and young people (JPIT, CRCW, FCG)
- Promote partnerships with other agencies to foster engagement in issues impacting children and young people (Action for Children, TLG, etc).

2. Initiate deliberate culture change – non-competitive intergenerational whole life missional discipleship throughout whole church

- *Walking the Way* and *Stepwise*
- LICC – training and learning hubs
- Charter for Children – review and revise for 2020 GA
- Church House culture
- Synod culture
- Child Friendly Church Award – local church culture
- RCLs, EM1, EM2, EM3 – training for ministry
- *Yearbook* and annual returns
- *Prayer handbook*
- All-age worship training and resources
- Widen view of ‘church’ to more than Sunday morning
- Church and society, ecumenical and interfaith relations, global and intercultural ministries.

3. Focus on churches with ‘no’ children and young people

- Promote discussion and awareness of existing connections with children and youth people in local churches and wider community
- Resources for engaging with children in people’s hearts and minds (grandchildren, wider family, godchildren, friends and neighbours etc)
- Resources for engaging with church premises users – Scouts, Guides, others
- Resources for engaging with local schools, colleges and universities
- Resources for engaging with children and young people in need of extra support
- Resources for engaging ‘occasional’ C&YP attenders
- Resources for connecting with local churches with C&YP – intergenerational exchanges
- Ways to support URC wide C&YP (e.g. Greenbelt craft projects)
- Ways to engage in advocacy for children and young people.

4. Focus on under 5s, then 5 to 11s, then 11 to 18s, then 18+

- Year two – under 5s
- Year three – 5 to 11s
- Year four – 11 to 18s
- Year five – 18 to 25s
- For each age group – those in the church, those coming to church premises, and those beyond the church in wider community
- Supporting parents/carers/wider family
- Child baptism/dedication/thanksgiving
- Messy Church
- Making space for children and young people in church and engaging in worship as active contributors.

5. Reshape CYDO programme – all synods and Church House as learning community and team

- Every synod asked to give one day per week equivalent of suitably skilled and experienced person to CYW Assembly level work (fulfilling strategy) – cut to 20% (!). Gives equivalent of another 2.6 people to serve the whole denomination
- Need to be negotiated around skills, passions, synod priorities – be response to local church needs etc – more flexible approach
- Possibility of taking a lead for whole denomination in an area for a period of time (one to three years)
- Development of stronger team ethos – synod and Church House staff
- Development of peer learning community – sharing learning and development to benefit whole URC
- Development of peer mutual accountability – whole team working together to achieve shared goals – in direct dialogue with CYWC.

6. Reshape Pilots – including project with Messy Church

- Strengthen proactive support for existing companies
- Develop ‘Pilots Lite’ version to complement existing Pilots ‘Max’ as resource for churches running Messy Church/all-age service once a month to create discipleship tool for children in between those events
- Reduce Pilots age range to 5 to 14s and develop young leadership training programme for 15 to 18s for Pilots and others
- Create ‘roadshow’ event for Pilots to run in all synods/regions
- Create project with Messy Church to explore developing discipleship through linking with Pilots.

7. Develop accessible go-to resource bank with links to URC people

- Develop website – accessible, easily searchable etc
- Develop resources and links to existing wider resources
- Provide links to URC people and churches that have recent relevant experience in each area
- Create network of ‘this works for us’ advocates.

8. Develop communication – reinvest in face2face

- Widen content/contributors and reach of bi-monthly news
- Create networks
- Invest in visiting churches – targets – visit 50% of URC churches in five years? – 50 churches each for each synod and Church House staff – ten per year.

9. Celebrate!!

- Share the good news of what URC churches are doing – social media, website, URC communications etc
- Share the good news of what URC C&YP are doing – monthly award, sharing grants and opportunities reports, Youth Exec/synod reps
- Help the church enjoy children and young people being part of URC
- Be a source of hope and joy
- Party – have fun and play.

Paper D1

Education and learning committee

Honouring the Windermere Centre's
legacy through the discipleship
development strategy

Church 2018
United
Church 2018
Reformed
Church 2018
Church

Paper D1

Education and learning

Honouring the Windermere Centre's legacy through the discipleship development strategy

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Professor Neil Messer, Convenor The Revd Fiona Thomas, Secretary fiona.thomas@urc.org.uk
Action required	Discussion in groups with written feedback.
Draft resolution(s)	None – not applicable.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The paper outlines some possible uses of the proceeds from the sale of the Windermere Centre, and aims to gain a steer for the committee's further work in this area from Mission Council through discussion groups.
Main points	A menu of options is offered for spending interest only, spending a combination of interest and capital; and spending capital only. This should be seen within the overall <i>Walking the Way. Living the life of Jesus today</i> vision adopted by General Assembly.
Previous relevant documents	Resolution six, Mission Council May 2017; paper D2 Mission Council March 2018; minutes of Mission Council March 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	The secretary of the resource sharing task group; URC Treasurer.

Summary of impact

Financial	The feedback obtained at this meeting will help to shape the proposals for using the proceeds from the sale of the Windermere Centre which are put to Mission Council in May 2019.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	There is no external impact of discussing these matters, although the use to which funds are eventually put could possibly have some ecumenical implications.

Honouring the Windermere Centre's legacy through the discipleship development strategy

Strategy summary

As God has loved you,
so love the world and its people as you encounter them,
with all the imagination, energy, wisdom and resources available to you.

1. Introduction ¹

- 1.1 The goal of the discipleship development strategy is that the people of the United Reformed Church are equipped to:
- a) participate joyfully and generously in the mission of God to the world
 - b) take the challenges, resources and responses to mission seriously
 - c) walk the way of Jesus and live the life of discipleship.
- 1.2 There are four intertwined aspects to this strategy:
- Accounting for hope:*
Disciples will be equipped to 'give an account of the hope that is in them' with gentleness and reverence (1 Peter 3.15-16a)
- All are pilgrims on the journey:*
Addressing the realities of inequality by emphasising equitable access to resources and opportunities.
- Ask, seek, knock: God-given senses in the service of learning*
Developing the necessary gifts, skills and aptitudes, in order that we all continue to grow in our own vocation and discipleship.
- Bread for the journey, shared and replenished*
Attention to developing people and congregations is rightly informed by sharing resources in a spirit of generosity.

2. Work done since March 2018

- 2.1 A questionnaire sent to synods in September 2017 asked for information on financial and personnel resources being made available for discipleship development. Analysis of the responses revealed an abundance of training experiences and opportunities

¹ Readers are advised to read paper D2 discussed by Mission Council in March 2018 which described the discipleship development strategy at some length. This first section is a very brief summary of that.

being offered by synods. It was also apparent that some of the questions could have been framed more clearly; that the answers to the questions did not always come from the people who had the necessary information; and that some synods gave narrative answers rather than the figures that had been requested.

- 2.2 However, preliminary work on the figures suggests that considerable resources are already being offered through synods.
- 2.3 There is a clear need for detailed and consistent work to be done to complete the mapping process, referred to as ‘joining the dots’ by the education and learning committee when it discussed this in May 2018. The education and learning committee is currently taking steps to achieve this.

3. Progress on the strategy

- 3.1 The draft strategy document presented to Mission Council in March 2018 identified 28 action points for implementation and four means of monitoring progress on the action points. Since March, the work of the education and learning team has focused on establishing the foundations of *Stepwise*, as a core part of the strategy. The appointment of staff for *Stepwise* has released staff time to attend to other aspects of the strategy.
- 3.2 Having discussed the draft discipleship development strategy in March, Mission Council resolved:
Mission Council
- a) commends the work done by the education and learning committee towards producing a viable, costed strategy for lay training and congregational development as requested in May 2017
 - b) endorses the plans for further financial work, to consider the use of both the capital and income from the sale of the Windermere Centre, by the education and learning committee, finance committee and resource-sharing task group in conjunction with the synods
 - c) and anticipates receiving and adopting the criteria and scoping for a Discipleship Development Fund at its meeting in May 2019.
- 3.3.1 At its meeting in May 2018 the E&L Committee explored possibilities for using the capital and income from the sale of the Windermere Centre and followed this up when it met in September 2018. There is much work still to be done. “Capacity” was seen as a major issue to be taken into account when using capital given that:
- i. Whether spending capital or income, there would need to be monitoring of impact and the ability to measure outputs
 - ii. The larger the expenditure to be made, the greater the staff capacity needed to manage it, wherever that staffing is placed
 - iii. The body making the expenditure requires the capacity to benefit from doing so. It is relatively easy to spend large amounts of money and much harder to ensure that the benefit from such spending has the desired effect
 - iv. Funds are used responsibly when there is clear costing of opportunities, and not simply a list of desirable activities and projects.
- 3.4 The legacy of the Windermere Centre will be honoured if the proceeds of the sale of the building are used in ways that express the imagination and theological risk-taking of the whole people of God that characterized the mission of the Centre.

4. Seeking a steer towards May 2019

- 4.1 Mission Council passed a resolution in March 2018 commending the work being done on the discipleship development strategy and anticipating that a final paper would be brought to it for decision in May 2019. To help the relevant committees to reach that point, it would be helpful to have feedback from discussion groups at the November meeting of Mission Council on possible uses of the funds to be explored over the next six months. The rest of this paper outlines these and ends with questions for groups to consider. The groups are also invited to make further suggestions in addition to the examples given below.

5. Menu of options for using the proceeds from the sale of the Windermere Centre

- 5.1 The net proceeds from the sale of the Centre are likely to be about £850,000. To put this amount in some sort of perspective, the education and learning committee's budget for 2018 is £1.8 million, and this goes towards supporting eleven teaching and educational administrative staff posts in three Resource Centres for Learning, 5.5 full-time equivalent posts in the education and learning team, academic fees and support for ministerial students, grant support for continuing ministerial development including lay preachers, development of *Stepwise*, and networking between synod field officers. The capital from the sale of the Windermere Centre is equivalent to:
- 47% of the committee's budget for one year, or
 - approximately 3.5 new middle level staff posts for five years, or
 - a one-off grant of £65,000 to each of the 13 synods

Option one: using interest only

- 5.2 If the whole of the proceeds from the sale of the Centre were invested at a notional interest rate of 6%, some £51,000 per annum could be generated to fund aspects of individual and congregational discipleship development. If part of the capital, e.g. £250,000 were "top-sliced" and allocated for spending directly, the reduced amount of interest from the remaining £600,000 would continue to be available.

Examples of uses of the funds	Amount available (no top slicing of capital)	Amount available (after top slicing of capital)
1.1 To support individual and congregational discipleship by contributing seed funding for a dedicated discipleship development fund as originally proposed in May 2017.	£20,000	£15,000
1.2 To continue staffing for <i>Walking the Way</i> when CWM funds cease, in order to sustain the momentum of the URC's focus on missional discipleship.	£31,000	£21,000

- 5.3 This would place relatively low additional demands on existing capacity, be in line with current expenditure, and be sustainable in the long term. Part of the strategy outlined in March 2018 is for the education and learning committee to develop criteria for the discipleship development fund which directs funds to where they are most

needed for the sake of equity – see section four of paper D2 at Mission Council in March 2018.

Option two: using part of the capital

- 5.4 Mission Council asked for serious consideration to be given to using the capital receipts to have a significant impact on discipleship development. The option above of “top slicing” would make £250,000 available to spend.

Examples of uses of the funds	Notional cost
2.1 Using LICC to support and develop culture change as part of <i>Walking the Way</i> , through accompanying a number of congregations over a protracted period. This is a medium to long term action for 3 to 5 years. Experience from the Methodist Church suggests that it has a good chance of making a positive impact on confidence and evangelism locally.	£50,000
2.2 Developing methods, with external consultancy, to help congregations move forward through reviewing their life and mission. This would be informed by the work already commissioned and developing in the synods of Yorkshire and Wales, from work initiated by the E&LC in 2016 and proving to have a positive impact.	£50,000
2.3 Developing the shared capacity of RCLs and synods to support individual and congregational discipleship development, along various lines already begun, including intensive visits by RCLs to synods and funding for churches and individuals to spend time with the RCLs.	£40,000
2.4 Developing communities of young people, using (e.g.) empty Manses, as a variety of pioneer ministry. Some examples of previous similar projects would be Ginger Groups (URC), Root Groups (CofE), Lambeth Community (CofE), and the ‘Time For God’ house in Hull (URC). A non-residential model is offered by the Methodist <i>One</i> internship programme.	£90,000

Option three: using all the capital

- 5.5 The Education and learning committee has been wary of recommending that all the capital is spent, because this relatively small amount of funding could be used quickly without any discernible impact – unless it is part of a much clearer overall vision which is owned by the United Reformed Church at large. It is the committee’s view that *Walking the Way* is such a vision, and should be the first call on the use of the funds. Therefore, in addition to the examples cited above, and in tune with the boldness which was the hallmark of the Windermere Centre at its best, the following examples are offered:

Examples of uses of the funds
3.1 Staffing of a dispersed URC film unit, to be coordinated by communications and available to be commissioned by synods, Assembly committees and local congregations. Up to three full-time equivalent members of staff (including administrator) and running costs for a period of five years.
3.2 A dedicated access fund to enable URC meetings and events to offer professional childcare, signers, and accommodation for carers wherever necessary to enable individuals to take part in discipleship development opportunities. This would become available after local funds from churches and synods had been drawn upon fully, and would be administered through synods, for re-imburement from Church House.

For discussion in groups at Mission Council

1. The paper offers three main options for using the funds: interest only, a combination of interest and capital, or capital only. Which one of these does your group favour? What are your reasons for this?
2. Having been offered some examples above, can you suggest other ways of using the interest, interest and capital, or capital only, based on the best use of funds that you have encountered for developing grassroots discipleship?
3. If you wish the United Reformed Church to spend some or all of the capital, how could capacity be developed to ensure that the spending has a significant positive impact?
4. Which of the examples mentioned above, and/or suggested by you, do you wish to see worked out in more detail for the final version of the paper at Mission Council in May 2019?

Paper G1

Finance committee

Budget for 2019

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper G1

Finance committee

Budget 2019

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Ian Hardie ianzhardie@googlemail.com
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council adopts the budget for 2019 as set out in the Appendix to paper G1 for November 2018 Mission Council.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The paper presents a budget for 2019 for decision and financial projections for 2020 and 2021 for information.
Main points	<p>M&M giving for 2019 is forecast to be around 1.6% lower than the 2018 budget figure.</p> <p>Overall expenditure is expected to be marginally less than in 2018, largely as a result of a reduction in the costs of ministry.</p> <p>The budget only achieves balance by assuming additional funding for ministerial pension costs will come from synods. Otherwise there will be a deficit in 2019, which Mission Council was advised in March finance committee did not intend to address for that one year.</p> <p>The position for 2020 is reasonably satisfactory at this stage. M&M giving is expected to further reduce. There will be some additional costs in 2021 but we have time to focus on those issues in the coming years.</p>
Previous relevant documents	Paper G1 for March 2018 Mission Council.
Consultation has taken place with...	Budget holders in Church House and the URC Trust.

Summary of impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

Budget 2019

1. Attached in column three of the Appendix is the draft budget for 2019 which the finance committee presents to Mission Council. This budget has been reviewed by the URC Trustees and has their support.

Income

2. Our income comes predominately from local churches through their Ministry and Mission Fund ('M&M') contributions. Estimates supplied by the synods over the summer suggest around a 1.6% reduction in giving compared with the 2018 budget figure. The ongoing decline in URC membership means that this still represents an increase in average giving to M&M per member.
3. The budget projects only a small increase in rental income in the year because of the delay in letting the third floor flat while staff are displaced from the lower basement of Church House.
4. It is also anticipated that an additional contribution towards the cost of ministers' pensions will come from a number of synods during the year. This is discussed more fully in a separate paper G2.

Stipends and ministers

5. More than two-thirds of our expenditure relates to paying stipends and directly related costs of Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers in local settings.
6. Mission Council has delegated the task of setting the stipend to the finance committee in conjunction with the URC Trustees. The recommended rise for 2019, which is built into this budget, is 2.65%. This increase has been calculated using a formula applied consistently for a number of years based on the consumer price index and average weekly earnings movements at consistent annual rests. Such a rise would increase the stipend by £696 to £26,880.
7. The 2019 budget assumes seven ministers of other denominations will be given Certificates of Eligibility to enable them to transfer permanently to the URC roll of ministers. Even with these additional ministers and the stipend increase suggested above, the reduction in the forecast overall number of available ministers means that total spend on costs of ministry shows a reduction of more than £230,000.

Other expenditure

8. The education and learning department budget is slightly down on 2018 which contained the (one-off) costs associated with the ending of the TLS programme and the start of the successor *Stepwise* programme, although some provision has been made in 2019 for the costs of those still completing TLS work already started. Most

other parts of the discipleship department budget have modest uplifts on 2018 other than safeguarding where a one off exercise to digitise records is planned for 2019.

9. The mission department budget is broadly maintained at current levels apart from a reduction in CWM support for funding *Fresh Expressions*.
10. The administration and resources department budget is at approximately the same level as in 2018 though it now includes for the first time costs of projects which cross departmental boundaries and also recharges a portion of the Chief Finance Officer's costs to RMHS and URC ministers' pension fund (also for the first time). The admin budget in 2019 is flattered in comparison with 2018 because of advice from the auditors that we did not need to depreciate the costs of the Church House refurbishment.

Overall 2019 position

11. As a result of all of this, the 2019 budget projects a virtually 'break-even' position. Should Mission Council be minded not to accept the finance committee recommendation to invite additional financial support from synods to help meet the increased costs of contributions to the ministers' pension fund there might be a deficit of up to £200,000. Finance committee indicated to Mission Council that it would not seek to address such a budget shortfall for 2019 but would be prepared to reduce our reserves until the actual position became clearer during that year itself.

Resolution

12. **Mission Council adopts the budget for 2019 as set out in the Appendix to paper G1 for November 2018 Mission Council.**

Projections for 2020 and 2021

13. The final two columns in the Appendix show projections for 2020 and 2021. These are not based on detailed discussions with every budget holder but incorporate estimated adjustments for likely changes within major budget categories. Accordingly, these figures should be regarded as very rough approximations only.
14. In both years we have projected a 1.5% drop in M&M giving and 2.5% increases in stipends. It would be good if our assumption about donations from local churches and synods proved pessimistic.
15. '*Walking the Way*' will no longer be funded from CWM in 2021 and decisions will need to be taken about its funding in that year. For the moment we have assumed the costs remain at levels similar to the present. Similarly, we have increase the General Assembly costs for 2021 in line with 2018 Assembly decisions but have not made any adjustment to Mission Council costs at present.
16. The position in 2021 in particular may prove challenging but, bearing in mind the caution that the figures should be regarded as rough approximations only, we believe that we will have time to consider the position further and respond to issues arising in practice over the next year or two. Consequently we are relatively comfortable with these initial projections; particularly for 2020.

G1: Appendix

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

SUMMARY BUDGET & PROJECTIONS 2019 -2021

Department/ Project	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	Actual	Budget	Budget	Projection	Projection
	£	£	£	£	£
Income					
34 Ministry and Mission contributions	(19,104,058)	(18,962,000)	(18,651,000)	(18,371,235)	(18,095,666)
35 Pensions - additional funding	(100,349)	(50,000)	(200,000)	(200,000)	(200,000)
31 Investment and other income					
Dividends	(893,566)	(854,000)	(895,000)	(895,000)	(895,000)
Donations	(3,272)	0	0	0	0
Specific legacies	(3,929)	0	0	0	0
Grants/Income - Memorial Hall Trust/Fund	(268,622)	(260,000)	(260,000)	(260,000)	(260,000)
Net other interest & bank charges	(12,450)	(10,700)	(6,000)	(4,000)	(2,000)
Other income, including property rentals	(57,025)	(137,000)	(139,000)	(151,000)	(151,000)
	(1,238,865)	(1,261,700)	(1,300,000)	(1,310,000)	(1,308,000)
Total income	(20,443,272)	(20,273,700)	(20,151,000)	(19,881,235)	(19,603,666)
Expenditure					
A Discipleship Dept.					
A1 Ministry					
01 Local and special ministries and CRCWs	13,724,030	13,992,727	13,757,000	13,570,326	13,429,059
02 Synod Moderators - stipends and expenses	646,923	690,000	718,000	736,000	754,000
03 Ministries department	312,124	314,300	321,900	325,900	329,900
03P Pastoral & welfare	1,230	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
	14,684,306	14,999,027	14,798,900	14,634,226	14,514,959
A2 Education & Learning					
04 Initial training for ministry	755,702	673,000	710,500	710,500	710,500
04 Continuing training for ministry	62,505	107,500	106,000	106,000	106,000
04 Resource Centres support	593,718	611,000	619,000	639,000	659,000
	1,411,926	1,391,500	1,435,500	1,455,500	1,475,500
W Windermere RCL - net support	99,279	0	0	0	0
04L TLS/Stepwise	89,460	159,350	113,000	115,000	117,000
04P Lay preachers support	4,574	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
On-line learning	1,005	57,600	61,000	62,000	63,000
Lay Development Fund	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
04T Education & Learning department	167,290	175,700	170,000	174,000	178,000
	1,773,535	1,811,150	1,806,500	1,833,500	1,860,500
A3 Children's and Youth Work					
06 Staff costs	164,842	203,500	212,500	217,500	222,500
06 Management, resources and programmes	69,102	81,700	81,700	81,700	81,700
	233,944	285,200	294,200	299,200	304,200
A4 Safeguarding					
07 Safeguarding policy and practice	90,500	95,700	104,000	106,000	108,000
Discipleship Secretariat					
Deputy General Secretary - Discipleship costs	53,182	51,000	80,000	82,000	84,000
B Mission Dept.					
10A-B Mission dept staff and core costs	448,486	524,200	530,500	541,500	553,500
10C-E Mission programmes and memberships (net)	135,841	198,500	220,000	220,000	298,000
	584,327	722,700	750,500	761,500	851,500
11 National Ecumenical Officers	29,389	35,800	36,500	38,500	40,500
	613,715	758,500	787,000	800,000	892,000
C Administration & Resources Dept.					
20 Central Secretariat	232,996	238,200	283,000	288,000	293,000
24 Facilities	264,946	380,200	348,000	352,000	356,000
24A Human Resources	80,093	115,700	82,500	84,500	86,500
23 IT Services	193,917	217,000	226,200	229,200	232,200
21 Finance	409,455	408,500	395,862	403,862	412,862
22 Communications	385,257	414,260	431,000	438,000	446,000
	1,566,663	1,773,860	1,766,562	1,795,562	1,826,562
D Governance					
29 General Assembly	115,000	115,000	100,000	100,000	135,000
27 Mission Council	56,071	46,000	55,500	55,500	55,500
28 Professional fees	158,237	90,000	94,000	94,000	94,000
25 Other	90,338	59,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
	419,646	310,000	319,500	319,500	354,500
Apprenticeship levy	44,337	50,000	54,000	54,000	54,000
Irrecoverable VAT	92,743	140,000	140,000	140,000	140,000
Total expenditure	19,572,572	20,274,437	20,150,662	20,063,989	20,138,722
NET (SURPLUS)/DEFICIT	(870,700)	737	(338)	182,754	535,055

Paper G2

Finance committee

URC ministers' retirement costs –
making best use of our shared
financial resources

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper G2

Finance committee

URC ministers' retirement costs – making best use of our shared financial resources

Basic information

Contact name	Ian Hardie ianzhardie@googlemail.com
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council recognises that additional financial contributions to the URC ministers' pension fund are required and, having noted that several synods are already committed to giving financial support to the pension fund by setting aside for this purpose a percentage of the sale proceeds of redundant non-manse buildings, encourages the other synods to consider giving 10% of the net proceeds of sales of their similar properties to enable the URC to meet its required contributions to the ministers' pension fund. Mission Council believes such giving now has a higher priority than giving in a similar way to the URC Retired Ministers' Housing Society.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To recommend that Mission Council encourages synods to assist in meeting part of the URC's contributions to the ministers' pension fund and to prioritise this giving over similar financial support currently offered by some synods to the URC Retired Ministers' Housing Society.
Main points	<p>Following the recent triennial valuation of the assets and liabilities of the ministers' pension fund contributions will be increasing from January 2019.</p> <p>Noting that several synods have already agreed to give at least 10% of the sale proceeds of redundant buildings to help with increased ministers' pension fund contributions, finance committee recommends to Mission Council that the other synods be encouraged to do so too.</p> <p>Finance committee also recommends that Mission Council encourages synods to accept that now such giving should have priority over any similar synod giving to other central URC bodies.</p>
Previous relevant documents	Papers G1 for both November 2017 and March 2018 Mission Council and the finance committee General Report 2016-2018 to 2018 General Assembly.
Consultation has taken place with...	The URC Pension Executive; the URC Ministers' Pension Trust; the URC Retired Ministers' Housing Society; and synod treasurers.

Summary of impact

Financial	Balancing the central URC budget without putting further strain on M&M giving.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

URC ministers' retirement costs – making best use of our shared financial resources

1. Various papers produced by finance committee during the past year have referred to the anticipated pressure on the URC budget as a result of the perceived level of increased contributions the URC would be required to make to its ministers' pension fund from 1 January 2019. This was expected to be triggered by the triennial valuation of the fund's assets and liabilities as at 1 January 2018; although when all of those papers were produced the final result of that valuation was not known.
2. Indeed, discussions with the scheme actuary are still ongoing: but it looks virtually certain that the annual contributions required from 1 January 2019 will be around £550,000 towards reducing the fund's (dramatically decreased) deficit and £2.15m in respect of future benefits. This will represent a total increase in budgeted annual contributions of the order of £250,000, which is less than envisaged in some of those earlier papers.
3. These increased pension costs are reflected in the draft 2019 budget contained in the separate finance committee paper G1. This suggests that the denominational budget can be kept in balance in 2019, even with these additional pension costs and without putting further pressure on M&M giving by local churches, if additional funding of around £200,000 can be found from other sources. An alternative approach could have been to seek to maintain the pension costs at the current level by making a capital contribution from the reserves of the URC Trust into the ministers' pension fund. For a number of reasons, finance committee do not consider this to be the best approach at this time: in the last year the reserves of the Trust have been depleted by the £2.6m paid into the lay staff pension scheme to reduce its deficit from an unacceptably high level; the Trust needs to retain sufficient reserves to provide protection against unexpected falls in M&M income and unexpected increases in pension costs caused by adverse conditions in the financial markets; and the actions already taken by some synods lead the committee to think that an alternative approach might be better and more successful.
4. As reported on page three of the May 2018 *Digest*, when the Treasurer outlined a range of options for tackling this issue at March 2018 Mission Council, in an informal poll Mission Council members showed no enthusiasm for looking to local churches for such additional funding or for slashing existing URC denominational programmes. This has encouraged finance committee to contemplate looking to synods for the additional financial support.

Possible synod funding support options

5. Recently, all those synods which are (or have been) participating employers in the URC lay staff pension scheme have contributed lump sums towards reducing the deficit on that scheme in order to avoid any increase in their annual contributions to that fund. This was a legal liability of those synods and it was possible to calculate reasonably accurately the liability of each synod.

6. Finance committee has considered whether it might be appropriate to invite synods to contribute a further lump sum from their reserves towards reducing the current £3.9m deficit on the ministers' pension fund. However, the level of contribution required from any single synod in relation to the lay staff pension scheme was much smaller than the amount likely to be required from synods to achieve the same result for the ministers' pension scheme. It is probable that some synods would be unable to make such a contribution out of reserves without risking their financial position more generally. Moreover, it would be much more difficult to arrive at contributions to the ministers' pension fund which were perceived by everyone to be proportionate and 'fair'. Accordingly we are not recommending this route in relation to the ministers' pension fund.
7. At Mission Council's request, contributions from synods towards meeting the annual ministers' pension fund costs have not been sought for the years 2016 to 2018. However, for several years before that, synods made contributions towards meeting the annual deficit reduction costs by donating an agreed amount each year. In a number of cases, synods raised the money to fund their giving by diverting a percentage of the net proceeds of property sales of redundant church buildings (other than manses) to enable that. In most cases this was in addition to amounts being given from the same source to support the work of the URC Retired Ministers' Housing Society (RMHS).
8. Finance committee is attracted by the idea of encouraging synods to use this approach to fund the required additional contributions to the ministers' pension fund since:
 - funds produced in this way would not impact on existing synod balance sheets and so are unlikely to endanger the financial health of synods themselves
 - synods receiving most from the sale proceeds of buildings because of the buoyancy of their local property market would contribute proportionately more than their less fortunate neighbours
 - there is a pleasing symmetry in the fact that no-longer required buildings should help fund the retirement of ministers and CRCWs who have given devoted service in these and similar buildings throughout their working life
 - several synods have already committed to helping meet the costs of the ministers' pension fund in this way and it seems right to encourage the others to follow them.
9. Some treasurers of these other synods have indicated they believe their synod would be willing to contribute to the ministers' pension fund costs in this way, but only if Mission Council were to give the synods encouragement to do so. Some other synod treasurers have indicated that they feel their synod would not be able to contribute a percentage of property sales both to this cause and also to the RMHS: in which case, they would be looking to Mission Council for an indication of where their financial priorities should lie.

The RMHS financial position

10. Ministries committee reported to the 2018 General Assembly that, partly as a result of the generosity of synods supporting the work of the RMHS financially through giving a proportion of property sale proceeds and other means, the society is in a much stronger financial position than it was when General Assembly encouraged giving to the society in 2006. Assembly gave thanks for all who had contributed across the years. In practice, however, while the synod gifts were crucial in the

early years after 2006 they have been playing a far less essential part in the funding of the society in more recent years. (See paragraph 12 below).

11. When 2018 General Assembly was asked to recognise the continuing needs of the society and encourage appropriate giving in future to aid its work, a number of speakers expressed concern that they saw the financial needs of the RMHS as less pressing than those of the ministers' pension fund, but did not feel this was reflected in the resolution. The URC Deputy Treasurer explained that the finance committee had not had an opportunity to consider the 2017 accounts for the RMHS but would do so in September and was likely to bring this paper to Mission Council re the relative needs of the two worthy potential recipients of synod generosity. The convenor of the ministries committee expressed his personal view that the needs of the pension fund were greater at this time but his resolution, which he saw as compatible with this view, was withdrawn before it was voted on.
12. Finance committee has now had an opportunity to consider the 2017 RMHS accounts. These show that at the end of that year the society held property with a value of £37.467m. Its net indebtedness to other parts of the URC family was £6.179m and the surplus it achieved in the year was £1.68m. Total donations from synods during the year were £115,258.
13. Because fewer ministers requiring housing have been retiring than was formerly the case, the society's stock of houses is slowly reducing; with the surplus made on selling the excess housing contributing substantially to the society's financial results. For each of the past few years the annual surplus has been in excess of £1m. The society is now undertaking substantial work to safeguard, maintain and improve its properties and it is therefore likely to incur significantly increased costs over the next few years. Nonetheless it is anticipated that similarly large surpluses will still be generated in these years also. This will shortly put the society in a position to repay all its loans to the URC Trust and other parts of the URC family and to become cash, as well as asset, rich.

Finance committee's view

14. Finance committee's concern is that money may in future be trapped in the RMHS which, because of the wording of the society's current objectives, may only be used for housing purposes, at a time when other parts of the URC family might be facing difficult financial circumstances. The RMHS directors quite rightly want to ensure their ongoing ability to meet the changing needs of their housing clients. However, the finance committee believes that it would be sensible to slow the pace with which money accumulates within the society by encouraging synods to give priority to supporting the ministers' pension fund over giving to RMHS.
15. Accordingly finance committee offers the following resolution for consideration by Mission Council:
 - **Mission Council recognises that additional financial contributions to the URC ministers' pension fund are required and, having noted that several synods are already committed to giving financial support to the pension fund by setting aside for this purpose a percentage of the sale proceeds of redundant non-manse buildings, encourages the other synods to consider giving 10% of the net proceeds of sales of their similar properties to enable the URC to meet its required contributions to the ministers' pension fund. Mission Council believes such giving now has a higher priority than giving in a similar way to the URC Retired Ministers' Housing Society.**

Paper H1

Ministries committee

Explaining possible variations in
operating a call procedure

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper H1

Ministries committee

Explaining possible variations in operating a call procedure

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Whittle moderator@urceastern.org.uk
Action required	For information.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	General Assembly 2018 requested the ministries committee to bring advice on the implementation of resolution 28 which reminded Assembly of the varying provisions within the Manual with respect to calling a minister to a post.
Main points	Whilst not wanting to suggest legislation, and encouraging flexibility, this paper aims to offer some examples of how our call process may be appropriately exercised in a changing context.
Previous relevant documents	Paper H2 Mission Council October 2016 Paper H1 Mission Council May 2017 Resolutions 28 General Assembly <i>Book of Reports</i> 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	N/a

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	No immediate relevance, although our call processes do concern ecumenical partners in those places where we are in a Local Ecumenical Partnership.

Explaining possible variations in operating a call procedure

1. General Assembly 2018 passed the following resolution (resolution 28):
General Assembly encourages a flexible approach to how ministerial calls are issued and concurred, noting the variety of existing practice and the provisions of sections 1(1)(b), 1(1)(c), 2(1)(vii), 2(4)(A)(iii) and 2(4)(A)(vii) of the Structure of the URC.
2. The cited sections of *the Manual* (Section B Structure) state:
 - 1.(1)(b) Where two or more Local Churches together, and in consultation with the synod, decide that their mission will be more effective if they share resources and ordained ministry, they may, with the approval of the synod, form an association known as a group of churches with a structured relationship and a constitution governing the way in which they relate to one another as to the sharing of both resources and the ordained ministry. Each church within the group shall retain its own identity, and its Church Meeting and elders' meeting shall continue to exercise all their functions in relation to that church, save that, so long as the constitution shall so declare, decisions relating to the calling of a minister (see paragraph 2(1)(vii)) may be taken by a single group Church Meeting at which all the members of each of the constituent churches in the group shall be eligible to attend and vote.
3. 1.(1)(c) Where two or more local churches together, and in consultation with the synod, decide that their mission will be more effective if they share ordained ministry (but not other resources), they may, with the approval of the synod, form an association known as a joint pastorate, with a structured relationship with respect to the provision of ordained ministry only and a statement of intent governing the way in which they relate to one another in relation to the sharing of ordained ministry. Each church within the joint pastorate shall retain its own identity, and its church meeting and elders' meeting shall continue to exercise all their functions in relation to that church, save that, so long as the statement of intent shall so declare, decisions relating to the calling of a minister (see paragraph 2(1)(vii)) may be taken by a single joint pastorate church meeting at which all the members of each of the constituent churches in the joint pastorate shall be eligible to attend and vote.
4. Functions of a Church Meeting:
 - 2 (1) (vii) to call a minister or Church Related Community Worker (CRCW) with the concurrence of the synod(s) (see paragraph 2 (4) (A)(vii)); (Where two or more local churches have formed a group or joint pastorate in accordance with paragraph 1(1)(b) or (c) above on the decision of synod under its function 2(4)(A)(iii), the church meetings of each church may, with the agreement of the synod and so long as the group constitution or the statement of intent as appropriate shall so provide, join together as a group or joint pastorate church meeting for the purpose of calling a minister or CRCW, in which case this function shall be exercised by the group or joint pastorate church meeting.)
5. Functions of synod:
 - 2 (4) (A) (iii) to decide upon all matters regarding the grouping, amalgamation or dissolution of local churches;
 - 2 (4) (A) (vii) to give (or, where deep pastoral concern for the church requires it, to withhold) concurrence in calls to ministers or Church Related Community Workers and, with the Moderator of the synod or the Moderator's deputy presiding, to conduct,

in fellowship with the local church, any ordinations and/or inductions of Ministers and any commissioning and induction of Church Related Community Workers within the synod.

6. The reason this was taken to General Assembly was to reflect the significant discussions on call that have occurred in various places, but not least Mission Council, over the past months, and so to remind General Assembly of the variety of ways in which pastorates may legitimately be structured in order to enable flexibility of scoping and effective mission and ministry.
7. This paper responds to a request to offer further explanation and provide examples. It seems that part of a helpful response is to isolate the relevant portions of *the Manual*, and so that has been done above.
8. We live in a day where the church is in the context of a fast-changing society. Our calling is surely to provide flexible and appropriate ministry. The day when a single congregation calls a person to be its minister as a full-time single pastorate is largely over. Of course, it has never been as universally present as many like to imagine.
9. The key opportunity in the provisions cited is perhaps that of 1(1)(c) which allows for the sharing of ministry by two or more churches in a group to be known as a joint pastorate. There is no limit as to how many churches might be involved.
10. The previous paragraph – 1(1)(b) – allows for a deeper sharing involving other resources, as well as ministry, in what is then known as a group of churches.
11. An important point to note is that these two paragraphs provide for a single church meeting with respect to the matter of calling a minister – and that may provide the biggest challenge in operating this practice.
12. In some areas churches have held this single meeting in different locations, either simultaneously or at varied times. That is certainly ‘allowed’ when congregations are simply sharing a minister, and it could be permissible in what *the Manual* defines as a joint pastorate or a group of churches. A shared meeting is beneficial, and to be encouraged, but may be impractical, depending on geography.
13. A further factor is an increasing use of synod-directed elements as part of a post to which a minister is called. The usage of such scoping varies widely but is likely to be direct service in a significant synod role, such as an ecumenical officer, or additional service in pastorate, which may either be not fully determined at the point of call or deliberately undefined so that it may be moved from one congregation to another in transitional ministry. In some circumstances the synod may be willing to remit the determination of the call to the pastorate. However, it is more likely that a prospective candidate will be interviewed by representatives of the appropriate synod committee. Good practice would be that any such appointment process is completed in advance of a ‘preaching with a view’.
14. How might it work in practice? Here are some possible examples.
15. A group of three churches is scoped at 75%, but the synod adds 25% as a scoped post to be used as a transitional minister.
16. A group of four churches calls two ministers, but uses them in a shared way according to their gifts.

17. A group of four churches becomes accredited as a CRCW project and jointly calls a CRCW to work with them. They agree to use the CRCW on a shared basis, focussing on each church and its community in turn.
18. A group of six churches calls two ministers, allowing them to work together but with clearly defined pastoral responsibility.
19. A group of eight churches calls two ministers, but with a clear agreement as to which four are under the care of which minister. When one minister leaves, the situation is reviewed and the remaining minister retains just one out of their part of the pastorate, and takes up responsibility for three of those that were previously in the other section.
20. A group of 12 churches calls three ministers to a team ministry. Each congregation can identify its 'primary' minister though that may, from time to time, change. Particular gifts and specialisations are shared across the congregations.
21. A group of 14 churches calls two ministers, but is able to additionally identify four local leaders and two retired ministers who are willing to contribute. There is also an NSM who can give ten hours a week. Pastoral responsibilities are identified and reviewed every two years.
22. Of course, none of this prevents, where the synod so determines, a large (or larger) church with (or without) a much smaller church linked to it calling its own minister, subject to synod concurrence.

Paper H2

Ministries committee

Non-stipendiary ministry of Word and Sacraments

Church 2018
United
Church 2018
Reformed
Church 2018
Church

Paper H2

Ministries committee

Non-stipendiary ministry of Word and Sacraments

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Whittle moderator@urceastern.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, authorises a model 4 non-stipendiary ministry which will provide for locally ordained ministers, as outlined in paper H2, November 2018. Mission Council directs the ministries committee to ensure that plans for this model of ministry are appropriately complementary to other ministries of the church – including stipendiary ministry, current models of non-stipendiary ministry, local leadership (recognising that this is currently directed by synods) and the eldership, including the specific role of authorised elders. Mission Council rules that the training for this model of ministry need not be bound by the standard set out in resolution 37 of General Assembly 1997 and that further training might be required before an NSM model 4 could transfer to other models of non-stipendiary or to stipendiary ministry. Mission Council instructs the ministries and education and learning committees to implement model four non-stipendiary ministry in consultation with the assessment board and the resource centres for learning.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Welcoming the contribution of non-stipendiary ministry since its introduction, this offers a way of extending this form of ministry.
Main points	This paper recognizes the value of non-stipendiary ministry and its contribution to the current challenges of church leadership. It introduces a form of locally ordained non-stipendiary ministry, model four NSM.
Previous relevant documents	Numerous reports which have concerned non-stipendiary ministry, notably reports to General Assembly 1982 and reflections on non-stipendiary ministry within the 1995 Patterns of Ministry Report Paper H1 Mission Council November 2017. Resolutions 29 and 30 General Assembly <i>Book of Reports 2018</i> .
Consultation has taken place with...	All 13 synods. The Revd Fiona Thomas, secretary for education and learning The Revd Dr Rosalind Selby, principal, Northern College The Revd Neil Thorogood, principal, Westminster College Faith and order committee CRCW programme sub-committee.

Summary of impact

Financial	No immediate impact on the budget.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	No direct immediate impact, although this proposal mirrors thinking and practice in some partner denominations.

Non-stipendiary ministry of Word and Sacraments – model four

1. In February 2015 ministries committee, with the subsequent endorsement of Mission Council in May 2015, established a working group on non-stipendiary ministry with a remit to explore current practice with respect to non-stipendiary ministry and to make recommendations about how this form of ministry might be better supported and used. The full report of the group is available at www.urc.org.uk/ministries-resources
2. As a result of the report of the working group, ministries committee brought a series of six resolutions to Mission Council, five of which were agreed by consensus. These resolutions concerned, respectively, training requirements, the appointment process, review, retirement and transfer between different forms of ministerial service.
3. Following facilitation, the sixth resolution was also agreed by consensus and then read: 'Mission Council instructs the ministries committee to develop a fourth model of non stipendiary ministry, based in a local church or mission project, whose training is locally focused, to meet the needs of the congregation and the community it serves. The proposal shall be brought to a future General Assembly or Mission Council.' As a result of that instruction the ministries committee brought draft resolution 29 to General Assembly 2018. However, pressures of time meant that it was not possible to reach consensus and the matter was remitted to Mission Council.
4. We assume that the request to do this piece of work, whilst not implying that a resulting proposal would be accepted, suggests that Mission Council recognised that this could well be a useful contribution to future URC ministry. Ministries committee believes that to be the case. Having carefully considered the points raised at General Assembly and their implications, we believe that this is a model that should be adopted and would ask Mission Council to do that.
5. The original vision for NSM within the URC was established by resolutions passed in 1979 and 1980 and was incorporated into section K of *the Manual* as follows:
There are three models of non-stipendiary ministry:
Model I – service in a congregation as part of a team. The pattern is taken from the former eldership of the Churches of Christ and is limited in scope and local in nature.
Model II – pastoral charge of a small congregation, or service as part of a team of ministers caring for a group of churches.
Model III – ministers in secular employment. Service set apart to be a focus for mission in the place of work or leisure. It is related to a local church or District Council.
6. In practice the majority of NSMs now serve under model II, arguably filling gaps in deployment.
7. We recognise that the United Reformed Church enjoys a wide variety of good ministries. Some would suggest that we have a sufficiently wide range of possibilities and that the introduction of a new model is superfluous to requirements
8. However, the findings of the working group, subsequently supported by ministries committee, is that a model 4 non-stipendiary ministry is a much needed and wanted addition to what is rightly a varied and flexible range of ministry. We believe that different forms of ministry add to each other. We see this model as a helpful way of

adding value to the total ministry of the church and sitting alongside the range of ministries to which members of the United Reformed Church are called.

9. While great value is placed on all forms of ministry within the URC, it is clear that most congregations want to be able to relate to an ordained minister and to have a sufficient 'slice' of that person. The introduction of authorised elders at General Assembly 2016 clarified and strengthened questions of lay presidency at the sacraments, but was not intended to address broader questions of ministry provision.
10. It is a highly valued element in URC theology that there are very few roles which are absolutely restricted to a minister. However, we do recognise the value of ministers and that their calling has a role that, though not exclusive, can add value to the ministry we offer in Christ's name. Ministers are recognised in ecumenical and community situations. Responding to the calling places a minister under the discipline of the church. Offering this particularity in this new way has much potential in our current context, where small churches are frequently offering valuable service with diminishing resources of personnel.
11. We hear the call to consider whether there should be a denominational scheme of local leadership. We hear also the call to further support elders in their vital role. We believe that a model 4 NSM will enhance these other ministries, as it sits alongside them, and that it will certainly not undermine them.
12. The call to ministry for model 4 NSM should be determined in the same way as other calls to ministry of word and sacraments through both the synod candidating process and the Assembly's assessment conference. It shall be for the assessment board with the guidance of the education and learning panel to determine what training needs to be undertaken.
13. Training would be tailored according to previous experience (e.g. elders' training, TLS, Stepwise would be considered in determining a training programme) with a minimum standard. Training should be placement-based and should include distance learning, under the auspices of one of the RCLs, and, as well as addressing any need for biblical and doctrinal studies, should ensure a clear understanding of practices within the United Reformed Church and personal formation for ministry. Should a model 4 NSM wish to move into another model of non-stipendiary ministry, it shall be for the assessment board to test that call and, with guidance from the education and learning panel, determine what further training may be required.
14. Each synod should determine the boundaries of model 4 NSM according to their need in planning for mission. There is no definitive list of ways in which a Model 4 NSM might serve, but likely options include pastoral charge of one congregation under the oversight of a pastoral advisor; being attached to a particular congregation or grouping to offer support within a ministries team; and offering key support in priority areas to enable other leadership locally.
15. Such a minister would be appointed by the synod to a termed, but renewable post, possibly for three years in the first instance.

H2

United Reformed Church · Mission Council, November 2018

Paper I1

Mission committee

Update on current work

Church 2018
United
Church 2018
Reformed
Church 2018
Church

Paper I1

Mission committee

Update on current work

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Bernie Collins bernie.collins@thecrocker.net Francis Brien francis.brien@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update on the work of the mission committee.
Main points	Update on Legacies of Slavery, Commitment for Life and staffing. Information about Brexit workshop and Israel/Palestine denominational educational visit in 2019. A new resource for Methodist-URC United Areas.
Previous relevant documents	Mission Committee's report to General Assembly 2018, especially 4.12, 4.13, 4.13.3-7 (visit to Israel/Palestine); 5.3.3.1 (Legacies of Slavery).
Consultation has taken place with...	Christian Aid (about Partnership Agreement); Council for World Mission partners (on Legacies of Slavery); CWM Europe (to plan Brexit, Borders and Belonging conference); Partners of the Israel/Palestine task group (to plan the visit); the Methodist Church, and our law and polity advisory group (re United Areas).

Summary of impact

Financial	Costs to Assembly of the various items in the paper are covered by funds held by mission committee.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	All of the items in this paper are about increasing awareness, understanding and partnership to help our members and partners to participate more effectively in Christ's mission in the world.



Mission update

1. Legacies of slavery

Mission committee have begun the process of how to respond to the Legacies of Slavery hearings sponsored by the Council for World Mission which have taken place in Jamaica, Ghana, USA and the UK. Alan Yates gave a presentation at the September meeting of mission committee and at the February 2019 meeting Michael Jagessar will continue the discussion with particular regard to the theme of 'white privilege'. Mission committee believe this is an extremely serious issue which will require a measured and thorough approach by the denomination.

2. Commitment for Life

A new partnership agreement has been drawn up between the URC and Christian Aid, which confirms our continued partnership and takes account of Christian Aid's new ways of working, but without making any major structural changes to the Commitment for Life programme. The full agreement forms part of an appendix to this paper as a reference document for Mission Council.

3. Response to Brexit

In partnership with CWM, URC Mission are holding a Brexit, Borders and Belonging workshop which will take place at Queens Foundation, Birmingham from 12 to 15 December. URC Secretary for Church and Society, Simeon Mitchell will deliver a keynote address. The workshop takes place at what will be a crucial time in the Brexit process as churches consider how to respond.

4. Israel/Palestine

An educational visit to Israel and Palestine is planned for 18 to 28 September 2019, which stems from the work assigned to mission committee at General Assembly in 2016. The aim is for one person from each of the 13 synods along with two representatives from URC youth to take part and application forms for the visit are now available. Successful applicants will be expected to raise £500 and commit to sharing their experience at local and synod level.

5. Staffing

Linda Mead retires at the end of November after 13 years of dedicated service. Her role at Commitment for Life has been reconfigured, made possible also by the departure of Eve Parker earlier this year. Dr Kevin Snyman will take up the role of programme officer for global justice and partnerships (a joint Commitment for Life/GiM post) on 1 December. Suzanne Pearson joined Church House in October as part-time administrative assistant for Commitment for Life. Roo Stewart joined in September as programme support officer for Church and Society.

6. Methodist/URC United Areas

There have been several requests from United Areas for a constitution which is robust enough to register with the Charity Commission and which complies with both the Structure of the URC and Methodist Constitutional Practice and Discipline (CPD). After considerable work, the Methodist/URC Liaison Group has now finalised a document which has been approved by the law and polity groups of the URC and the Methodist Church. For those United Areas who are seeking to update their constitutions this is now the only version which is endorsed by both denominations. Anyone wishing a copy may contact Philip Brooks at Church House.

Appendix to paper I1: Commitment for Life Partnership Agreement

An agreement between Christian Aid and the United Reformed Church

Part I

This partnership agreement is an affirmation of our past relationship and an investment for the future to work more closely in bringing God's kingdom here on earth through life giving faith, defiant hope and generous love.

Principles of partnership

The United Reformed Church has a history of being involved in justice. This comes from the gospel imperative of care for the poor and vulnerable. It takes its inspiration from Jesus' mission and ministry of breaking down social barriers and bringing hope and love. They seek to build a new earth where everyone lives in justice, peace and plenty.

Christian Aid's theology is based on the idea of relationship between God and humans. As we are all invited into a relationship with a God of love, community and justice, it follows that our relations with each other should reflect this. We love because God first loved us and are all equal in his sight. Poverty robs people of their dignity, freedom and hope. Christian Aid sees poverty as an outrage against humanity so its mission is to bring an end to it by giving hope for tomorrow.

These common understandings of God's concern for justice and love of all people is the basis for this partnership between Christian Aid (CA) and the URC in Commitment for Life (CfL).

History of Commitment for Life

The late 1960s was a time when churches and the voluntary aid agencies were realising that the problem of poverty and underdevelopment overseas could not remain simply a matter for charitable response. Problems needed to be tackled at government level. The United Nations made recommendations that developed nations should make available 1% of their Gross National Product for overseas aid. This influenced the World Council of Churches meeting in Uppsala in 1968.

Both the Congregational Church and the Presbyterian Church came to the same conclusion that an appeal should go out to churches recognising from the start that the Appeal was for 1% of annual take home pay 'until such time as the government of the day reaches the 1% target for overseas aid'. It was recognised from the beginning that the appeal needed a strong political stance. Remembrance Sunday 1969 saw the start of the appeal with Christian Aid as the principle vehicle for dispersing the money. In 1972 the newly formed United Reformed Church continued the appeal. The World Development Movement, to become

Global Justice Now, emerged at the beginning of the 1970s as a further focus of the political challenge of poverty and came into the appeal.

With the contributions increasing, it was felt that churches needed to understand how and where the money was being used. A new programme called Commitment for Life was introduced to the churches. In partnership with Christian Aid four areas were chosen where there were Council for World Mission (CWM) and World Council of Churches (WCC) links. In those early years, Commitment for Life did not progress as planned and so was restructured ready for a relaunch in 1992.

In that year, General Assembly stated: 'Commitment for Life is offered to the Assembly, congregations and members of the United Reformed Church as a challenge and an invitation, one way of expressing our obedience to the words of Jesus as we follow in his way, our solidarity in the Spirit with our partners and the poor with whom they are striving for justice, and our faith in the God of hope, of peace, of love.'

Vision, mission and aim for Commitment for Life

Commitment for Life's **vision** is to see the United Reformed Church play a full part in working for justice in the world, recognising that change starts with each of us.

Its **mission** is to encourage all United Reformed Churches and Local Ecumenical Partnerships to take action and pray for people across the world so that we can make a difference in the lives of some of the world's poorest people.

Its **aim** is to deepen the response of congregations through education, worship and action for long term development.

Aims and objectives for partnership

To build a strong relationship between the URC and Christian Aid to develop a greater understanding of justice and development in the world and a deeper relationship with supporters in URC congregations.

To provide individuals and churches with opportunities to respond to the injustice in the world through prayer, actions and gifts as part of their spiritual life.

To forge a long-term partnership between Christian Aid programmes and URC churches which helps them to deepen understanding of the process of sustainable development and address systemic injustice.

To enable Christian Aid partners and beneficiaries to feel a connection of solidarity through the commitment, prayers and gifts from Commitment for Life supporters.

To ensure Commitment for Life is the strongest, fullest and recommended way for United Reformed Churches to support Christian Aid.

Part II

Structure of Commitment for Life

The programme is managed by a URC staff member, supported by a volunteer reference group, who reports to the Mission Committee. Additional support is provided by a network of synod and global advocates and church link people across England, Scotland and Wales.

Finances

- Contributions are received by the programme officer. The URC has responsibility for processing all contributions
- Of the money raised, currently Christian Aid receives 75% of the total. Global Justice Now receive 5% and the remaining 20% is used for education and administration of the scheme by the URC
- Christian Aid's allocation is divided evenly across the four country areas
- The cost of resources produced by Christian Aid will be divided equally between CfL and CA
- Any additional resources are the responsibility of CfL.

The URC's responsibilities

The URC will be responsible for:

- keeping records of church and individual donations
- managing the mailing of resources to churches
- working with volunteers to promote and encourage participation in synods and churches.
- having stories checked for 'fact and tact' by Christian Aid
- coordinating the signing of CAW endorsement letter by moderators of General Assembly for mailing
- working closely with the Christian Aid link person on design and content for resources
- sending the CA share each month.

Wider Church/denomination commitments

Recognising the importance of this partnership agreement and the unique role of CfL, the URC will promote Commitment for Life beyond just the supporting churches by:

- Sending worship resources to all churches and synods every year
- Organising Commitment for Life slots at the Councils of the Church
- Using media and social media platforms to regularly promote Commitment for Life news, stories, updates and resources
- Promoting Christian Aid Week and Christian Aid Campaigns to wider churches.

Christian Aid's commitments

Staffing

Christian Aid will provide a dedicated staff member with responsibility for Commitment for Life. This will be, as far as possible, a long-term project or role to allow for good working relationships which help Commitment for Life to flourish. As part of their role they will:

- Attend reference group meetings and produce such updates and reports as may be required
- Oversee the writing of content and production of resources
- Develop the relationship with Commitment for Life staff
- Maintain the working relationship with CA Country Programmes on CfL
- Promote and support CfL within Christian Aid
- Resource regional staff to engage and support United Reformed Churches with CfL resources
- Organise visits from/to partner countries as appropriate.

Country programmes

Christian Aid's country programmes in Bangladesh, Central America, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Zimbabwe are stakeholders in the Commitment for Life partnership. Their responsibilities include:

- Budgeting to spend their share of the Commitment for Life money on programmes. This is a code one offset and can be spent on any part of the partner programmes which need funding. This should be planned each year according to estimates provided by the Commitment for Life staff member in Christian Aid
- The country programmes will provide information and updates on the country programme three times a year for scheduled updates to churches. This will include case studies and photographs as well as general programme information
- Country programmes will be prepared to send extra information on emergency appeals within the programme or campaigns specific to the country programme when applicable in order to provide updates to CfL churches.

Joint responsibilities

- Share useful data on Commitment for Life in line with GDPR guidelines
- Work together on Christian Aid campaigns by promoting campaign resources and encouraging churches and individuals to take action
- Develop a new legacy campaign
- Strengthen the relationship between URC Youth and the Christian Aid Collective.
- Provide a joint communications plan between CA and URC media teams to promote CfL
- Meet every two years to recognise successes and share concerns between senior staff
- It is the joint responsibility of Christian Aid and the URC to consider Commitment for Life when planning promotion of other appeals and communications, particularly denominational letters and media advertising. Commitment for Life staff should be consulted about any such promotions in good time.

Review

This agreement will be reviewed every two years at the senior staff meeting. If necessary, changes can be made in the time between these review meetings with agreement between the relevant URC and Christian Aid staff.

Linda Mead – URC

Charlotte Scott – Christian Aid

Started May 2018

Approved by Christian Aid directorate September 2018

Approved by Mission Committee September 2018

Seeking Approval by CforL reference group October 2018

Seeking approval by Christian Aid Country managers

Recognised by Mission Council, November 2018

Paper 12

Mission and discipleship

Walking the Way: Living the life of
Jesus today

Entering a new phase

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper I2

Mission and discipleship

Walking the Way – entering a new phase

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Richard Church richard.church@urc.org.uk Francis Brien francis.brien@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council a) gives thanks for the work carried out as part of <i>Walking the Way's</i> first phase, b) endorses the current direction of work as it enters its second phase and c) approves the steering group makeup and terms of reference as established in paper I2 of November 2018.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	An update on the continuing work of <i>Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today</i> , supporting the United Reformed Church's denomination-wide focus on missional discipleship; and a request for a decision on the makeup and terms of reference of its steering group.
Main points	The message of <i>Walking the Way</i> is being well received across the URC. The next phase will involve building on existing work on missional discipleship, especially in synods. Some amendments are needed to the makeup and terms of reference of the steering group to assist its work moving forward.
Previous relevant documents	Mission Council 11/15 papers M1 and M2 Mission Council 3/16 paper M1 General Assembly Reports 2016, p.11.
Consultation has taken place with...	Mission committee Education and learning Communications Nominations Children's and youth work Neil Hudson, London Inst for Contemporary Christianity (LICC).

Summary of impact

Financial	After 2020, Council for World Mission (CWM) funding for <i>Walking the Way</i> will cease. It is important to start thinking about the implications of this now.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Members of Churches Together in England have shown an interest in the development of <i>Walking the Way</i> , along with the Church of Scotland and the United Church of Canada.

Entering a new phase

1. The success of phase one

- 1.1 Since its launch in late 2017, the ethos of missional discipleship contained in *Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today* has been well received across the URC. Every synod is responding in some way to the call to equip more people in recognising and responding to God's call to mission in everyday life. Some have established their own discipleship programmes, whilst some are promoting existing resources and materials to help deepen their relationship with Jesus. Others have hired staff to empower local congregations in being God's presence of love in the community around them.
- 1.2 Each of these diverse and innovative responses, shaped and tailored according to the needs of each differing context across the URC suggest that the core message of *Walking the Way* is being endorsed. The URC is recognising a need to support its members in thinking about how we walk with Jesus throughout the entirety of our lives, from cradle to grave, supermarket to workplace, morning run to evening social club.
- 1.3 The message of *Walking the Way* is also sparking conversations with ecumenical partners with similar priorities, including members of Churches Together in England, the Church of Scotland and the United Church of Canada.
- 1.4 In its first phase, *Walking the Way* has sought to spread this message in several practical ways, including the distribution of an introductory leaflet, bookmark and prayer cards, supporting the *URC Daily Devotions* e-mail system, and visiting and contributing to synods and some of their associated committees, bodies and local churches. The promotion of *Holy Habits*, participation in the development of *Stepwise* and general contact with various networks (TDOs, CYDOs, Mission Enablers, etc.) have also helped to share existing experience and wisdom around, preventing the reinvention of the wheel and promoting fresh, innovative thinking and solutions for discipleship development across the URC.
- 1.5 This continues with a series of URC-specific videos on each of the *Holy Habits*, which are being released at a rate of one per month, and the online Resource Map which has now launched on the *Walking the Way* webpages. This Venn diagram is designed to help visitors find suitable resource and material suggestions in relation to their discipleship journey in an innovative and efficient manner.

2. Moving into 2019

- 2.1 From now through to the end of 2019, our focus needs to move from sharing the message of *Walking the Way* to building on the existing work going on across the URC, especially at a synod level.

- 2.2 In addition to work mentioned above, more Advent materials have been commissioned to help local churches explore and design their own journey through Advent, encouraging them to call on the people, issues, resources and opportunities around them in their own contexts. These will be published on the *Walking the Way* webpages as they become available. The steering group is also keen to collect and share stories of individual/personal, faithful, contextual discipleship to go along with local church and community examples.
- 2.3 As a priority for 2019, the steering group is working on an accompaniment programme for synods and local churches with the support of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC), with whom some synods and local churches have already enjoyed a productive relationship. This will share the *Walking the Way* ethos, using the LICC's approaches and materials in considering strategy, with key representatives from ten or so churches within two pilot synods, who will then be expected (and equipped), both individually and collectively, to disseminate their new-found knowledge and experience across churches in their synod, 'infecting' people with the call to live the life of Jesus today.

3. Beyond 2020

- 3.1 Thinking even further forward, it seems important to begin thinking about what we hope will happen beyond 2020, when the Council for World Mission (CWM) funding, on which *Walking the Way* currently relies, comes to an end. Whilst these issues are not immediately urgent, it would be good to start thinking about the implications of this and how the URC will continue to equip people for effective discipleship long into the future.

4. Steering group membership and terms of reference

- 4.1 In November 2015, Mission Council was informed that a missional discipleship task group had been set up with membership and terms of reference as established in paper M1 of that meeting. Mission Council agreed resolution 15/29, which endorsed the direction of the task group's work. In March 2015, Mission Council agreed resolution 16/05 which supported the continuation of the task group, establishing it as the *Walking the Way* steering group, stating that all members (who are not staff) from October 2016 should serve until 2018.
- 4.2 Since then, the members appointed in 2015 (Graham Adams, Peter Ball, Tracey Lewis, Kathryn Price, Phil Wall and, later, Stephen Newell) have worked very hard. Some of them feel that, as *Walking the Way* enters a new phase, it is time for them to step down. We thank them for their loyal and faithful service. Others feel able to continue and we are grateful for the continuity they help to maintain.
- 4.3 This time of transition has presented an opportunity to reconsider the shape of the steering group, moving forward. As such, it is proposed that the makeup of the steering group be as follows:

- Deputy General Secretary for Mission (Co-Chair) (ex-officio)
- Deputy General Secretary for Discipleship (Co-Chair) (ex-officio)
- Project Manager for *Walking the Way* (ex-officio)
- Stepwise Programme Manager (ex-officio)
- URC Communications Officer (ex-officio)
- Children's and Youth Work representative
- Global and Intercultural Ministries representative
- Education and learning committee representative
- Resource Centres for Learning representative
- Training and development officers representative
- Mission committee representative
- Mission enablers representative
- and two other members

4.4 Given the wide reach of *Walking the Way*, it is important for General Assembly and Mission Council to have complete ownership of it. As such, it is felt that vacancies for posts which are not ex-officio should be carried out using the usual procedures for the Church's committee and task group nominations.

5. Terms of reference

5.1 As well as reconsidering the makeup of the steering group, this is also a chance to reconsider its terms of reference in the light of the work done so far and the future direction of travel. It seems that some changes are required to the terms of service originally approved by Mission Council in November 2015. The proposed revised wording is as follows:

***Walking the Way* steering group** **Terms of reference**

Vision

For the United Reformed Church to further encourage and develop the way in which people discover and follow Jesus, through whom God calls them to participate in God's reign. Indicators of what this would look like are given in the Vision2020 statements reframed as provocative proposals.

Aim

To offer an integrated system of whole-life missional discipleship with all learning opportunities being open to all, anchored in the Christian revelation, and building up the Church.

Objectives of the task group

In conjunction with the mission and discipleship departments of the United Reformed Church and in collaboration with synod teams, to devise a discipleship ethos within the United Reformed Church which:

- reflects the Church's commitment to participation in the *Missio Dei*
- provides the Church with the means of equipping every congregation with servant leadership which is imaginative, flexible and courageous
- provides diverse individuals with accountable routes of discipleship
- incorporates the fruits of dialogue with a range of partners including children and youth and global and intercultural ministries perspectives.

Expectations of steering group

That it will:

- build on the existing work of synods inspired by *Walking the Way: Living the life of Jesus today*
- recognise the depth of well-founded content which already exists through material that has been tested both within and beyond the URC and which is available for dissemination, together with ecumenically produced materials
- enable networking and relationships to ensure wisdom and experience on missional discipleship is shared mutually throughout the URC
- create materials to encourage widespread engagement with *Walking the Way's* ethos and to supplement existing resources
- offer opportunities for local church accompaniment and support through their discipleship journey
- support and advocate for the work of *Stepwise* within *Walking the Way*
- emphasise the work of evangelism and offer appropriate resources to equip churches in this area
- draw on Appreciative Inquiry principles especially in the light of the need to achieve culture change within the Church.

Thanks and prayers

We are grateful for the support which *Walking the Way* continues to receive from across the URC and ask for continuing prayers as we all seek, together, to empower more people to recognise God's presence in all aspects of life and to respond to God's call, for all people, to mission.

Paper J1

Nominations committee

List of nominations

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper J1



Nominations committee

List of nominations

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Ray Adams ray.adams12@btinternet.com Mr George Faris nominations.secretary@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Mission Council notes and approves the changes set out in section A of the report to the list of Nominations agreed by General Assembly in July 2018. Mission Council appoints according to the list of nominations in section B of the report.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To clarify various details of the nominations list. To appoint a member of a panel.
Main points	See detail of report.
Previous relevant documents	Nominations list published in <i>Record of General Assembly 2018</i> .
Consultation has taken place with...	All synods are represented on the committee.

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

List of nominations

1. Amendments to published list of nominations

Mission Council is asked to note and approve the following amendments to the nominations list that was agreed by General Assembly in July 2018.

1.4 Listed Buildings advisory group

- i. Amend 'The Revd David Figures (4)' to 'Mr David Figures (4)'.

2.4 Disciplinary process – commission panel

- i. Mr Patrick Smyth is in synod four.
- ii. The Revd Jane Campbell is in synod 13.
- iii. Mrs Mary Kelly is in synod one.

4.2 Education and learning committee

- i. The Revd Dr Jill Thornton has resigned from the committee.

5.6 The United Reformed Church Ministers' Pension Trust Ltd

- i. The Revd Caroline Vodden (7) has replaced the Revd Derek Wales. Caroline will serve to 2022.
- ii. The statement "Members normally serve for six years" is incorrect and should be deleted. Note five of the nominations list covers the four-year terms of both General Assembly appointees and Ministerial Member nominees.

5.8 Investment committee

- i. Mr Lyndon Thomas has been co-opted to serve until the end of General Assembly 2022.

2. New appointments

Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Mission Council makes the following appointment:

2.2.1 Panel for General Assembly appointments

- i. Mrs Sheila Davies (3) to be a member of the panel with immediate effect to the end of General Assembly 2022.

Paper L1

URC Trust

Windermere and Church House

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper L1

URC Trust

Windermere and Church House



Basic information

Contact	Convenor of Trust valmorrison7@btinternet.com General Secretary john.proctor@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information only.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update on two properties.
Main points	The Windermere building has been sold. We still wait for decisive progress on the necessary remedial works at Church House.
Previous documents	Paper L1, March 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	At Windermere: Carver Church, NW Synod Trust, planning authorities, legal adviser, architect. At Church House: our project manager and legal adviser.

Summary of impact

Financial	See detail below.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Windermere and Church House

Windermere

1. We reported to Mission Council in March that sale of the Windermere Centre had been delayed by difficulties around the building's planning categorisation. These have now been resolved, and the building was sold in late July, to a local hotelier.
2. The sale price was some way above the market price, and the Trustees expect to release a sum approaching 850k (this being the sale price, net of various closure costs) for the programmes of the education and learning committee as it carries forward the work of the Centre.
3. The Trust has engaged an architect to design a proper boundary between the land of the Centre and that belonging to Carver Church, as promised at Mission Council in 2017, and has approved a quotation from a local contractor for constructing this.

Church House

4. The remedial work on the lower ground floor at Church House has not yet advanced beyond the investigative stage, at the time of writing in late September. However, the Trust is in active discussion with our building contractors, Peldon Rose, is receiving firm and capable support from our project manager, Third Sector Property, and expects decisive progress before the end of this year.
5. The Trust noted that the staff team at Church House have now worked for a long time in restricted accommodation and sent its warm thanks to the staff for their patience and commitment.

Paper M1

Moderators of Assembly

Listening in the URC:
a discussion starter

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper M1

Moderators of Assembly

Listening in the URC: a discussion starter

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Derek Estill derek.estill@urc.org.uk Nigel Uden nigel.uden@urc.org.uk
Action required	Discussion in groups.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	How we consult one another by careful listening.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	Nigel Uden's moderatorial address to Assembly, 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	General Secretary Mission Council advisory group.

Summary of impact

Financial	There would surely be costs involved, but these have not been calculated, until it is clear what might be the best way forward.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	No direct immediate impact.

Listening in the URC

1. A conciliar church is a listening church. It takes account of the discernment reached by its constituent parts. It listens for the voice of God in its members' voices, in the voices of its ecumenical and interfaith partners, and in the world's voices. These were key elements of Nigel Uden's moderatorial address in July 2018, which argued that the United Reformed Church must listen if it is to be worth listening to.
2. Listening is always prudent, but perhaps in times of change, transition and uncertainty it's all the more so, if the church is to move forward with as much unity as possible. Transition is unavoidable; change is essential as a sign of the church's life, just as not changing inevitably portends its death. Transition, though, is not easy. As Nigel has cited elsewhere, William Bridges eloquently describes the vulnerability that it creates, speaking of a time of transition as 'a nowhere between two somewheres'.
3. We sense that there is a significant strand in the denomination which feels we may be at just such a moment – an uncomfortable 'nowhere'. If we are, then we believe it could be fruitful to listen deliberately to the elders and ministers of the United Reformed Church – to have our own 'listening project', borrowing the title from Radio 4 and Fi Glover. The Ministers' Gathering in spring 2018 was well received and engendered for ministers a real sense of belonging to the URC, but it was more a time for them to listen to speakers than to be listened to. Moreover, it was for ministers and we believe there is something very important to be achieved by listening to elders, too. After all, as we live with fewer ministers of the word and sacraments, the strategies we are advocating are markedly dependent upon elders, and therefore listening to them would surely be essential.
4. In principle, perhaps, a commitment to listening is uncontroversial, but, to make a listening project worthwhile, we would need to be clear what its purpose would be. Whilst setting the agenda for such a conversation is not our intention – it would be something of a contradiction of what we discern is needed – talking to the General Secretary and to the Mission Council advisory group we feel it would be helpful if our listening to elders and ministers could be characterised by three things.
5. First, that everything we are and everything we offer as the United Reformed Church is intentionally focussed upon supporting and building-up the local churches in their life and witness.
6. John Proctor sums up the second in this way:
'It is also part of our track record in the URC that many a searching discussion leads on to a new structure of some kind, such as a working party, a review or a new initiative. I'd rather this discussion offered some articulate thought to inform the central and synod committees, plans and initiatives that already exist. We don't lack structures, goodwill or able people. We do occasionally lack joined-up thinking.'
7. And thirdly, John refers us to the Basis of Union:
'which sets out expectations for URC church life in formal and binding terms. I think the following clauses of the Basis and the Structure of the URC have most to do with the practice of the local church:

Basis of Union 12-16, 19, 23, 25

12 and 13	Trinity and scripture
14 and 15	Baptism and communion
16 and 19	Mutual commitment; service and discipleship
23	Elders
25	Worship is catholic (related to the life of the whole Church), as well as local (what we do here)

Structure 1.1(a), 2.1, 2.2, 2.4(c) and 2.4.A(ix)

1.1(a)	Local mutual commitment for worship, witness and service
2.1 and 2.2	Church Meeting and Elders' Meeting
2.4(c) and 2.4.A(ix)	Representation on synod, and care by synod

'All of that does give some flexibility. It doesn't say, for example, that local churches must have a building, or must meet on Sundays, or must use a certain hymnbook. But nor does it give infinite room for manoeuvre, if a fellowship wants to be considered part of the URC. However, we can change the Basis of Union if we find we need to. So you might want to think which if any of the criteria above you would be ready to drop.'

8. It would also need to be clear how this listening project would be facilitated and how its outcomes would be taken forward, so that it was not seen to have been a pointless exercise.
9. In determining whether to proceed, there are also some practical issues that arise:
 - a) with what other parts of the URC should we consult? – e.g. synod moderators, ministries, etc
 - b) should we listen to elders and ministers together, or have separate events for each?
 - c) should we have one event (two, if elders and ministers are to meet separately) or several in different parts of the nations of England, Scotland and Wales?
 - d) what are the budgetary implications?
 - e) should we as General Assembly Moderators be intimately involved in such a listening project or would it be better understood as an initiative of Mission Council?
 - f) whoever is understood as the initiators, who could be asked to take responsibility for the organisation, e.g. booking venues, issuing invitations, day to day administration, etc?

We would be grateful for the insight and guidance of Mission Council.

*Derek Estill and Nigel Uden
September 2018*

Paper M3

Moderators of Assembly

Recruitment of General Secretary
and DGS (discipleship)

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper M3

Moderators of Assembly

Recruitment of General Secretary and DGS (discipleship)

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Derek Estill derek.estill@urc.org.uk Nigel Uden nigel.uden@urc.org.uk
Action required	Approval of process as outlined; election of Mission Council representatives to nominating group/s.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council approves the timeline and process as outlined for the appointment of a General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary ready for Induction at the General Assembly of 2020.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Recruitment of General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) to take effect July 2020.
Main points	Notices of intention to retire have been received from The Revd John Proctor wef 31 August 2020 and The Revd Richard Church wef mid July 2020; the timeline for recruiting their successors as General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) respectively.
Previous relevant documents	<i>The Manual</i> , section C (Rules of Procedure), paragraph five.
Consultation has taken place with...	Assembly Clerk Deputy General Secretary (administration and resources) Human resources advisory group Convenor of the nominations committee The Convenor of the most recent GS nominating group.

Summary of impact

Financial	Expenses of process.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Recruitment of General Secretary and of Deputy GS (Discipleship)

1. Preamble

- 1.1 Following provisional intimation at the time of their appointments, we have received formal notice that the Revd John Proctor intends to retire on 31 August 2020 and the Revd Richard Church in the middle of July 2020. Their long ministries have both been fruitful, effective and appreciated; the Church is significantly in their debt.
- 1.2 Their retirements create forthcoming vacancies for a General Secretary (GS) and a Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) (DGSD). It is the responsibility of the Moderators of General Assembly to convene the nominating group that enables the filling of these posts (*The Manual* section C.5) and the following brief paper suggests the skeleton of a process and its timeline.
- 1.3 There are four basic assumptions:
 - that the GS be selected four to six weeks ahead of the DGSD in order that the former can participate in interviews for the latter
 - that appointees may be serving in posts with long notice periods
 - that the same nominating group will deal with both appointments, since they fall vacant around the same time
 - in the event that the first GS process does not appoint, the DGSD process will continue in order to ensure that the General Secretariat is not left at 50% strength.

2. Process and timeline

Action	Target date
2.1 Notice by current DGSD and GS of their intentions to retire in July and August 2020 respectively	17 August 2018
2.2 Submission of process and timetable paper for November 2018 Mission Council	30 September 2018
2.3 Creation of process and consultation with, amongst others: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DGS (administration and resources) • Assembly Clerk • Human resources advisory group (HRAG) • Convenor of most recent GS nominating group (2014) • Convenor of Assembly nominations committee 	Autumn 2018
2.4 Mission Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invited to approve process and its timeline • and to elect three committee convenors to join panel 	16 November 2018

- | | | |
|------|--|--------------------|
| 2.5 | Identification of remaining members of the nominating group (six people from the panel for General Assembly appointments, appointed by the nominations committee); review of General Secretariat and of current job descriptions and person specifications | Winter 2018/19 |
| 2.6 | Submission of papers re review, Job description and person specification for Mission Council's consideration | 30 March 2019 |
| 2.7 | Advertising in June <i>Reform</i> – deadline | 10 May 2019 |
| 2.8 | Mission Council invited to approve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outcomes of General Secretariat review • Job description/person specification | 13 May 2019 |
| 2.9 | Finalising of paperwork, advertisement, etc; preparation of nominating group | Early summer 2019 |
| 2.10 | Long listing, shortlisting, interviews | from 1 June 2019 |
| 2.11 | Select GS by early October | 1 October 2019 |
| 2.12 | Select DGSD by early November | 1 November 2019 |
| 2.13 | Appointment by Mission Council | 15 November 2019 |
| 2.14 | News made public following Mission Council at a time mutually agreed with the appointees and the communications staff | |
| 2.15 | Appointees' notice period of up to six months, commencing | 1 December 2019 |
| 2.16 | Start date that ensures overlap, shadowing and hand over | 1 June 2020 |
| 2.17 | Induction at General Assembly 2020 | 10 to 13 July 2020 |
| 2.18 | We invite Mission Council's reflections upon this proposed way ahead. | |

Draft resolution

Mission Council approves the timeline and process as outlined for the appointment of a General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary ready for Induction at the General Assembly of 2020.

*Derek Estill and Nigel Uden
30 September 2018*

Paper M4

Report of an Assembly commission

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper M4

Report of an Assembly commission

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Michael Hopkins clerk@urc.org.uk
Action required	Note.
Draft resolution(s)	N/a

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update.
Main points	<p>Commissions of General Assembly, whether meeting to hear appeals/constitutional reviews/references, or for the Ministerial disciplinary or incapacity processes, always report to the General Assembly.</p> <p>An Assembly commission met on 5 September 2018 to hear an appeal. The commission requested some further work be undertaken, and so the report is being laid on table of Mission Council as that further work may come before Mission Council before the Assembly meets.</p> <p>The usual formal report will continue to be made to the General Assembly of 2020.</p>
Previous relevant documents	None.
Consultation has taken place with...	N/a

Summary of impact

Financial	N/a
External (e.g. ecumenical)	N/a

Report of an appeal to the General Assembly by the Revd Wendy Williams, against a decision of the ministries committee

1. The Revd Wendy Williams appealed against the decision of the ministries committee that she had been deemed to have resigned from the Roll of Ministers of the United Reformed Church following her ordination as a deacon and a priest of the Church of England.
2. The appeal followed the procedure laid down under the Structure of the United Reformed Church paragraph five and the Rules of Procedure paragraph nine.
3. The officers of the Assembly appointed the following to serve as members of the Commission. Neither the appellant nor the ministries committee objected to any of the names:
Mr John Ellis, former Moderator of General Assembly, to convene the commission
Mrs Margaret Marshall, Clerk of West Midlands Synod
The Revd Geoffrey Clarke, East Midlands Synod
The Revd Sarah Moore, North Western Synod
The Revd Dr Matthew Prevett, Northern Synod
4. The Clerk of the Assembly was present to advise both the commission and the two parties, to facilitate the process, record the decision, and prepare the report for Assembly.
5. The Revd Wendy Williams was initially accompanied by Mr Peter Bounds during the hearing; after Mr Bounds had to leave, The Revd Gwynfor Evans accompanied Miss Williams. The ministries committee was represented by the Convener and Secretary, The Revd Paul Whittle and The Revd Craig Bowman.
6. Papers, submitted by both parties, were circulated in advance. Upon receipt of the papers, the Convener asked some questions of the Mersey Synod, and a further paper was submitted by their Moderator, which was also circulated in advance.
7. The hearing took place at Trinity United Reformed Church, Wigan, on 5 September 2018. The commission began at 10am and completed its business at 2.45pm. Before the appellant was invited to make her statement, the Convener explained the process, including the fact that the panel was acting on behalf of the General Assembly and there was no right of appeal against the decision. The Convener led those present in prayer.
8. Mr Bounds presented Miss Williams's case.
9. Mr Whittle and Mr Bowman presented the response of the ministries committee.
10. Members of the commission questioned both parties. The Convener thanked the parties for their time and submissions. The parties were asked to leave the room while the panel considered the submissions of the parties.

11. After discussion, the parties were recalled, and the Convenor gave the decision:
 - a) The commission affirmed Miss Williams' many years of devoted service as a United Reformed Church minister, within and beyond the denomination, and emphasised that no criticism of this was implied by considering her new situation.
 - b) The commission regretted the lack of communication about the planned Anglican ordination in July 2017, not least on the part of the Diocese of Liverpool, until very shortly before the intended date.
 - c) Despite the compressed timescale, Miss Williams was aware before deciding to go ahead with her Anglican ordination that the consequence would be removal from the United Reformed Church Roll of Ministers in line with established United Reformed Church policy. The commission therefore concluded that the subsequent action of the ministries committee in removing her name had to be upheld and the appeal against it had to be rejected.
 - d) The commission regretted that the decision to remove Miss Williams from the Roll had not been more immediately and clearly communicated to her. It requested the ministries committee to reconsider its process when a name is removed from the Roll to ensure both the individual and their Synod Moderator receive timely written notification and explanation.
 - e) The commission appreciated the view of the ministries committee that in the case of an ordination to another denomination it was pastorally more sensitive to have deemed a minister to have resigned than to put them through a disciplinary process. The commission asked the ministries committee to seek formal endorsement for this approach from Mission Council or General Assembly.
 - f) The commission shared the profound disappointment of all parties that the visible unity of Christ's Church is not yet our experience and that those who were called to serve across denominational boundaries sometimes need to make personally and pastorally painful choices about where their formal allegiance lies. The commission requests the faith and order committee to place into the United Reformed Church-Church of England Bilateral Dialogue the circumstances of Miss Williams's position and to seek better ways, preferably applicable to all dioceses, of recognising the sacramental ministry United Reformed Church ministers are sometimes asked to provide to Anglican congregations.
 - g) The commission welcomed the assurance of the Mersey Synod Moderator that the synod would continue to hold Miss Williams in high regard and maintain fellowship with her. In particular, the commission hoped the forthcoming 60th anniversary of her ordination into Christian ministry could be suitably and joyously celebrated within the synod.
12. Miss Williams thanked the commission for their work; she said that she had always sought to follow the Lord's plans for her life and would continue to obey the call of Christ to preach the Gospel wherever He led her.
13. The Convenor led those present in prayer.

5 September 2018

Paper N1

Task group on the future of General Assembly

Update

Church 2018
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2018

Paper N1

Task group on the future of General Assembly

Update

Basic information

Contact	Convenor of task group valmorrison7@btinternet.com
Action required	For information only.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update.
Main points	The task group will meet on 15 October, after the date when papers for Mission Council are due to be submitted. At the time of writing we expect to bring a full report to Mission Council in May 2019 covering the nature and expectations of the Moderatorship, electing the Moderator(s), Mission Council, and the future work of AAC and MCAAG.
Previous documents	Record of General Assembly 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	N/a

Summary of impact

Financial	N/a
External (e.g. ecumenical)	N/a

Paper 01

Human resources advisory group

Report on recent work

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper 01

Human resources advisory group

Report on recent work

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Mr Geoff Shaw, convenor geoffshaw2810@sky.com
Action required	Take note.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To update Mission Council on the recent work of the group.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	Previous HRAG reports to Mission Council.
Consultation has taken place with...	General Secretary, Church House staff.

Summary of impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

HRAG report on recent work

1. Membership

Geoff Shaw (Convenor), Alastair Forsyth, Bridget Fosten, Mike Gould, the Revd John Proctor, General Secretary (ex officio), Jane Baird, Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources) (ex officio).

These members bring to the group a wide range of HR and management experience within the Church, the public sector and industry.

2. Remit

HRAG was established in October 2012 and its remit reviewed by the May 2015 meeting of Mission Council. The remit is to provide a unified reference point on HR matters for Mission Council/General Assembly/URC Trust and Church House staff.

3. Routine work

3.1 Recruitment

It was noted that there had been a very significant level of recruitment across five departments. The HRAG questioned whether this indicated an underlying trend which might give cause for concern. The group examined the various vacancies and was satisfied that there was no overall concern about the level of vacancies at this time.

3.2 Policies and procedures review

The HRAG is pleased to note that the HR team continues to review and update Church House policies and procedures in line with the established review timetable. HR also provides policy templates and advice to synods and churches when requested.

3.3 Line management training

The HR team delivers line management training for Church House managers and makes those training events available for managers from synods and churches to join.

3.4 Lay staff terms and conditions

A challenge to the URC policy on maternity pay had prompted a full review of the range of benefits provided by the URC. This confirmed that the URC is in line with the faith and charity sectors and in some cases better than those. On the specific query related to maternity pay the URC is in line with two thirds of the comparable group who all offer Statutory Maternity Pay. HRAG recommended no changes to these terms and conditions.

3.5 Job evaluation system

A new and very comprehensive system was demonstrated to the group. Early use on newly created posts showed it to be very useful and in particular the opportunity to benchmark with market salary information was invaluable.

HRAG endorsed the system and encouraged its wider use and agreed to support HR staff in further analysis of existing roles in Church House.

3.6 Facilities management

The HRAG endorsed plans for a new staffing structure following the retirement of the Facilities Manager in August 2018.

3.7 Risk matrix

The HRAG had looked in detail at this matter. The Deputy General Secretary (admin and resources) confirmed that she is part of a team looking at this area. One of the key outcomes recommended by the team was that there was a need to distinguish between 'risks' and 'issues'. It was hoped that revisions to the process would be introduced for the 2019/20 review, which would be carried out in the autumn of 2019. The HRAG had agreed to be a pilot area for the revised process.

4. Ministers' disciplinary process (section O)

The convenor of the HRAG met with the General Secretary and the convenor of MIND to discuss comparisons between the URC's Ministerial Disciplinary Process and parallel processes in other fields of work.

5. General Assembly appointments

Following the decision at General Assembly 2018 to widen the qualifying bodies for certain Assembly appointments the relevant table has been amended to reflect that change and recent changes to job titles and is shown in the attached appendix.

Assembly-appointed posts as agreed at GA July 2014 – updated General Assembly July 2018

To avoid confusion, it is helpful to note that people are appointed to Assembly-appointed posts in three ways: They may be appointed by Assembly itself; they may be appointed by Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly; and, in most cases they may be confirmed by appointing groups, as authorised in resolution 16 of the 2010 Assembly:

‘General Assembly agrees that the power to appoint Assembly staff members, other than officers of Assembly and synod moderators, shall be delegated to appointing groups duly appointed so long as appropriate processes and employment and related criteria have been met. All such appointments shall have effect from the date determined by the appointing group and shall be reported to the next meeting of Mission Council or General Assembly.’

	Minister of Word and Sacraments of the URC	Member of the URC	Minister of Word and Sacraments of the URC; or of a church belonging to WCRC; or DECC; or CWM	Member of the URC; or member of a church belonging to WCRC; or DECC; or CWM	Member of the URC; or member of a church belonging to any of WCRC; DECC; CWM; ACTS; CTE; Cytun; FCG; or CTBI
General Secretary	✓				
Deputy General Secretary Discipleship				✓	
Deputy General Secretary Mission				✓	
Deputy General Secretary Administration and Resources					✓
Head of Children’s and Youth Work Development					✓
Secretary for Church and Society					✓
Church Related Community Worker Development Worker(S)					✓
Head of Communications					✓
Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations		✓			
Secretary for Education and Learning					✓
Secretary for Ministries	✓				
Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministry					✓
Editor, Reform					✓
National Rural Officer					✓



Synod moderators	▼				
Principal of Westminster College			▼		
Members of Westminster College Senatus					▼

- ACTS - Action of Churches Together in Scotland*
- CTBI – Churches Together in Britain and Ireland*
- CTE - Churches Together in England*
- Cytun - Churches Together in Wales*
- CWM – Council for World Mission*
- DECC – Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council*
- FCG - Free Churches Group*
- WCRC – World Communion of Reformed Churches*

Officers of Assembly: the serving moderators of General Assembly, the General Secretary, the Clerk, the Treasurer, and the Convener of the Assembly arrangements committee.

Paper 02

Human resources advisory group

Terms of reference

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper 02

Human resources advisory group

Terms of reference

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Mr Geoff Shaw, HRAG Convenor geoffshaw2810@sky.com
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<p>a) Mission Council adopts the amended terms of reference for the human resources advisory group with immediate effect.</p> <p>b) Mission Council extends the service of Mr Geoff Shaw (Convenor), Mr Alastair Forsyth and Mrs Bridget Fosten so that the end of service dates for the current members of the human resources advisory group become:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Gould, end of General Assembly 2020 • Alastair Forsyth, end of General Assembly 2021 • Bridget Fosten, end of General Assembly 2022 • Geoff Shaw, end of General Assembly 2023.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Updating the terms of reference for current needs and circumstances. Confirming terms of service for current members and clarifying periods of service for new members.
Main points	Membership and terms of service.
Previous relevant documents	Terms of reference agreed Mission Council November 2015 (paper O2 refers).
Consultation has taken place with...	Clerk of the Assembly Nominations committee.

Summary of impact

Financial	No direct impact.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

Terms of reference

1. In November 2015 Mission Council agreed updated terms of reference for the human resources advisory group (HRAG).
 2. The 2015 terms of reference specified membership, frequency of meetings and quorum levels for this group which, in the light of experience, should be updated to meet current needs and circumstances. Such changes would not impact on the level of support being offered by the group. There is also a need to clarify service periods for current members since in some cases no terms of office were specified.
 3. HRAG wishes to come in line with other committees which set an expectation for the period of service by setting an initial period of four years extendable by up to an additional two years.
 4. HRAG proposes the following end of extension of service for the following appointed members:
 - Alastair Forsyth, end of General Assembly 2021 †
 - Bridget Fosten, end of General Assembly 2022 †
 - Geoff Shaw, end of General Assembly 2023 †
- † denotes those who have been invited to extend their period of service
5. The proposed amended terms of reference are included as an appendix to this paper.

Appendix – human resources advisory group (HRAG) terms of reference

Human resources advisory group (HRAG)

Constitution, proceedings and terms of reference (TOR)

1. Constitution and quorum

- 1.1 The purpose of the human resources advisory group (HRAG) is to provide a unified reference point on HR matters for Mission Council/General Assembly/URC Trust and Church House staff.
- 1.2 The HRAG will be accountable to Mission Council but may be called upon to report to the URC Trust with regard to legal and reputational management issues.
- 1.3 The HRAG will have delegated authority from Mission Council in relation to all operational HR matters, including the agreement of HR policies and procedures, and will provide regular reports to Mission Council.
- 1.4 HRAG will consist of:
 - a) a Convenor (appointed by General Assembly, or Mission Council on its behalf)
 - b) three members (appointed by General Assembly, or Mission Council on its behalf) with HR and/or management experience, including those with experience of accredited ministries in the Church
 - c) the Deputy General Secretary (admin and resources) (DGS) (ex officio)
 - d) the General Secretary (ex-officio).

A member of the HR Team will be in attendance to take notes.

- 1.5 The HRAG may invite other members of staff (e.g. line managers) and committee convenors to attend meetings for specific issues if HRAG feel it appropriate to do so.
- 1.6 Appointments will be for an initial term of four years which may be extended by up to two years (see also paragraph 5.1).
- 1.7 The quorum for meetings of the group shall be three members.
- 1.8 The HRAG will work closely with the remuneration committee to ensure that there is consistency in the work of the two groups. In carrying out its remit, the HRAG will also be mindful of the work and responsibilities of the Church House management group (CHMG).

2. Convenor

- 2.1 The committee will be chaired by a Convenor appointed by General Assembly, or Mission Council on its behalf; the committee may choose to appoint a Deputy from amongst its members.

3. Meetings

- 3.1 The HRAG will meet at least twice per annum and on such other occasions, as they deem necessary.
- 3.2 Outside of meetings, and where urgent need demands it, the HRAG will have authority to make decisions by email circulation of all relevant papers.
- 3.3 The DGS (A&R) will arrange for a member of staff to act as Clerk to the HRAG (save where their personal terms and conditions of employment are under consideration, in which event the DGS (A&R) will clerk that part of the meeting).
- 3.4 All reports shall be submitted to the HRAG sufficiently in advance of meetings to allow for their proper consideration.

4. Terms of reference

- 4.1 The role of the HRAG is to:
 - a) oversee and sign off employment policies and procedures for staff based at Church House and for those staff for whom Church House is their principal reporting base (except synod moderators)
 - b) monitor, review and approve staffing strategy – including staffing establishment, grading or re-grading of posts, expertise, career development and succession planning
 - c) review and approve the job descriptions and associated person specifications for all posts based at Church House and for posts where Church House is the principal reporting base (except synod moderators) with input from operational staff or committee convenors, as required
 - d) agree course of action with HR staff with regard to any dismissal other than a straightforward end of a fixed term contract or non-confirmation of post at the end of a probation period
 - e) in conjunction with the remuneration committee, review remuneration policy and other aspects of compensation and benefits¹
 - f) oversee the development, approval and implementation of any changes to the terms and conditions of staff, including: taxation and benefits, housing policy and the provision of cars and training
 - g) in conjunction with the pensions executive, monitor and comment on the lay staff pensions policy
 - h) have oversight of training and development activity for staff based at Church House and for those staff for whom Church House is their principal reporting base (particularly those in managerial positions) and monitor its effectiveness.
- 4.2 The HRAG will structure its work so as to ensure that it addresses all of its remit on a timely basis and can, where necessary, advise Mission Council and/or the URC Trust accordingly.
- 4.3 The HRAG shall also have the power to seek other external professional advice if they deem it necessary with reference to the General Secretary as budget holder.

¹ **Note:** The terms and conditions of Assembly-appointed staff who are ordained ministers shall come within the framework of the Plan for Partnership.

5. Review of constitution and terms of reference

- 5.1 These terms of reference will be reviewed by both the HRAG and Mission Council at least once every four years.

Paper P1

Law and polity advisory group

Marriage in Jersey

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper P1

Law and polity advisory group Marriage in Jersey

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Dr John Bradbury jpb44@cam.ac.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	See below.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Jersey now allows the marriage of same-sex couples. This paper proposes a URC response to this new law.
Main points	The URC response to the legislation in Jersey should be as close as possible to that in other jurisdictions where we serve.
Previous relevant documents	General Assembly 2016, resolution seven.
Consultation has taken place with...	Moderator of Wessex Synod.

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Some partner churches would welcome a URC decision of the kind proposed, and others would disagree with it. The responsibility assigned to the local congregation would give them significant control over their witness on the island in this matter.

Marriage in Jersey

1. The government of Jersey has approved a law permitting same-sex couples to marry, which is operative since July 2018. This paper proposes a URC response to the new law.
2. The Jersey law combines, in some ways, the English and Welsh legal approach to religious marriage, which largely depends upon the registration of buildings, and the approach of Scots law, in which the nomination by churches of celebrants is a key requirement. Thus our response in Jersey ought to match, so far as possible, the provisions we have made in these other, larger, territories, following the General Assembly decision at Southport in 2016.
3. The draft resolution that follows would effect the necessary provisions. LPAG commends it to Mission Council.

Following the passing of resolution seven of the Assembly of 2016, Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly:

- a) **notes that under the Marriage and Civil Status (Jersey) Law 2001 as amended by the Marriage and Civil Status (Amendment No. 4) (Jersey) Law 2018, the marriage of same sex couples is now lawful in the Bailiwick of Jersey**
- b) **recognises that the competence and functions of Church Meetings on Jersey are no different from those of any other Church Meeting in the United Reformed Church**
- c) **accepts that the definition and role of a 'governing authority' in the amended Jersey Law of 2001 are in essentials the same as those of a 'governing authority' under section 26(A)(1) of the Marriage Act 1949 in England and Wales; but**
- d) **notes that the amended law of Jersey provides also for the appointment of 'authorised religious officials' to solemnize marriage, and that the competence and functions of such officials are in essentials the same as those of 'approved celebrants' under section eight of the Marriage (Scotland) Act 1977**
- e) **notes further that the amended law of Jersey provides also for religious organisations to approve locations (other than their own usual places of worship) for the solemnization of marriage by their own rites and usages. Accordingly Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly**
- f) **declares, for the avoidance of doubt, that paragraph B of resolution seven applies to Church Meetings on Jersey in the context of the Jersey legislation as it does to Church Meetings in England and Wales**
- g) **directs that, on Jersey, paragraphs C, E and F of resolution seven shall apply with the necessary modifications**
- h) **declares that it lies within the competence of the Synod of the Province of Wessex to make any nominations required by a scheme under section 6(3) of the amended Jersey Law of 2001 of members of the United Reformed Church who have indicated their willingness in writing to be authorised religious officials for marriage solemnization on Jersey**
- i) **declares that it lies within the competence of any Church Meeting on Jersey to approve, in the name of the United Reformed Church under section 23(10)(b) of the amended Jersey Law of 2001, locations on Jersey (other than the usual place of worship of a local church) for the purpose of solemnizing marriages according to the rites and usages of the United Reformed Church.**

Paper R2

Safeguarding advisory group

Learning from the Past Case Review

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper R2

Safeguarding advisory group

Learning from the Past Case Review

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Ioannis Athanasiou safeguarding@urc.org.uk Richard Church richard.church@urc.org.uk
Action required	Receive the published report produced by the learning group. Commit to implementing its recommendations. Instruct SAG accordingly.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council receives the learning group report with thanks to its authors and to all those who contributed to the Past Case review, and instructs the safeguarding advisory group to implement the recommendations of the learning group, consult with relevant groups, and advise Mission Council on progress at subsequent meetings.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The report captures the learning generated through the two phases of the Past Case Review (May 2015 to June 2017) and supports the URC on the next steps that need to be taken in order to effect cultural change in the safeguarding policies and practices throughout the church.
Main points	<p>The PCR Learning Group report recognises that the Church needs to be more systematic and attentive to matters of safeguarding and protection.</p> <p>The report points at a range of areas of operation to review and improve, including relationships with survivors of abuse, the need to clarify the definition of safeguarding, standardizing policy, training and record keeping.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given to a new disciplinary process with safeguarding training of panels.</p> <p>Recruitment processes also need to be informed by safeguarding processes.</p>
Previous relevant documents	<p>Mission Council reports from March 2015 onwards. Most recent ones include:</p> <p>Paper R1 November Mission Council 2017</p> <p>Paper R2 March Mission Council 2018</p> <p>Mission Council report to General Assembly 2018, Appendix seven, <i>Book of Reports</i> p38.</p>
Consultation has	MIND, ministries committee, URC General Secretariat.

taken place with...	
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Summary of impact

Financial	There will be additional cost; at present this is difficult to quantify.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Methodist Church CAFCAS Independent Specialists.

Learning group report on URC's Past Case Review

1. On behalf of the United Reformed Church, Mission Council is asked to receive the final report, findings and recommendations produced by the Past Case Review learning group. In May 2015, the Mission Council authorised a Historic Case Review of previous ministerial practice over the life of the denomination. In response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) enquiry, the United Reformed Church conducted a review of 1556 ministers' files from 1972 onwards to ensure that any historic issues and concerns were dealt with appropriately. The Historic Case Review (known also as the past case review phase one) was completed in January 2016.
2. In October 2016, phase two of the past case review was launched and opened for anyone to make complaints or raise concerns about past actions or behaviour of people affiliated with the URC since its formation in 1972. Twenty-seven persons were listened to, and further actions were taken to resolve their complaints and concerns. Although the process was planned to conclude in March 2017, phase two was extended and continued until May 2017, when the open call to anyone to report and share concerns was closed. During this phase, in line with individual consents and direct work with survivors, a final number of 18 people were identified, assessed and supported through the past case review process.
3. In spring 2017, the URC sought the support of a learning group to capture the lessons learned through both phases of the past case review. The learning group was comprised of members internal and external to URC: a church historian, a Bible scholar, a sister denomination's safeguarding lead with a background in social work, and an academic scholar of abuse in faith-based settings. The group studied the past case review process, independent reviews and individual cases, analysed the findings and made a good number of recommendations. The report of the PCR learning group was compiled and produced by Dr Lisa Oakley, senior lecturer at University of Chester and Chair of the National working research group for child abuse linked to faith and belief.
4. Undertaking the review process was for many a painful and courageous journey, especially for survivors and victims, shedding light on uncomfortable truths of the past and causing strong feelings and emotions. Mission Council may express heartfelt gratitude to those who approached the United Reformed Church to voice their stories and experiences. Mission Council should also thank those who were involved in both phases of the past case review and the members of the learning group for their time and contribution to completing this learning process.
5. The report makes clear that it is a matter of respect to survivors to acknowledge and apologise for past failures and calls anyone who serve our churches, synods, institutions and offices to take significant steps from now onwards to protect and support survivors and victims from all forms of abuse. Safeguarding is a responsibility for everyone and for all. This includes councils of the Church (at local, synod and Assembly level), resource centres for learning, church members, adherents, trustees, paid and volunteer staff as well as lay and ordained ministers.

6. Mission Council is asked to instruct the safeguarding advisory group to take forward the PCR learning report's recommendations and implement a comprehensive strategic safeguarding plan for the whole Church in the next five years (2018 to 2023). The synods will make their own arrangements to standardise practices and report progress annually in alignment with the requirements of Good Practice 4 Safeguarding Guidance. The safeguarding advisory group will be responsible and accountable for maintaining an oversight of systematic changes in safeguarding policies, practices and procedures of the United Reformed Church, and for reporting to Mission Council periodically.
7. A key principle for URC's tradition is conciliarity, that is, that we reach our decisions as representatives meeting together in council, guided by the Holy Spirit. Similarly our Church expects everyone who serves the United Reformed Church to work collectively to improve our safeguarding policies and practices and ensure safer public worship and services in all congregations and synods across England, Scotland and Wales. Survivors and relevant groups should be consulted on proposed changes and developments as well as these being discussed within relevant committees, trustee bodies, reference groups and local ecumenical partnerships.

Paper R3

Safeguarding advisory group

Vetting, disclosure and
barring checks

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper R3

Safeguarding advisory group

Vetting, disclosure and barring checks throughout the URC

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Mr Ioannis Athanasiou safeguarding@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mission Council affirms its commitment to guarding the safety of all who are involved with the Church's life and work, to following current best practice in safeguarding, and to taking seriously the demands of the law and the expectations of our insurers and ecumenical partners. 2. Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Mission Council therefore approves the principles set out in paper R3 of November 2018 for shaping a new code of practice around vetting, disclosure and barring checks and safer recruitment procedures. 3. Mission Council directs the safeguarding advisory group to advocate across the Church these principles and the practices they entail, to embody these in the next edition of Good Practice, and to publish this resource in 2019.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Review and approve a new code of practice related to safer recruitment in the United Reformed Church.
Main points	The Church needs to provide adequate support to those who are responsible for undertaking any activities associated with submitting disclosure applications for ministers, staff and volunteers.
Previous relevant documents	Resolution 21, 'Ministries and youth and children's work: vetting and barring', General Assembly 2010. Appendix seven to Mission Council report, General Assembly 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	Members of the safeguarding advisory group The Secretary for Ministries Churches Forum for Safeguarding (CFS).

Summary of impact

Financial	Proposed resolutions have significant financial implications for URC's synods and for Church House.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	An external contractor ('Due Diligence Checking' Ltd) acts as umbrella body for undertaking the checks for paid and voluntary workers on behalf of the URC.

Safeguarding advisory group safer recruitment checks

1. The United Reformed Church is committed to be a safe church for all. Mission Council is therefore asked to commit to providing clear guidance on recruiting people who will work or volunteer with children, young people and adults experiencing or being at risk of abuse or neglect, and thereby to encourage all local churches, synods, offices and institutions of the Church to follow best practice.
2. By providing this guidance Mission Council will reassert the need to make recruitment arrangements and practices safer for the benefit of the Church and those who join and serve the Church, in line with legislation, standards and guidance of the Charity Commission and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. Those who act on behalf of the denomination should initiate, request and submit disclosure applications as part of robust recruitment processes, for specific roles that ministers, workers and volunteers are undertaking to support and serve children, young people and adults.
3. In addition to offering this guidance to the United Reformed Church, Mission Council is asked to update the safer recruitment policy of the Church to reflect new laws and regulatory requirements. The secretary of the safeguarding advisory group has already set up a policy review working group with synod safeguarding officers, which is reviewing and updating current safer recruitment policies and procedures for the whole church. The URC's new safer recruitment policy will be section six of Good Practice 5 Guidance for safeguarding children and adults at risk, the updated version of URC's main safeguarding policy document, which will be produced and disseminated by summer 2019.

Criminal records checking schemes

4. The United Reformed Church uses the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in England and Wales and the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG) in Scotland to help ensure that those working with vulnerable groups are safe to do so. The safeguarding advisory group (SAG), the ministries and children's and youth work committees and safeguarding designated professionals in the synods work together to support and guide local congregations within the United Reformed Church, Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) and the wider church in their duties.
5. Criminal record checks are just one part of an effective recruitment process. They reveal any information held on central police databases such as cautions and convictions and any mention on government lists that bar an individual from working with children, young people or adults at risk. Although each nation in the UK uses a different scheme, they are all aligned and recognise each other's decisions. An applicant who is barred from working with children in one nation is barred across the UK.
6. It is a criminal offence for anyone listed and barred by the DBS and PVG to work or apply to work in the UK with the protected groups for which they are listed and barred (either children or adults). It is also illegal for any URC church or synod knowingly to employ a listed or barred person to do regulated activity and work from which they are barred or listed.

7. Those who act on behalf of the denomination should be vigilant in assessing each role or position and determining whether a DBS or PVG check should be initiated and what type of check is required. There are four types of criminal record checks:
- **Basic** – this checks for unspent criminal conviction and conditional cautions only, and it can be used for any position or purpose. This is obtained from DBS and Disclosure Scotland.
 - **Standard** – this checks for spent and unspent convictions, cautions, reprimands and final warnings to support employment/recruitment purposes. This is applied to specific roles and obtained from the DBS and Disclosure Scotland.
 - **Enhanced** – this includes the same as the standard check plus any additional information held by local police that is reasonably considered relevant to the role for which the person has applied. This is also obtained from the DBS and Disclosure Scotland.
 - **Enhanced including barred list checks** – this is like the enhanced check but includes a check of the DBS barred lists. This is obtained from the DBS and is equivalent to Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme in Scotland.

Fair and transparent processing of criminal offence data

8. Individuals and the self-employed cannot apply for a standard or enhanced check directly to the DBS. Due Diligence Checking Ltd has been contracted by the United Reformed Church (URC) to provide criminal records checking services for the URC, and the churches and synods within the Church. Checks for ministers, Church Related Community Workers (CRCW), Assembly accredited lay preachers, and other relevant denominational staff in the URC in England and Wales are currently processed by the URC ministries office at Church House. Checks for ministers and Church Related Community Workers (CRCW) in the URC in Scotland are currently initiated by Church House, which then instructs DDC to process them. The safeguarding advisory group is proposing to transfer the processing of checks for all paid and voluntary roles and positions within the URC to DDC next year following a review of the current contract.
9. Once a decision for appointing an applicant has been made, a DBS or PVG check should always be carried out for successful applicants, but only for job roles and positions which are eligible. Before someone considers asking an individual to apply for a criminal record check, they are legally responsible for ensuring that they are entitled to submit a disclosure application for the role/position, and that individuals have consented to such application. It is best practice that those who act on behalf of the denomination obtain suitable written consents from the applicants and ensure applicants are fully aware of what will be done with their data and why they are providing it. If a local church or synod has a privacy policy, the applicant should read and understand this prior to the URC asking to process their data.
10. It is essential that criminal offence data obtained via checking schemes are obtained lawfully, fairly and transparently. Any application for a check should therefore be initiated with the consent of the applicant, to ensure protection of the rights of people who apply to work or volunteer for the URC. Personal data relating to criminal convictions and offences are not included in the definition of special category data, but similar extra safeguards are applied to processing of sensitive category data.
11. Certain General Assembly appointees and others undertaking roles for the denomination, including ministers, will be deemed to be engaging in 'Regulated Activity', and therefore require a criminal record check prior to undertaking such work. To identify which roles are eligible for a DBS check, it is important to first be clear about what each role entails and produce a written job or role description (for a paid

or volunteering position), emphasizing the specific requirements and duties of the post, the frequency and period of time over which the work is to be done, and how the work will be supervised. The job or role description should say whether it is eligible for and requires a criminal records check, and if so the level of the check. Detailed job descriptions and thorough attention to regulated activity, workforces and supervising activity criteria are important for those who request disclosure applications and handle recruitment decisions and appointments throughout the URC.

12. All local churches and synods must treat DBS and PVG check applicants who have a criminal record fairly and should not discriminate because of a conviction or other information revealed. DBS and PVG checks with convictions or offences do not automatically bar applicants from working with children or adults. The URC has clear guidelines and procedures to deal with concerns resulting from information revealed by criminal record checks that are not clear (i.e. blemished disclosures), in accord with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. The safeguarding advisers and officers of the URC also provide a comprehensive support service in such circumstances, including assistance with completing risk assessments and setting up appropriate safeguards for individuals and local churches.

Guidance

13. In this area, we are taking our guidance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in its guide to eligibility for DBS checks, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012), the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, new legislation related to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and relevant documents published by statutory agencies. Guidance about regulated activity with children has been published by the Department for Education (DfE). Information about regulated activity with adults is available from the Department of Health (DH). Guidance for both vulnerable groups as well as guidance about regulated work in Scotland are accessible on URC's website.
14. The Safeguarding Good Practice 4 for Synods and General Assembly and The Handbook for Churches (section seven of both documents) are available on the website of the United Reformed Church. Both documents offer clear and practical guidance on how to integrate criminal records checking schemes in the recruitment processes for paid and voluntary workers. DDC has set up a web page (www.ddc.uk.net/urc) with further information and guidance for local churches, trustees, verifiers and other responsible staff to complete online and paper DBS and PVG applications for those working or volunteering with children and adults at risk. The government also provides an on-line tool to find out whether to check eligibility of roles for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in England and Wales (www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check). If legal information is complex or questions arise, URC churches and synods are advised to seek guidance by safeguarding professionals and regularly access statutory websites to keep information up to date due to constant changes in legislation and eligibility.
15. The table below shows URC roles where the activity is seen to be eligible for vetting, disclosure and barring checks. However, this list is indicative and not exhaustive as there will be local variations in roles and positions. Further, it should be recognised that roles do change over time and new roles are formed, and that some roles are not eligible, while others require certain type of checks. As an example, those in self-help groups or family and friends' arrangements are not eligible for an enhanced criminal record check. When a role is reviewed or a new one is created, those who are

responsible for appointments should consider first whether the individual undertaking that role is going to undertake 'regulated' activity with children or adults at risk.

16. DBS checks for all roles and positions of the URC must be renewed every five years. In Scotland membership of the PVG scheme lasts forever. PVG scheme members are continuously checked, unless they decide to leave the scheme, and they should keep their record up to date if for example, they change jobs or move house.
17. Any questions about the content of the table below should be raised with the author of this paper ahead of the Mission Council meeting, as it may not be possible for speakers to respond quickly and accurately to detailed queries in a plenary meeting.

URC roles eligible for a criminal record check

	With barring information		Without barring information		No checks
	Adults	Children	Adults	Children	
Ministers, stipendiary/NSM and Church Related Community Workers – Active	✓	✓			
Ministers, stipendiary/NSM and Church Related Community Workers – Non-active					✓
Ministers of other denominations employed by the URC	✓	✓			
Others in special category ministry posts	✓	✓			
Ministers and CRCWs in training	✓	✓			
URC Assembly accredited lay preachers in England and Wales			✓	✓	
URC Locally recognised lay preachers in England and Wales			✓	✓	
URC Assembly accredited or locally authorized lay preachers in Scotland					✓
Assembly staff and Church House support staff who undertake regulated activity with children and/or adults	✓	✓			
Synod safeguarding officers or other safeguarding designated professionals, including safeguarding coordinators, deputy safeguarding coordinators and safe church advisers	✓	✓			
Synod recognised lay pastors, local leaders, and interim ministers	✓	✓			
Interim moderators					✓
Children's and youth workers (voluntary or paid), children's and youth work elders, managers of children and youth workers, stewards and drivers in settings with regulated work with children or young people		✓			
Vulnerable adult workers (voluntary or paid), elders and pastoral and personal care visitors where the role includes direct feeding, physical care, assistance with financial matters, bereavement support/counselling or driving to medical or social care appointments	✓				
United Reformed Church trustees of registered charities providing regulated activities for children or adults at risk			✓	✓	
TLS students studying the 'Gateways into Worship', 'Gateways into care' courses or 'Stepwise' development programme	✓	✓			

Frequency criteria: Once a week or more; or Intensive – four days or more in a 30 day period; or overnight – between the hours of 0200 and 0600.

Paper T1

MIND (ministerial incapacity and discipline advisory group)

Update

Church 2018
United
Church **Reformed**
Church Church 2018

Paper T1

MIND (ministerial incapacity and discipline advisory group)

Update

Basic information

Contact	General Secretary john.proctor@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information only.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update.
Main points	Response to concerns raised, with indication of proposed way forward.
Previous documents	N/a
Consultation has taken place with...	Some consultation with synod moderators through their representative on the advisory group. The legal adviser.

Summary of impact

Financial	N/a
External (e.g. ecumenical)	The clarity, efficiency and fairness of our disciplinary process is a reputational issue for the Church.

Update

1. At the meeting of Mission Council in March 2018 a number of concerns were raised about the ministerial disciplinary process (colloquially known as 'section O'), mainly by people involved in the day to day operation of the process. These concerns can be summarised as the complexity of the process, the time it takes to operate, the number of volunteers required, the variable skills of some of the volunteers, the costs of the process, and the amount of documentation involved.
2. MIND has heard these concerns, and resolved to address them by initiating changes to the process along these lines:
 - 2.1 Assembly commissions and appeals commissions to be reduced from five members to three, in order to speed up the arrangement of dates.
 - 2.2 Synod panels, shared synod panels, and the joint panel all to be amalgamated into one joint panel, involving a smaller number of people altogether, who will receive greater training and expect to be used more frequently. Such people would not be expected to undertake much other work for the wider URC, in order that they might be available for this.
 - 2.3 The current caution stage to be integrated into the main process rather than standing almost entirely apart. Cautions will thus be one possible outcome for cases considered within the main process.
 - 2.4 The role of the Synod Moderator, beyond being the initial recipient of complaints, shall be widened by the appointment of a synod standing panel of three people, one of whom shall be the Synod Moderator; in many synods it might be appropriate for another to be the Clerk. This better reflects our conciliar nature where decisions are normally taken by groups rather than individuals; it gives a Moderator a small reference group for considering difficult decisions; it protects synod moderators against personal criticism and attack for decisions they are currently required to take; it also protects ministers against any possibility of a personality clash.
3. MIND lays this thinking before Mission Council. If there is no feedback, MIND will assume that Mission Council will be happy to consider detailed proposals along these lines, perhaps at its next meeting. Therefore, if Mission Council is not content with the direction of travel indicated here, it needs to make its views known to MIND.
4. In order to put these changes into effect, MIND has commissioned one of its number with the relevant skills to draft a possible replacement new disciplinary process. MIND will receive and review this at its meeting in January 2019, and then make a decision of principle whether to proceed with amendments to the existing process or with commissioning a new process. MIND reserves the right to bring amendments to the existing process as an interim measure, so that agreed revisions need not wait for the completion of extensive drafting. Nonetheless, MIND intends that any new drafting be more accessible than the present text, particularly for new readers.
5. Therefore, MIND proposes to bring major business to the May 2019 meeting of Mission Council, either as outlined above, or in response to feedback on what is outlined.

Paper U1

Mission Council advisory group

The Greenbelt festival

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper U1

Mission Council advisory group

The Greenbelt festival

Basic information

Contact	Mr Alan Yates, immediate past Moderator of Assembly alan.yates@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mission Council agrees to fund being an associate of Greenbelt for the next three years, with a total annual budget, covering fees and practical costs, of up to £24,000 p.a. 2. The URC planning group for GB is asked to continue its excellent programme for the under 25s and to provide more content for the over 25s, to ensure that the original intention of URC participation in GB being intergenerational is achieved. 3. The mission committee is asked to take responsibility for our involvement in GB through the established planning group; noting that the costs of our involvement in GB are not intended to come out of the existing mission committee budget.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The URC's involvement in the Greenbelt festival 2019 to 2021.
Main points	Involvement is recommended; a budget is indicated; and the mission committee is identified as the line of accountability.
Previous documents	Nothing very recent.
Consultation has taken place with...	Very widely indeed: see paper. Chief Finance Officer.

Summary of impact

Financial	See the second resolution.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	This is largely about external relationships and public witness.

The Greenbelt festival

Introduction

1. Legacy Fund money supported the Church's mission and communications committees in planning and delivering an active URC presence at the Greenbelt annual Christian arts and music festival in 2016 and 2017.
2. Many people who were aware in one way or another of the URC input in these two years were keen to see continued involvement, and some imaginative and effective work was planned and delivered in 2018.
3. However, the experience of planning activities and of gathering money a year at a time seemed unsatisfactory and somewhat unpredictable. If involvement were to continue, it would be important to look a few years ahead.
4. The Mission Council advisory group therefore asked that two people review what was being achieved in 2018 and bring a recommendation to Mission Council for the years 2019 to 2021. Mr Alan Yates was asked, as a senior figure in the Church who had not been involved in planning our input previously. He was joined by a nominee of the planning group, the Revd Anne Sardeson from Thames North Synod. The resulting paper was drafted by Alan and Anne. While their work on it was commissioned by MCAG, their conclusions have not been tested by MCAG, as MCAG believes this is a task for Mission Council.
5. The finance committee has included a sum of 30k for inter-committee projects in the draft 2019 budget. This paper clearly recommends that the bulk of that budget line be used on Greenbelt, and hopes for similar provision in 2020 and 2021.
6. The paper and recommendations prepared by Alan Yates and Anne Sardeson now follow. Alan Yates will speak to this at the Mission Council meeting.

The Yates-Sardeson review paper: Greenbelt 2019 to 21

Background

1. The URC has been a Greenbelt (GB) associate for the past three years. This provides us with a small (by Greenbelt standards) tent, permission to put on three 'Cake and Debate' sessions for youth, and access to the site to stage things such as contemplative walks, worship, discussions and art installations. A large planning group, under the leadership of Steve Summers, was established prior to the 2016 event, and has continued, with a few changes of personnel, for all of the three GBs.
2. Anne Sardeson (one of the GB Planning Group) and Alan Yates were asked by MCAG to review our involvement in GB and to provide a report to Mission Council (MC) to facilitate a decision on future investment in GB for the next three years.

3. The authors would like to thank all those who have taken the time to provide responses to this review.

Approach

4. Our aim with the data collection was to estimate the value our relationship with GB brings so that MC can assess value for money and affordability. Note that we were asked not to publish the cost of being a GB Associate as this data is 'commercial in confidence'. Therefore, the majority of people who provided us with feedback did not know how much the involvement in GB costs the URC. This is why MC is being asked to consider costs and benefits.
5. The following groups have been invited to contribute to the review:
 - Synod clerks and moderators
 - Mission Council members
 - Mission committee members
 - URC festival goers
 - Non-URC festival goers
 - URC GB planning group
 - URC tent visitors
 - Paul Northup, GB Creative Director
6. In addition, Anne and Alan have provided some insights based on their time at GB.

Results

7. Synod clerks and moderators – eight responses
 - All are aware of our involvement and all but one (who wanted more data) wanted to continue our involvement
8. Mission Council members, Mission committee members and URC festival goers – 149 responses
 - 94% want to continue our involvement, 62% say our involvement encourages them to go, 91% agrees it gives a positive view of the URC, 76% say their GB experience is enhanced by our involvement and 49% say our involvement has a positive effect on our local churches.
 - Note that we had URCers from all synods except Northern and Scotland ... not surprising given the location of GB.
 - A few people felt our activities did not offer much for those beyond 25; recognising that 84% of the URC festival goers are over 39. Also note that those under 26 were the most positive about our involvement in GB.
 - We have added a few comments from our URC festival goers. There were many more positive than negative comments:
 - 'Our 'table installation' was so out of the way, that it was not visible and many of the volunteer stewards did not know of its presence and mis-directed folks to 'The Table' cookery demonstration tent.'
 - 'The URC has some good quality, publicly known folk and good contacts elsewhere – it would be relatively easy for a different URC planning group to emulate that Methodist success, style and partnership [a part-share in a main avenue, named marquee venue] – this would also fit more easily with our

current demographic. But this might be a stronger value for money partnership than what was evidenced in 2017 and 2018 – but it might have demanded more £££.’

- ‘I wanted to reinforce that I feel that involvement with Greenbelt has been beneficial for raising the profile of the URC. I spoke to many people who loved what was done and said that the children's activities were great.’
- ‘I have found the input of the URC to be valuable at Greenbelt. It provides a space for people to come and talk and it raises the profile of the church. The past two years have been great interactive events at GB and pulled people in and then allowed for conversations. My only comment would be that if someone did not have children I wonder if they would as easily come into the space?’
- ‘It is hard to think that the URC being at Greenbelt adds much to our URC numbers – as I think most people at Greenbelt are already involved in some kind of church and aren’t looking for a new one.’
- ‘The carefully planned and prepared items and activities in the URC tent at Greenbelt, and the thoughtful 'treasure hunts' around the grounds, have been valuable contributions for people of all ages to share in exploration and conversations on topics of faith and Christian life. The way these have been prepared has involved individuals and groups from many churches throughout Britain making things to be used in the festivals. This has spread the sense of belonging and sharing in a large-scale enterprise of the URC in Christian celebration and witness.’

9. Non-URC festival goers

We interviewed 83 non-URC GB festival goers, asking three simple questions: Were you aware of the URC before GB?

- **Yes:** Do you know more about the URC now?
if yes: Does our presence put the URC in a favourable light?
No: Are you aware of the URC now?
if yes: Does our presence put the URC in a favourable light?
- 90% said they were aware of the URC, 35% said they now knew more about the URC because of our involvement and 30% said it put the URC in a good light.

10. URC GB planning group

- The members of the planning group were, in addition to contributing to the survey, asked to provide estimates of the effort that went into planning and delivering our GB activities, but we did not get enough responses to estimate total resource. We suspect that the total effort exceeds 120 person-days. Note that most of this time is given free-of-charge and is given because the people have a passion for GB (in other words we cannot assume that this effort would be available for other initiatives).

11. URC tent visitors

- The work in the Take Away tent is a focus for our time at Greenbelt and much of the feedback shines a light on the place this tent is coming to play in the life of many Greenbelters and the way this is undoubtedly affecting the perception of the URC. Many who came in spoke of how much they had enjoyed previous years and

commented on the longer-term effect our contribution has had. One summed up what many have said about the creativity and energy of the URC: 'Brilliant stuff URC. Thank you. Very thoughtful activities, especially the silhouettes – beautifully written and engaging. Incredible asset to Greenbelt', with one person declaring 'this is a jewel in the URC crown'

- 'When we use the basket from last year it always reminds us of the URC at Greenbelt'. 'I've never said this before, but I am so proud to say I am from the URC'. The Take Away tent adds a focal point for URC people at Greenbelt and seems to have been a great encouragement and sense of connection. This above quote is an overheard reply given to a question about where someone was from; it makes me giggle and fills me with joy
- The tent is a crucial connection point beyond the URC, and beyond Greenbelt itself, as many who come through and take away ideas and flowers are not URC, and of course, many of those who contribute to the tent do not (as many cannot) come to Greenbelt. Those who worked in the tent had a number of significant conversations enabled by the flowers. The stories of how people will use their flowers in so many ways in so many churches around the country are a reminder of what we are giving to the wider Christian community, as is what a chaplain from a school in Glastonbury shared when he told us he has taken a set of the labels from the pilgrimage to hide around the school for the pupils to find. 'We really appreciated what the URC have provided over the last couple of years for Greenbelt. There is clearly so much thought, creativity and love that goes into the preparation and execution of the event. It is made even more special knowing the work has been done by people all over the country. Thank you!'
- To sum up: 'well done for coming to Greenbelt'.

12. Paul Northup, GB Creative Director

- Very complimentary about our planning group ... 'creative and diligent ... they're easy to work with'
- 'GB can be free floating [i.e. only operates for four days a year] so it is important to have relationships with mainstream denominations [Quakers and URC]'
- GB values the year-round coverage they get from *Reform* ... although independent from us being an Associate, but very much seen as part of the broader relationship. Note that in conversation with Steve Tomkins it is clear that *Reform* [and the URC] benefit from access to high profile speakers during GB and beyond.

13. Anne and Alan's insights

- The tent was in a good position, looked attractive, was always busy, and had a 'buzz' about it
- It came across as a place for the young: welcoming for the young, less so for adults without children
- The Cake and Debate sessions were well received (note that 'oldies' were not allowed in)
- For some who come to GB there is a sense of falling off the edge of church: so, the value in us being there and saying there are churches that connect in these places is crucial
- Greenbelt gives a sense of connection with others both in the URC and beyond

- Greenbelt offers a way of being church that is a place of exploration and openness; a safe place to ask questions and explore ideas that might be shut down in other settings; a place to be creative and find connection. Something I call ‘being church in a field’ – not all polished, but exciting and challenging and wet and warm and open and supportive. Being there for the world. Being Christ in a messy world’.
- Only two denominations were present in their own right: The Quakers and us ... not surprising given our shared heritage of social action and inclusiveness.

Assessment

14. We did not specifically ask a question that had been raised at MCAG – whether the URC would do better to sponsor a different festival. In conversation, and from some comments, it was clear that Greenbelt was better aligned to the URC than festivals such as Spring Harvest. One of the issues is that GB does not really serve our Northern and Scottish synods: it’s worth noting that Greenbelt are well aware of their lack of involvement of people from Scotland, not least because it happens after Scottish Schools have gone back. There is another sister festival in Scotland, Solas, earlier in the summer that fits better with the school holidays there.
15. In all the data we have gathered the overwhelming response is that we value and wish to continue our involvement in GB, particularly by those under 26. We recognise that the URC respondents are self-selecting (not unusual in such exercises) and therefore may be naturally favourable to GB. However, opportunity was given for anyone to provide negative comments.
16. The impact on non-URC folk was positive. Although only about a third of those interviewed expressed a positive impact from our presence this could translate into about 4,000 people, if the statistics work!
17. A significant, but as yet unquantified, effort goes into the planning and delivery of our GB activities.
18. The simple summary of the data is that our involvement in GB does add significant value, but the question remains that should we better meet the needs of our core festival goers (40 to 65) or focus on our missing generations?

Governance

19. At present our GB planning group has a loose connection to the mission committee. The mission committee receives and reviews a report from the GB planning group. One of the resolutions aims to formalise this arrangement.

Towards a decision

20. Two key decisions are needed: financial and strategic:
 - Our involvement in GB undeniably delivers significant value, but is it value for money, and can we afford it?

- If we are to continue should we modify its focus and how should we govern it?

Resolutions

- 21. Three draft resolutions are therefore offered to Mission Council, as shown in the table on page 152.**

Paper U2

Mission council advisory group

Future tenure of General Secretary

United Church 2018
Church 2018
Reformed Church 2018
Church 2018

Paper U2

Mission council advisory group

Future tenure of General Secretary

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Clerk michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council amends paragraph 5.1 of the Rules of Procedure to read as follows: <i>The General Secretary, who shall be a Minister of the United Reformed Church, shall be appointed for a period of seven years renewable for successive terms of not more than seven years each.</i>

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Future tenure of the General Secretary.
Main points	This is presently a one or two term post. The paper proposes lifting that cap for future post-holders.
Previous relevant documents	<i>The Manual</i> , section C (Rules of Procedure), paragraph five.
Consultation has taken place with...	Within MCAG, the present general secretary has made clear that he would not in any eventuality seek to take advantage of the proposed change in the Rules.

Summary of impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Future tenure of General Secretary

1. The recent appointment of the Revd Paul Whittle for a third term as Moderator of Eastern Synod reminded many people that synod moderators are not limited to two terms, despite a widespread belief that this was the case. The relevant part of the Rules of Procedure reads as follows:

'Each [Synod] Moderator shall be appointed for such term not exceeding seven years as the General Assembly shall in each case think fit ... the General Assembly shall have power to determine any such appointment during its term or to renew any such appointment for successive terms of not more than five years each.'
2. Other Assembly appointed ministers, at Church House and Westminster College, are subject to terms, but in many cases these are renewable without limit, subject to satisfactory review and a desire by all parties for the post holder to continue.
3. This means that the General Secretary is almost the only Assembly appointed minister limited to a maximum number of terms.
4. This paper does not argue against termed appointments *per se*. There are many benefits to these. The reviews mean that the church is protected against an inappropriate post holder continuing, and ministers are protected against being trapped in a post that they feel only requires their ministry for a season.
5. However, there are some difficulties created by limiting the number of terms:
 - a) The pool of people available to be General Secretary is limited, and is diminishing as the number of ministers (and members) continues to decrease
 - b) Given the increased retirement age, and the likelihood that this will further increase, it is more likely than it once was that someone would be appointed General Secretary at an age when they would be able to offer longer service than two seven year terms, if they and the church both wanted to
 - c) Were someone to finish two terms less than five years before their retirement date, perhaps significantly less than five years before, it would put them in an awkward position for seeking a pastorate for only a very short time
 - d) Some synods are now moving away from fixed terms for URC Ministers serving in LEPs, even where this causes difficulties with our ecumenical partners
 - e) It is now regarded as bad employment practice to limit the length of time a post holder can serve when both the post and the funding are continuing, and all parties are happy with the performance of the post holder. The General Secretary is not an employee, but that should not be a reason not to follow best practice.
6. Were this argument to be accepted, than it could be resolved by a simple change to Rules of Procedure. The current wording is as follows:

5.1 *The General Secretary, who shall be a minister of the United Reformed Church, shall be appointed for a period of seven years renewable for the same term or such shorter period as the Assembly may determine.*
7. A possible revised wording is offered in the draft resolution.

Paper Z1

Church House management group

Terms of reference

Church 2018
United
Church 2018
Reformed
Church 2018
Church

Paper Z1

Church House management group

Terms of reference

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Jane Baird, Deputy General Secretary (administration and resources) jane.baird@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<p>a) Mission Council adopts the amended terms of reference for the Church House management group, with immediate effect</p> <p>b) Mission Council notes the end of service dates for the current members of the Church House management group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mike Gould, 30 June 2019 • Doug Maxwell, end of General Assembly 2020 • Derek Jones, end of General Assembly 2021 • Robert Buss, end of General Assembly 2022.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Updating the terms of reference for current needs and circumstances, specifically to define terms of service for members.
Main points	Membership and terms of service.
Previous relevant documents	Terms of reference agreed Mission Council November 2015 (paper U2 refers).
Consultation has taken place with...	Nominations committee.

Summary of impact

Financial	No direct impact.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

Terms of reference

1. In November 2015 Mission Council agreed updated terms of reference for the Church House management committee (CHMG).
2. The 2015 terms of reference did not specify any length of service for its members.
3. CHMG wishes to come in line with other committees which set an expectation for the period of service by setting an initial period of four years extendable by up to an additional two years.
4. CHMG proposes the following end of service dates for its existing members:
 - Mike Gould, 30 June 2019
 - Doug Maxwell, end of General Assembly 2020
 - Derek Jones, end of General Assembly 2021
 - Robert Buss end of General Assembly 2022
5. The terms of reference are also amended to clarify the staff members in attendance.
6. The proposed amended terms of reference are included as an appendix to this paper. The changes are shown in bold.

Appendix – Church House management group terms of reference

1. Membership

CHMG will consist of:

- 1.1. Convenor: Deputy General Secretary (administration and resources) [DGS(A&R)]
- 1.2. Ex officio: General Secretary, Chief Finance Officer.
- 1.3. Four members appointed by General Assembly (or Mission Council on its behalf) on the recommendation of the nominations committee, who have experience in buildings and IT management, including finance and general management.

Appointments will be for an initial term of four years which may be extended by up to two years.

- 1.4. In attendance: IT Manager, Facilities Manager, **Records Manager**.

The group will appoint a Secretary.

2. Accountability

CHMG is accountable to Mission Council through the DGS (A&R). The DGS (A&R) shall be responsible for ensuring communication to Church House staff of those decisions which are directly relevant to them, and will receive any matters, within its terms of reference, which staff wish to be considered by CHMG.

3. Responsibilities

CHMG shall set and monitor policies relating to the management of the support services and facilities of Church House. The responsibility for implementation of such policies rests with those employees appointed by the Church to do so and ultimately the General Secretary.

- 3.1 CHMG shall have budgetary responsibility for capital expenditure on 86 Tavistock Place, London, for maintenance to the fabric (including the third floor flat, 86A Tavistock Place); and for such equipment and staffing costs as come under the 'Church House costs' budget head in the annual accounts.
- 3.2 CHMG shall have responsibility for overseeing the maintenance of centrally owned properties in accordance with the Housing Policy for Assembly Appointed Staff (December 2005).

- 3.3 CHMG shall ensure the development, implementation, maintenance and monitoring of a policy and hold budgetary responsibility (capital and revenue) for IT in Church House, for staff whose reporting base is Church House.
- 3.4 CHMG shall ensure the development, implementation, maintenance and monitoring of a health and safety policy for Church House, for staff whose reporting base is Church House and synod moderators.
- 3.5 CHMG shall ensure the development, implementation, maintenance and monitoring of a data protection policy for Church House, for staff whose reporting base is Church House and synod moderators.
- 3.6 CHMG shall ensure development, implementation, maintenance and monitoring of an Archiving Policy for Church House.
- 3.7 CHMG shall ensure the development, implementation, maintenance and testing of a business continuity plan for Church House.
- 3.8 CHMG shall be responsible for that part of the Church's Risk Register which relates to the running of Church House, including all matters covered within its health and safety policy.
- 3.9 CHMG shall be responsible for any other related matters which affect the welfare of staff or operational matters in Church House, which may arise from time to time, and for which a formal policy or procedure is required (excepting human resources matters which will be the responsibility of the human resources advisory group); and any other associated matters referred to it by Mission Council.



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