

Mission Council

20-21 November 2020
Via Zoom



The
United
Reformed
Church



November 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Mission Council Friday to Saturday 20 to 21 November 2020

This is the second mailing for this month's Mission Council. The first mailing included a covering letter, a list of members, and 'What we are about in Mission Council.' If any of these are missing, please contact Samantha Bircham: samantha.bircham@urc.org.uk. A third mailing will follow next week and will include the agenda and log in information for Zoom.

1. Mission Council Papers

Many of the papers for Mission Council are now available here: <https://urc.org.uk/november-2020>. Others may follow over the coming days, so please check this page on our website regularly.

2. En Bloc

At General Assembly and Mission Council meetings we take certain business *En Bloc*. These are 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 needs discussion at Mission Council, particularly if you disagree with a proposed resolution, you may ask that a piece of business be removed from *En Bloc*. You must put that request to the Clerk michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk four days before we meet (11:00 on Monday 16 November). If three people ask to remove an item, it will be withdrawn from *En Bloc* and added to our agenda.

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.

Here are the papers the Moderators presently expect to take in *En Bloc*:

- A1 Business Committee: Mission Council/Assembly Executive and General Assembly
- B1 Children's and Youth Work Committee: response to Covid-19 update

- B2 Children's and Youth Work Committee: URC infant feeding policy for local churches
- C2 Education and Learning Committee: Environmental Statement - Working Towards a Green Charter
- C3 Education and Learning Committee: Carbon Calculator
- D1 Faith and Order Committee: Update
- F1 Ministries Committee: Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers and Elders
- F3 Ministries Committee: Non-stipendiary Church Related Community Work ministry
- H1 Nominations Committee: List of Nominations
- H2 Nominations Committee: Supplementary (resolutions 1 and 2 only)
- I1 Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee: Update to terms of reference
- J1 Human Resources Advisory Group: Review panel for the renewal of the appointment of the Principal of Westminster College
- M1 Walking the Way Steering Group: Continuing the Way of Jesus

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. P. Bradbury" with a stylized flourish at the end. Below the signature is a small number "2".

John Bradbury

**Mission Council
20 to 21 November 2020**

Groups

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>Val Morrison <i>Leader</i> Bill Robson <i>Reporter</i></p> <p>Karen Campbell Tim Crossley Joanna Harris Tim Hopley Richard Lockley Charles Mather Maria Mills Pamela Tolhurst Nigel Uden</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>Alan Yates <i>Leader</i> Jenny Mills <i>Reporter</i></p> <p>Derek Estill Fran Kissack Morag McLintock Shirley Miller Lythan Nevard Marilyn Piper Myra Rose Victoria Turner George Watt</p>
<p>C</p>	<p>David Greatorex <i>Leader</i> Graham Hoslett <i>Reporter</i></p> <p>Rosie Buxton Martin Coe George Faris Russell Furley-Smith Elaine Hutchinson Anne Lewitt Sarah Moore Steve Summers</p>	<p>D</p>	<p>Simon Walkling <i>Leader</i> Chuka Agbasiere <i>Reporter</i></p> <p>Jane Baird Karen Bell Geoffrey Clarke Nicola Furley-Smith David Herbert Keir Hounsome Timothy Meadows Robert Pope</p>
<p>E</p>	<p>Helen Lidgett <i>Leader</i> Peter Stevenson <i>Reporter</i></p> <p>Jason Askew Fiona Bennett Francis Brienen Melanie Campbell Tessa Henry-Robinson Charles Mather Simeon Mitchell Andrew Prasad Paul Whittle</p>	<p>F</p>	<p>Steve Faber <i>Leader</i> Rita Griffiths <i>Reporter</i></p> <p>Elizabeth Clark Ruth Dixon Simon Fairnington Paul Franklin Joan Grindrod-Helmn Ian Hardie Sarah Lane Cawte Rosie Martin Sandra Wallace</p>
<p>G</p>	<p>Sam Richards <i>Leader</i> Adrian Bulley <i>Reporter</i></p> <p>Ray Adams Ioannis Athanasiou Philip Brookes Lorraine Downer Kenneth Howcroft John Piper Maureen Shepherd Camilla Veitch Ruth Whitehead</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>Reuban Watt <i>Leader</i> Phil Wall <i>Reporter</i></p> <p>Bridget Banks Phillip French Gwen Jennings Brian Jolly Nick Jones Jamie Kissack Paul Robinson John Samson</p>

Paper A1

Mission Council/Assembly Executive and General Assembly

Business Committee

An update on decisions and ongoing work

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Adrian Bulley adrian.bulley@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information – updates.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	An update on the work of the committee to date.
Main points	Arrangements for: November 2020 Mission Council, March 2021 Mission Council, Assembly Executives beyond March 2021, July 2021 General Assembly and General Assemblies beyond 2021.
Previous relevant documents	None.
Consultation has taken place with...	Officers of standing committees.

Summary of impact

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

The first meeting of the new Business Committee took place in late September.

1. November 2020 Mission Council

Having reflected in detail on the July meetings of Mission Council and General Assembly, the decision has been taken to use the standard Zoom (as opposed to Zoom Webinar) for this meeting because the platform is now more familiar, enables greater interaction, engenders a sense of being in community with colleagues, and gives the opportunity to use breakout rooms for smaller group discussion.

2. March 2021 Mission Council

The committee has reached the decision that this meeting should be held virtually, using Zoom, over three days (Monday 15 to Wednesday 17 March). The booking at High Leigh has been cancelled.

3. Assembly Executives beyond March 2021

Bookings have now been made as follows:

- 22 to 24 November 2021 at High Leigh;
- 28 to 30 November 2022 at High Leigh;
- 27 to 29 November 2023 at The Hayes;
- 25 to 27 November 2024 at High Leigh.

4. July 2021 General Assembly

- a) Meeting for General Assembly in a conference centre will inevitably feel somewhat different to meeting on a campus or in a public building.
- b) The committee is determined that the main purpose of General Assembly will be to conduct its business in the context of prayer and Bible study.
- c) Parallel sessions will remain an important part of the agenda of General Assembly, offering an opportunity for members of Assembly to engage with the work of the Assembly's committees in a more intimate and less formal setting. This will apply whether or not a committee is reporting in writing in a given year. The committee is producing guidelines for committee officers to make best use of these opportunities.
- d) We do not anticipate inviting a key-note speaker in 2021.
- e) There will not be the same opportunities for fringe meetings as there have been in the past. All meals will be taken in The Hayes' dining rooms, so the possibilities for members of Assembly to take packed lunches to another venue will not present themselves. In short, we do not anticipate making provision for fringe meetings, although it may be possible for a small interest group so to organise themselves that they can gather together over a meal to share in conversation.

5. General Assemblies beyond 2021

Bookings have now been made with The Hayes as follows:

- 8 to 11 July 2022;
- 30 June to 3 July 2023;
- 12 to 15 July 2024.

Paper B1

Children's and Youth Work response to Covid-19 update

Children's and Youth Work Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Robinson paul@pjr-robinson.co.uk Dr Sam Richards sam.richards@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To report the work of the CYDO+ team and Children's and Youth Work staff to support local churches during Covid-19 restrictions.
Main points	Changes in working practices, production of new resources.
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	Synods through CYDO+ team and CYDO+ managers Safeguarding URC Comms URC Youth Executive CTE.

Summary of impact

Financial	Financial savings of at least £50K due to cancelled meetings, events and move to digital alternatives.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Strengthening links with ROOTS; contributing to ecumenical projects; and sharing resources freely with other denominations at national, synod and local level.

Children's and Youth Work response to Covid-19 update

1. The 2020 world pandemic has changed the context and lives of children, young people and young adults. In England, Scotland and Wales this has seen periods of

lockdown and varied restrictions on daily life. The results for those aged 0-25 included months of missed education, disrupted exams and results, greatly reduced social contact, suspension of church activities and those offered by other voluntary organisations. Many things that had been looked forward to such as birthdays, holidays, and celebrating life transitions were lost. A number experienced the loss of older relatives to the disease. Employment opportunities have been severely reduced with young adults most effected. Domestic violence and child abuse have increased as families have been restricted to households which are not places of safety for all. Disparity in virtual connectivity has widened the gap between socio-economic groups. The economic impact has hit families with children hardest of all, with a sharp increase in use of foodbanks and reliance on benefits alongside increased debt and a rise in childhood poverty. Many children and young people have mental health and wellbeing issues arising from the loss of play, social contact and freedom so necessary to healthy development. Whilst those aged 0-25 have been least at risk from the infection, they have been the most seriously impacted both during the pandemic and in terms of the anticipated longer term consequences.

Living, loving God,
we praise you,
and through times of peril we lean into you,
for in Jesus Christ
you have trodden paths as difficult as ours,
revealing there a love that nothing defeats,
a love that bears us through.

We pray for children, young people and young adults
whose lives are being impacted
who are experiencing anxiety, loss, frustration and isolation.
We pray for those seeking to support them
and protect them from all forms of harm.

Even as we strive to behave responsibly,
and to care reliably,
so we feel after you
that in these uncertain times we might trust you are with us,
our refuge and strength,
and our faith, hope and love might be renewed,
through Jesus Christ, Amen.

(Adapted from 'A prayer for uncertain times' by immediate past moderators of General Assembly Revd Nigel Uden and Derek Estill.)

2. The team of synod Children's and Youth Development Officers and other synod lead workers for children's and youth work (the CYDO+ team) with the Head of Children's and Youth Work and Programme Officer started a weekly online meeting each Monday from 30 March 2020 until August when this reduced to fortnightly.

In addition, the team have had longer, more focused meetings online to replace their normal 24 hour residential meetings in June and October. These online

meetings have proved extremely beneficial and we will seek to continue them beyond the current pandemic response. In particular they have:

- a) helped the team to strengthen working relationships, particularly enabling those who are employed part-time, and for whom travel time is often prohibitive, to be more connected.
 - b) enabled the needs of local churches to be shared at a denomination-wide level very quickly.
 - c) enabled the team to make rapid decisions about which issues were best served collectively, and how best to resource that work.
 - d) enabled CYDO+s to offer their skills and gifts to particular projects.
 - e) helped the team members to remain connected, supported and motivated at a time when much of their normal work was suspended.
3. A much more flexible approach to CYDO+ allocations for assembly level work has emerged, as planned work (such as What Do You Think and The Big Speak Out) was cancelled, and other projects emerged as timely ways of resourcing local churches. This flexible approach also enabled us to reflect the variety of circumstances the team were in during different periods (such as health, local restrictions, being involved in other areas of synod work). This created a much more fluid way of working which raised potential issues around accountability to synods through line-managers and to the assembly programme through the Children's and Youth Work Committee (CYWC). On the whole ways of working and lines of communication have been established to mitigate these issues, and there is a general desire to find ways to retain at least some of this flexibility going forwards to enable children's and youth work in the URC to be responsive to the ever changing context.
4. The CYDO+ team and Children's and Youth Work team have together created the following additional resources in response to the impact of Covid-19:
- i. Supplements to the normal bi-monthly e-newsletter on the following:
 - Online resources
 - Holiday club
 - CPD opportunities and online training
 - Supporting children and young people through anxiety, grief and loss
 - Resources for 11-18 year olds.
 - ii. Pre-recorded services
 - Together for Pentecost All Age Service
 - Pilots Sunday
 - Intergenerational Worship for Education Sunday (for CTE).
 - iii. Families on Faith Adventures @ Home – a weekly resource for Pilots Companies, FOFA Groups and local churches to send to families. This has been made available each week since 9 April 2020, online or as PDF to email or print, and includes a

range of activities (craft, play, prayer, worship, storytelling) that invite a family to explore a Bible story together, with supporting material on YouTube and Pinterest.

- iv. URC Youth TRIalogue – a weekly resource for age 16+ broadcast live on YouTube from 7 May 2020 to 30 July, and fortnightly since 3 September with option for live audience engagement via **Slido.com**, and available to view afterwards or access as a podcast. The first eight sessions also have an accompanying Going Deeper resource. This is a panel discussion with three contributors, chaired by a CYDO, exploring an issue in relation to a Bible passage.
- v. Let's Celebrate: children and youth work in the URC – online 'fringe event' for General Assembly 2020. This enabled us to share news and highlight projects, reaching a much wider audience than normal.
- vi. Stepping Out – our first webinar on starting youth work outside the building (detached youth work) with Tim Evans, CEO of Worth Unlimited. This method of offering training enabled us to provide specific support to a widely scattered group of participants, and to showcase some examples of good practice.
- vii. The Big Speak Out and Pilots Big Day Out were offered as virtual events but did not go ahead due to low take up.
5. URC Youth Executive in 2020 have only met online, and in September took the difficult decision not to hold Youth Assembly 2021. They are working on an alternative programme on the theme of Heroes and Villains. They created an online service for International Youth Day on the theme of mental health. Some have also been involved in a peer-led regular online worship gathering.
6. Our normal June mailing to all churches was re-conceived as an email campaign with support from URC Comms. We will be assessing the relative impact of this.
7. Our Faith with Under 5s day conference (run in partnership with Roots) in September was re-conceived as an online conference over three evenings 24 to 26 November, with strong take up.
8. We are partners in an ecumenical project Creating Space with Children, offering an online community of practice to reflect on ministry with children, hosted by the Methodist Church.
9. At the invitation of URC Comms we are creating a family engagement resource in a post-able box for the six weeks from advent to epiphany – Advent Hope and Joy.
10. We are producing an online Christingle service for the URC.
11. We have been producing guidance for local churches and sample materials for risk assessment, consent and code of conduct for online engagement with children and young people:
 - Latest URC guidance for children's and youth work
 - Guidelines for safe use of video conferencing with young people and children (PDF)
 - URC online engagement with children and young people RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL (PDF)

URC online engagement with children and young people RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL (Word document)

- Online engagement information and consent form for under 18s (PDF)
 - Online engagement information and consent form for under 18s (Word document)
 - Code of Conduct for online engagement with young people, children and families, and church workers (PDF)
 - Code of Conduct for online engagement with young people, children and families, and church workers (Word document)
 - Top Tips for engaging in online worship (PDF)
12. This represents a huge amount of work and ministry in an uncertain time and we encourage the church to give thanks to God for the Children and Youth Work team, the synod CYDO+ team, Youth Executive, and the many people working with children and young people in our local churches and local communities.

Paper B2

URC infant feeding policy for local churches

Children's and Youth Work Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Robinson paul@pjr-robinson.co.uk Dr Sam Richards sam.richards@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council approves the URC infant feeding policy and encourages local churches to adopt it.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To offer local churches a denomination approved policy to support infant feeding.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	Record of Assembly 1992 Record of Assembly 2010 Mission Council November 2018 Paper B3 CYWC outline strategy.
Consultation has taken place with...	Equalities Committee CYDO+ team Head of Communications.

Summary of impact

Financial	Local churches may incur minor cost in implementing the policy.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	If approved we will share this with our ecumenical partners through Children's Ministry Network (part of CTBI).

1. Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,
all you who love her;
rejoice with her in joy,
all you who mourn over her—
¹¹ that you may nurse and be satisfied
from her consoling breast;

that you may drink deeply with delight
from her glorious bosom.

¹² For thus says the LORD:

I will extend prosperity to her like a river,
and the wealth of the nations like an overflowing stream;
and you shall nurse and be carried on her arm,
and dandled on her knees.

¹³ As a mother comforts her child,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

Isaiah 66:10-13 NRSV

The Christian tradition directly associates God with infant feeding. The Lord is described as a nursing mother and caring father. In Jesus, God is incarnate as a newborn infant dependent parents and carers for nourishment to thrive. As the people of God, we rightly celebrate each new life, and seek to welcome infants into our community.

2. A key element of welcoming infants with their parents and carers is offering an environment where their needs can be comfortably met whilst enabling them to participate in the full life of the church and its wider activities.
3. This is the second year of Children's and Youth Work Committee's (CYWC) five year strategy which has a focus on supporting local churches in their engagement with 0-5 year olds.
4. Equalities Committee had previously begun work on a breast feeding policy for local churches, and earlier this year passed that over to Judy Harris, Children's and Development Officer (CYDO) for Wales for comment.
5. This was brought to the CYDO+ team who agreed to work with Children's and Youth to develop this into a more inclusive policy to support all parents and carers bringing infants to activities in local churches. This policy is now presented by CYWC to Mission Council for approval (see Appendix 1).
6. The proposed policy aims to promote and enable breast feeding, widely recognized to be the best start in life. The World Health Organisation states:
'Breastmilk is the ideal food for infants. It is safe, clean and contains antibodies which help protect against many common childhood illnesses. Breastmilk provides all the energy and nutrients that the infant needs for the first months of life, and it continues to provide up to half or more of a child's nutritional needs during the second half of the first year, and up to one third during the second year of life. Breastfed children perform better on intelligence tests, are less likely to be overweight or obese and less prone to diabetes later in life. Women who breastfeed also have a reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancers'.¹
7. The policy aims to balance this with supporting all parents and carers in feeding their infants according to their circumstances and choices.
8. URC Communications are prepared to work with CYWC to design appropriate signage for local churches which can be downloaded from the URC website.

¹ https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab_1

9. The URC has a history of supporting campaigns to promote and protect breastfeeding worldwide. FURY Assembly resolution IJ9 in 1992 on Nestle and Baby Milk supported the boycott campaign. URC General Assembly subsequently passed a resolution in 1992 encouraging churches to boycott Nescafe and other Nestle products because of the way Nestle markets breast milk substitutes in the developing world. The Church and Society committee and the Commitment for Life sub-committee of the URC, both continued to monitor the situation and support the work of Baby Milk Action for a number of years. The URC was thanked by Baby Milk Action for its support². In 2010, following a resolution concerning ethical investment, General Assembly invited the Children's Assembly to write to Nestle to make their views known.³
10. A new report by WHO, UNICEF, and the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) reveals that despite efforts to stop the harmful promotion of breast-milk substitutes, countries are still falling short in protecting parents from misleading information. 'The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the need for stronger legislation to protect families from false claims about the safety of breast-milk substitutes or aggressive marketing practices. Breastmilk saves children's lives as it provides antibodies that give babies a healthy boost and protect them against many childhood illnesses.'⁴
11. The policy invites local churches to engage with these continuing issues at local, national and international levels as a matter of Christian witness of God's particular concern for the most vulnerable.
12. The policy sets out the level of support it is possible for local churches to offer in relation to infant feeding. Churches would be encouraged to adopt this whilst still working towards some elements as a statement of intent, and the policy may be adapted by local churches as appropriate to their context.
13. The provision of a welcoming environment for the feeding of infants in our local churches is an invitation and opportunity for all to deepen our experience of being a child of God:
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.
Psalm 131:2 NRSV

² <http://archive.babymilkaction.org/pdfs/babymilkactionurc0710.pdf>

³ https://urc.org.uk/images/General-Assemblies/Archives/assembly_record_10.pdf

⁴ <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/27-05-2020-countries-failing-to-stop-harmful-marketing-of-breast-milk-substitutes-warn-who-and-unicef>

Appendix 1

Anytown United Reformed Church Safe feeding environments for babies

Anytown United Reformed Church ('the church') wants this to be a safe place for infants to be fed by their carers/parents.

We will give all parents and carers active and practical support for their needs in feeding their infant here whether by breast or bottle.

Guidelines

1. The Equality Act 2010 says that it is discrimination to treat a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. It applies to anyone providing services, benefits, facilities and premises to the public, public bodies, further and higher education bodies and associations.
2. We will acknowledge and support the rights of women to breastfeed their children in all public areas of these premises. If a mother is happy to feed in a public area, then she should be made to feel comfortable to continue. An appropriately placed chair can be offered for her comfort and convenience.
3. If a mother wishes to feed her baby in private, we will advise her of the facilities available [quiet room, vestry, church office *as applicable*]. If a mother chooses not to use the private facilities offered to her, her right to do so must be respected.
4. Toilets are not acceptable as a private space to breastfeed and should not be offered as they do not offer a hygienic environment.
5. If a mother wishes to express milk to feed her baby, we will advise her of the facilities available [quiet room, vestry, church office *as applicable*]. If a mother chooses not to use the private facilities offered to her, her right to do so must be respected. Toilets are not acceptable as a private space to express and should not be offered as they do not offer a hygienic environment.
6. If there are older siblings with the parent or carer, and there is no creche provision, then we will try to provide an appropriate space alongside the feeding parent/carer with age appropriate materials for those children to play with safely.
7. We will provide information to everyone about the options for feeding infants, giving support to those who cannot breastfeed their own children and are grieving about this.
8. We will signal our support for breastfeeding with appropriate public signs (these are available from URC website).
9. We will support local, national and international campaigns that promote safe feeding environments for infant and breastfeeding.

10. We will support the Baby Milk Action campaigns against Nestle and Danone. Whilst acknowledging that not every mother can breastfeed, the targeting of the world's poorest nations by large multinational companies is not acceptable.

Handling objections

1. It is the policy of this church to try and meet the needs of all its members and visitors and make their attendance as positive and safe as possible.
2. If a visitor or member of the church objects to a mother breastfeeding, then a conversation about the church's policy will be held and an alternative place for the person with objections to sit will be offered.
3. The policy was discussed by elders and church members prior to its adoption and will be reviewed annually. Anyone wishing to comment on this policy should contact the Church Secretary.

Equipment which may be helpful:

- A comfortable chair without arms which is suitable to use for feeding a child (nursing type chair);
- A quiet space using a small play tent, a wigwam or a simple rug for older siblings, with a box of books, and some age appropriate quiet toys;
- Facility to warm a bottle;
- Facility to keep milk cold.

**This policy was adopted at the Anytown URC Church Meeting held on [date].
Reviewed [date]**

Paper C1

Improving integration within education and learning in the URC

Education and Learning Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Alan Yates alan.yates@urc.org.uk
Action required	Mission Council is invited to shape the consultation plan, and then the Education and Learning Committee will be responsible for the consultation.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council accepts the plan to consult with named bodies to develop a view of how education and learning within the URC can achieve the integration envisioned in the 2005 General Assembly.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To consult, as widely as necessary, to gather ideas of how to improve integration within education and learning in the United Reformed Church.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	Resolution 51 at General Assembly 2005. The Way Forward presented by the Education and Learning Committee, Mission Council, July 2020.
Consultation has taken place with...	The General Secretary and Education and Learning staff team.

Summary of impact

Financial	None specific to this consultation process.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None at present, but there may be ecumenical implications identified during the consultations.

Improving integration within education and learning in the URC

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In the autumn of 2019, The Education and Learning Committee (E&LC) started to consider its ongoing strategy. This culminated in a report that was approved by the Mission Council in July 2020. The Way Forward recognised that we had not yet reached the goals set by the General Assembly in 2005, and that they were still highly relevant. The key goal of the Education and Learning Committee, paraphrased from Resolution 51 at General Assembly 2005, is to cultivate: *“a church committed to life-long learning where there is integrated education and training offered to the whole people of God”*.
- 1.2 The plan presented as part of the Way Forward strategy included a key task to ‘Define Integration’ and went on to explain that the essence of the task was to ‘Define what ‘success’ looks like’. This task, in conjunction with the other defined tasks, recognises that integration for its own sake is not the goal; it must, at least, enhance the delivery of *life-long learning offered to the whole people of God*.
- 1.3 At the E&LC meeting in July, following Mission Council’s approval of The Way Forward, the committee agreed that the integration task should focus on possible changes to make education and learning more integrated rather than simply defining ‘what success looks like’; and in doing so will need to be consultative.
- 1.4 The purpose of this short paper is to define how and when the consultation will take place, who will be involved and when Mission Council will be provided with the feedback.

2. Approach

- 2.1 The aim is to consult with a wide group of stakeholders in a transparent manner. The expectation is that these consultations will identify ways in which integration can be improved and how it will benefit the URC. Consultations are expected to take place before the end of February 2021. Initial findings from these consultations will be presented to Mission Council in 2021, together with the suggested next steps.
- 2.2 The consultations will be undertaken by Convenor and Secretary of the E&LC, and the acting Deputy General Secretary Discipleship.

3. Stakeholders

- 3.1 Two groups of stakeholders will be consulted:
 - core stakeholders who will be directly involved in making the changes that will enhance integration; and
 - wider stakeholders who will possibly be impacted by any changes.
- 3.2 The core stakeholders are:
 - RCLs

- Assembly Committees, notably Education and Learning, Children and Youthwork, Ministries and Mission;
 - The Ministries staff team;
 - The Education and Learning staff team;
 - The General Secretariat, and the Deputy General Secretary Discipleship; and
 - Synods, particularly Moderators and Synod staff/committees with Education and Learning responsibilities.
- 3.3 The wider stakeholders are:
- EM1 students and EM2/3 ministers;
 - Those involved in managing, developing, and participating in Stepwise;
 - URC Youth; and
 - Global and Intercultural Ministries.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Education and Learning Committee put forward the following resolution for the consideration of Mission Council:

Mission Council accepts the plan to consult with named bodies to develop a view of how education and learning within the URC can achieve the integration envisioned in the 2005 General Assembly.

Paper C2

Environmental statement – working towards a Green Charter for the Education and Learning Committee

Education and Learning Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Alan Yates alan.yates@urc.org.uk The Revd Dr Rosalind Selby rosalind.selby@lkh.co.uk
Action required	None; for information only.
Draft resolution(s)	None

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The development of a 'Green Charter' to guide the operation of the Education and Learning Committee (E&LC).
Main points	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. For the URC to achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by well before 2050 requires urgent action.2. Identifies how the E&LC can play its part in meeting this target.3. Defines a Charter to guide E&LC operation.4. Aims to track progress with a carbon calculator.
Previous relevant documents	Mission Committee Paper I3: Carbon emissions target; Mission Council May, 2019
Consultation has taken place with...	Secretary for Church and Society

Summary of impact

Financial	Possibly, if carbon offsetting is used.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None at present.

Environmental statement

Working towards a Green Charter for the Education and Learning Committee

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2016, General Assembly adopted an Environmental Policy for the United Reformed Church (URC), which was updated by Mission Council in May 2019. The URC appointed an Environmental Task Group which is working towards the denomination's response to this pledge within the policy:
- 1.1.1 *We pledge to respond to the report's call for repentance in the face of our complicity in the sinful structures that are causing wanton damage to the earth, to its creatures and to many poor communities. We also commit to intercede for those threatened by climate change, and to adopt practices and lifestyles consistent with levels of carbon emissions the earth can sustain. Specifically, we shall strive to act urgently to reduce carbon emissions across the whole of church life in line with the target we are calling on the UK government to achieve, of net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by well before 2050.*
- 1.2 Mission Council further resolved to:
- 1.2.1 *... request the Resource Centres for Learning to ensure that those being prepared for service and leadership are cognisant of the global and spiritual context of the climate crisis.*
- 1.3 In May 2019, Mission Council requested that all Assembly Committees work on "developing new ways of meeting and working which have environmental benefits". At its meeting in September 2019, the Education and Learning Committee (E&LC) set up a small task group (Robert Pettigrew, David Salisbury and Rosalind Selby, advised by Alan Yates) to begin working towards a Green Charter for E&LC.
- 1.4 The E&LC believes that changing our lifestyles and work practices is an urgent matter but does not seek to regiment any individual's behaviour. Rather, we seek to set an ethos by example and by awareness-raising. This charter sets out in further detail how the E&LC will fulfil the aims set out in its statement, acknowledging where work and dialogue still needs to happen.
- 1.5 Within the URC, it is important to note that many individuals have made sacrificial changes to their own lives in terms of refusing, recycling, reusing and reducing in their daily living. A number of local churches have achieved an eco-church award or are working towards that. In what follows, the E&L Committee seeks to encourage and advance integrity of living across its own

work and within its own remit, acknowledging that people and churches are already making changes.

2. The E&LC's meetings

2.1 Mode of Meetings

At present, the E&LC meets for one overnight meeting a year (normally alternating between Luther King House, Manchester and Westminster College, Cambridge), and two one-day meetings (usually held in London). It is normal for all committee members to attend in person, though occasionally one member attends by Skype/Lifesize. Also, on occasion an additional/small-group meeting is held through Lifesize.

The E&LC will:

- 2.1.1 consider the balance between the efficient working of the committee and reducing the carbon footprint of the committee. Meeting in a pattern of two overnight meetings would reduce the carbon footprint, but would limit E&LC's speed of response and possibly hinder achieving our longer-term goals;
- 2.1.2 keep this under constant review as we urgently need to limit the travelling we do for committee business;
- 2.1.3 aim to reduce face-to-face meetings by using virtual meeting techniques¹. Additional contact in between meetings should be made by email using 'reply all' for sharing comments;
- 2.1.4 work towards paper-free meetings, unless a committee member with sight problems needs to use a printed format;
- 2.1.5 discourage late or additional material that needs to be tabled.

3. Transport to meetings

- 3.1 At present, all reasonable transport costs are refunded without making any assessment concerning environmental impact.

The E&LC task group suggests:

- 3.1.1 Strongly encouraging the use of low-carbon public transport (i.e. bus, tram and train); ensuring venues used are easily accessible via public transport;
- 3.1.2 Acknowledging that use of public transport typically adds journey time, the timing of meetings and agendas of meetings should take account of this;
- 3.1.3 Taking an individual's personal circumstances into account, and not making any individual feel guilty;
- 3.1.4 Making carbon calculations for each person attending meetings. This will be achieved by using an adapted expense claim form;
- 3.1.5 Developing a policy for when the use of high-carbon forms of transport (planes and cars with fewer than three occupants) are deemed reasonable, including encouraging car sharing.

¹ At the time of writing the E&LC is considering a paper written by Alan Yates on virtual meetings, through the work of another small task group.

4. Carbon-offsetting

- 4.1 The Charity Commission allow the use of a charity's funds for carbon offsetting provided the trustees of the charity believe this is the right use of funds belonging to the charity (General Assembly/Mission Council's resolutions and requests, adoption of Five Marks of Mission and Vision 2020 all represent such decisions).
- 4.2 We will offset, at a minimum, the justifiable use of high-carbon forms of transport. Our longer-term goal is to offset all our transport-generated carbon (this will have budgeting implications).
- 4.3 The cost of offsetting carbon will have consequences for the E&LC budget. To mitigate this, E&LC will:
- 4.3.1 encourage the purchase of railcards where at all possible. If an individual would have personal difficulty in purchasing a card, the E&LC budget might be used to support in such situations (it is often the case that one trip to London will pay for a one-year railcard that brings a 30% discount);
 - 4.3.2 encourage early purchase of tickets to take advantage of low rail costs. Should a meeting be cancelled, the E&LC budget takes responsibility for such tickets;
 - 4.3.3 keep the pattern of meetings under review, seeking to keep carbon-cost, carbon-offsetting and E&LC business in the best balance possible.

5. Venues for meetings

- 5.1 At present, venues are booked for convenience, availability, finance and room-size. In addition, the E&LC made a decision to use the RCLs as venues. Whilst these considerations should be retained, the E&LC will encourage RCLs to look to making their conferencing and accommodation as environmentally/ethically appropriate as possible:
- 5.1.1 recycle all materials provided in preparation for meetings (recycle paper, reusing name badges etc);
 - 5.1.2 restrict the use of single-use plastic. All drinking vessels in meeting rooms, dining room and bars should be either glass, or recyclable plastic or paper (and there must be evidence that the cups are collected by the venue for recycling);
 - 5.1.3 provide by default, balanced, vegetarian menus (or at a minimum providing such menus for E&LC). *Creaturekind* offer chef training free;
 - 5.1.4 employ waste reduction and recycling techniques (recycling facilities available to guests AND evidence of waste reduction and recycling carried out by the venue);
 - 5.1.5 source gas and electricity from eco-suppliers, and to minimise the amount of fuel used (eg thermostats in each room, solar panels/cells);

- 5.1.6 refrain from investing in fossil fuels businesses.
- 5.2 In coordination with other Assembly Committees, an environmental sustainability index request will be sent to each venue used so that informed choices may be made for the future. Ahead of meetings, the venue will be sent a requirements list.
- 5.3 The best outcome would be that a venue holds, or is clearly working towards, ISO 20121:2012 (a voluntary international standard for sustainable events management) and/or ISO 21401:2018 (a similar voluntary standard for hotel management) [see iso.org]

6. E&LC members and associated staff teams

- 6.1 We will occasionally review the membership of the committee; the more members the bigger our carbon footprint is likely to be. It might be worth considering a smaller committee supported by some sub-groups who meet by Lifesize/agree work via email. This will be addressed as part of the Way Forward project.
- 6.2 The E&LC asks that each committee and staff member endeavours to set an example of as many aspects of sustainable living as it is possible for them in their individual circumstances and will support them in doing so
- 6.3 Supporting the committee, its members and others, would involve:
- 6.3.1 compiling helpful information and signposting;
 - 6.3.2 encouraging each person to advocate lifestyle changes towards as much environmental sustainability as possible;
 - 6.3.3 encouraging each person to take every opportunity to encourage their local church and other organisation with which they have connections to examine ways in which they could reach carbon neutrality.
- 6.4 This may require sacrificial change, but this recommendation would take into account the challenges of different abilities and essential needs, and of living in an isolated rural community (for example).

7. The remit of E&LC's work

- 7.1 In line with Mission Council's resolution (see introduction), request the RCLs to ensure that those being prepared for service and leadership are cognisant of the global and spiritual context of the climate crisis.
- 7.2 As part of the ongoing review of Stepwise material, to consider how personal discipleship, churches and communities may be equipped with understanding and with signposting for life changes.

- 7.3 All RCLs should be able to offer support to synods, local churches, and other groups of lay people that encourage understanding of and commitment to environmental justice and concern.
- 7.4 Awareness of climate change and its consequences, concern for God's creation in all its aspects, and understanding of necessary actions will be built into EM1, EM2 and EM3.

8. Next steps

- 8.1 Mission Council has set a target of making the URC carbon neutral by 2050. E&LC commits to making significant progress by 2025 and will set a target once our carbon footprint is estimated.
Action: EL&C
- 8.2 Undertake research to estimate E&LC's carbon footprint, by introducing a 'miles by transport type' to the expenses form.
Action: Convenor and Secretary
- 8.3 Ask the E&L Finance sub-committee to investigate the financial impact of carbon offsetting on our budget and to develop a recommended offsetting policy.
Action: Convenor and Secretary
- 8.4 E&LC will support Church and Society's work to raise awareness throughout the URC, of the various areas of serious environmental concern: biodiversity, waste management, pollution, deforestation, desertification, global warming and associated extreme weather phenomena and other harm being caused to all parts of creation.
Action: EL&C liaising with Church and Society
- 8.5 EL&C will encourage the URC to develop a Meetings Charter (for both face-to-face and virtual meetings) which all committees will be asked to respond to.
Action: AY/RMS to discuss with other convenors (at Mission Council) and liaise with Simeon Mitchell
- 8.6 Consider how the work of the Education and Learning Team and Convenor might be impacted;
Action: Convenor, Secretary and Deputy General Secretary for Discipleship
- 8.7 Maintain progress against all actions, particularly 9.4, on the agenda of every E&LC meeting, including update of 'Next Steps' in between meetings;
Action: Convenor and Secretary for E&L, and all 'Action Point holders'

- 8.8 Item on RCL Tutors' agenda for July 2020 that considers how the RCLs are working in this area as venues, and in terms of the EM1 and other resources they offer;
Action: RMS to lead discussion in 2020
- 8.9 Continuing liaison with the URC's Environmental Task Group and support their compilation of information and signposting.
Action: AY/RMS liaise with Simeon Mitchell

Appendix

The Green Charter for the Education and Learning Committee

Introduction

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, in May 2019 updated the URC's Environmental Policy to include a definitive target:

Specifically, we shall strive to act urgently to reduce carbon emissions across the whole of church life in line with the target we are calling on the UK government to achieve, of net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by well before 2050.

The E&LC believes that changing our lifestyles and work practices is an urgent matter and this charter is designed to guide how this is done. It does seek to set an ethos by example and by awareness-raising, through which individuals can be encouraged to reflect on the contribution they can make to meeting the URC's targets. The E&LC Environmental Statement, May 2020, sets out in more detail how we will fulfil the aims expressed here and acknowledges where further work and dialogue is needed.

Our charter

Meetings: We will use a balance of virtual, one-day face-to-face and overnight face-to-face meetings to optimise our carbon footprint. We expect this balance to change as we become better able to use communications and optimisation technologies.

Transport: We are committed to using low-carbon forms of public transport. We recognise that there will be occasions when this is not possible or practical.

Offsetting: We will offset, at a minimum, the justifiable use of high-carbon forms of transport. Our longer-term goal is to offset all our transport-generated carbon.

Venues: We are committed to using the Resource Centres for Learning which serve the URC as meeting venues where possible, and we will encourage them in their journey to be leading environmentally friendly and responsible conference centres.

Committee and staff: Committee members and the Education and Learning staff team are encouraged to be examples and advocates of environmental best working practice, individually and collectively

Education: Through all our programmes, including Stepwise, the RCLs and our support of Synod education and development, we will raise awareness of environmental issues and provide practical advice so that everyone in our denomination can play their part as we strive to become carbon neutral.

Paper C3

Carbon calculator

Education and Learning Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Alan Yates alan.yates@urc.org.uk
Action required	None; for information only.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The development of a 'carbon calculator' to enable the Education and Learning Committee (E&LC) to track the carbon content of travelling associated with committee business.
Main points	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A key step to reducing the carbon footprint of the E&LC operation is to track the carbon content of all journeys. 2. Understanding our carbon footprint will enable reductions to be targeted. 3. A number of on-line carbon calculators exist but typically don't allow off-line use. 4. An Excel-based calculator was developed that can be used off-line; it is more flexible and can incorporate a database to make it easier to use.
Previous relevant documents	Paper C2: Environmental statement for EL&C; Mission Council November, 2020.
Consultation has taken place with...	Secretary for Church and Society.

Summary of impact

Financial	Possibly, if carbon offsetting is used.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None at present.

Carbon calculator

Estimating the carbon content of E&LC journeys

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2020, The Education and Learning Committee adopted an Environmental Statement containing a Green Charter to enable the committee to support the United Reformed Church's goal to achieve net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by well before 2050.
- 1.2 A key element of the Environmental Statement is the E&LC commitment to making significant progress by 2025. To track the performance of the committee will require the E&LC carbon footprint to be estimated. A target will be set once the existing carbon footprint is estimated.

2. The Carbon calculator

- 2.1 Two key limitations were identified for the on-line carbon calculators that were reviewed. Firstly, they can only be used on-line, which limits their usefulness for the committee. Secondly, they did not provide estimates for the wide range of transport methods the committee can use. Therefore, an Excel-based system was developed that enables a very wide range of transport methods to be evaluated and allows a database of common journeys to be established, making the system quicker and easier to use.
- 2.2 Transport is not the only carbon contributor in the life of an Assembly committee, but this is the best element to focus on in the short term. Other contributors are addressed (but not evaluated numerically) in the Green Charter policies.
- 2.3 A copy of the Excel Carbon Calculator can be found in the Mission Council part of the URC main website for the November 2020 meeting. The instructions for use are contained in the 'Read Me' worksheet. Note that the calculator can be used for any journey (not just E&LC ones) and can even be used to determine the most carbon friendly form of transport to help plan a journey. Please contact the author if further help is needed.

Paper D1

Update

Faith and Order Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Robert Pope rpp20@cam.ac.uk Philip Brooks philip.brooks@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update on the work of the Faith and Order Committee.
Main points	This paper outlines the current areas of work for the Committee.
Previous relevant documents	None.
Consultation has taken place with...	URC Communications, URC Youth, Fresh Expressions Enabling Group, Walking the Way Steering Group and ecumenical partners.

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Ongoing discussions with ecumenical partners about the role of eldership in LEP's.

As with other parts of the Church, the work of Faith and Order has continued during the period of lockdown. Alongside such extraordinary conditions, the Committee has welcomed three new members, Diana Paulding, Sue McCoan and Kristin Ofstad and a new Convener, Robert Pope. We note with thanks the valuable contributions of Alan Spence, our outgoing Convener. Thus far in 2020 we have met twice on Zoom and this paper is intended to update Mission Council on the Committee's work and its priorities for the immediate future.

The November 2019 Mission Council meeting agreed to establish a Worship Reference Group accountable to the Faith and Order Committee. Members have been appointed and an oversight mechanism established with reporting to Faith and Order through the convener of the new group, the Revd Samuel Silungwe, who is also a member of the Faith

and Order Committee. The Worship Reference Group will be a standing item on the Committee's agenda.

Faith and Order has completed work on a leaflet on Baptism (now available online), as well as on ten short, accessible theological themes outlining 'What the URC believes about ...' These are now with Communications for design and production. They outline key theological themes with an emphasis on Reformed perspectives. The Committee trusts they will be useful for members of the URC as well as enquirers.

A discussion document on Eldership and Ordination has been distributed to ecumenical colleagues for feedback. This will inform Faith and Order's continuing work on Eldership in LEPs. This feedback will be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

Discussion has taken place with URC Youth over issues which have arisen around 'Isolated Membership'. More work is being done to reflect theologically on 'membership' and on what it means to 'gather', the latter in part, being a response to the pandemic and the option taken by many churches to meet 'virtually'. This will be fed into continuing discussions with the FX Enabling Group and the Walking the Way steering group about online Church.

Questions have been submitted to the Group for discussion at our next meeting. These include the matter of EM1 students presiding at the Lord's Supper and whether ordained ministry is to 'Word and Sacrament' or 'Word and Sacraments'.

The Committee next meets on 8 October on Zoom and looks forward to being able to meet physically as soon as it is safe to do so.

Paper E1

Budget for 2021

Finance Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Ian Hardie ianzhardie@googlemail.com John Piper john.piper30@ntworld.com
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Recognising that there is more than usual uncertainty about future income, Mission Council nonetheless adopts the budget for 2021 as set out in the Appendix to paper E for November 2020 Mission Council.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The paper presents a budget for 2021 and financial projections for 2022 and 2023.
Main points	We face significant uncertainty as to our likely levels of income in 2021 (and beyond) with the result that the budget has to be more tentative than usual. Some significant actions are proposed to curtail expenditure next year, including no general increases in stipends/salaries. Nonetheless, although we expect substantial deficits in both 2020 and 2021, we do not propose any more drastic action now and recommend that a strategic review of denominational activities should take place once we are clearer about future levels of income.
Previous relevant documents	Paper G1 and G1 Addendum for November 2019 Mission Council Re the pensions issues – papers G3 for November 2019 Mission Council, G1 for March 2020 Mission Council and the report to General Assembly 2020, 'URC Pension Schemes – Facing up to some serious challenges'.
Consultation has taken place with...	Budget holders and the URC Trust.

Summary of impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

Introduction

1. Since budgets, by their very nature, concern the future they inevitably involve an element of uncertainty. Generally, this level of uncertainty may be mitigated by referring to previous and current financial results and extrapolating from recent trends. This year, however, we find ourselves in a situation where the impact of Covid-19 has rendered past experience of limited relevance; where our ability to forecast the outcome for the current year is much more problematic than usual, even as late in the year as September (when this is being written); and where even relatively recent trends are unlikely to be a reliable guide to what awaits us in 2021 and beyond.
2. Nonetheless, the Finance Committee offers Mission Council the draft budget for next year as set out at column three of the attached Appendix, but on the understanding that the budgeted M&M contributions figure may be less reliable than usual. This draft budget has been reviewed by the URC trustees and, while acknowledging the significantly increased level of uncertainty, it has their support.

Income

	2020 Forecast £000	2020 Budget £000	2021 Budget £000
Total	19,053	20,160	19,123
Local church contributions	17,584	18,477	17,442

3. Over 90% of the Ministry and Mission ('M&M') Fund's income comes in the form of contributions from local churches. Since March 2020 churches have been closed and many have suffered significantly reduced offerings as well as, in many cases, losing large amounts of property rental income. Some will also have experienced reduced investment income. Synods have been taking what steps they can to assist their churches and to encourage them to maintain the level of their contributions to the M&M Fund wherever possible. We want to take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to churches and synods for their commitment to honouring their covenant with the wider church at this difficult time for everyone. Nonetheless, over the six months to June 2020, M&M contributions were around £350,000 below budget expectations. It is uncertain what will happen in the second half of the year; but our present forecast is that we may have a contribution shortfall approaching £900,000.
4. In constructing the budget for the following year, it is our normal practice to seek estimates from the synods over the summer as to the likely level of contributions to be expected in that coming year. While never entirely accurate, generally speaking such estimates have provided a sound basis for budgeting for contributions in most years. The current level of uncertainty means that synods have had far less confidence in their ability to supply meaningful estimates than has been the previous norm. They have suggested figures which cumulatively equate to a drop of around 5.6 per cent in M&M contributions compared to the 2020 budget; but this could be wildly overoptimistic or unduly pessimistic.

5. Although we are forecasting that money given by synods from property sales will be £212k below budget this year, we have left the 2021 budget for additional pension support from shares of synod property disposal proceeds unchanged – despite uncertainty as to the number and value of future property sales. Ongoing discussions about pension issues may significantly alter this figure but the outcome is too uncertain to budget for at present.
6. The Church’s investment income has remained surprisingly buoyant to date and our investment managers are confident of maintaining our current level of dividend income through 2021 – though they are more cautious about the longer-term.
7. As a result our current forecast for this year shows a potential income shortfall of £1.1 million while the draft 2021 budget shows total income around £1 million less than the 2020 budget.

Expenditure

	2020 Forecast £000	2020 Budget £000	2021 Budget £000
Total	19,379	20,286	19,481
Ministries	14,385	14,774	14,054

8. In response to the lockdown we asked budget holders to reduce or defer expenditure in 2020 wherever possible. At the end of June every department was below budgeted expenditure and our present forecast is that total expenditure for 2020 will be around £900,000 below budget. If that proves accurate it will result in a total deficit of around £326,000 instead of a budgeted deficit of £70,110.
9. In arriving at the budget for expenditure next year we have been acutely conscious of the potentially significant reduction in our likely income as indicated in paragraph four above.
10. In normal years it is our practice to consider increases to stipends and central employee salaries based on movements in cost of living indices and average earnings. But, in all years, such consideration also weighs the affordability of the increases.
11. In view of the very considerable uncertainty about the level of our income next year we are recommending that there be no general increases in stipends or salaries in 2021, though a very few salaries will be changed to complete rectification of an anomaly in current pay scales revealed by our job evaluation tool. A number of representations were received to the effect that it would be insensitive to increase stipends/salaries when many wage earners in our congregations are faced with wage or hour cuts and increased threats of redundancies. Some also referred to cost savings on travel, etc. which increased levels of home working have introduced and which are likely to be maintained into next year. However, while noting such views, it is the uncertainty around short-term affordability which has been uppermost in our minds. Had we followed the usual method of calculating stipend increases, the 1.6 per cent uplift would have added a further £190k to the deficit

mentioned below while an increase of (say) 1 per cent in staff salaries would have added another £30k. If possible, we would hope to be able to mitigate or reverse the impact of our decision this year when we come to look at the position again in 12 months.

12. To reflect the recent Mission Council decision that central funds should pay half the costs of Pastoral Supervision for ministers and CRCWs, £90k has been added to the Ministries Department budget in 2021.
13. Similarly, to reflect the decision that *Walking the Way* should be funded by the M&M Fund to the extent necessary during 2021 to allow time to consider its long-term future, £20k has been included within the Mission budget.
14. At the request of the Education and Learning ('E&L') Finance Sub-Committee a one-off amount of £20k has been included within the E&L budget for 2021 to cater for ministerial sabbaticals or professional development which has not been possible during 2020.
15. Increased levels of litigation have necessitated increases in the Governance budget but with the exception of that budget category and the modest increase in Mission Department costs for *Walking the Way*, every departmental budget for next year shows a reduction.
16. Our total expenditure in 2021 is therefore budgeted to be approximately £805k less than in 2020.

Overall budget for 2020

	2020 Forecast £000	2020 Budget £000	2021 Budget £000
Excess Expenditure over Income	326	70	358

17. The net effect of the reduced income budget and the limiting of expenditure, including the non-payment of any general cost of living increases to stipends and salaries, is a budgeted deficit for 2021 of around £358k. In the longer term, such deficits as those being forecast for this year and now budgeted for next year would be unsustainable. However, the degree of uncertainty about the next couple of years is such that the Finance Committee and the URC Trust think that now is not the time for a drastic knee-jerk change in the way the M&M budget is used. That could do lasting damage to the effectiveness of the Church and might prove to have been unnecessary or inappropriate.
18. Rather we believe the Trust should bear the forecast losses for 2020 and 2021 from its reserves on the understanding that a strategic review of the M&M budget and the activities it funds will be undertaken when there is greater clarity about our 'new normal' and our likely levels of future income.

Resolution

19. Accordingly, the committee proposes the resolution set out above.

Projections for 2022 and 2023

20. A separate paper for this Mission Council – paper [E2] – reports on the current state of the ongoing conversation about pensions within the URC family. Pending further clarification of how the issues under consideration will be addressed, the projections set out in columns four and five of the Appendix to this paper make no attempt to reflect any of the necessary financial arrangements yet to be agreed.
21. As usual the projections should be regarded as no more than very rough approximations only and, in common with the budget column, suffer from the current state of uncertainty about our financial future.
22. In both years we have projected a modest recovery in the M&M position and also included some stipend and salary increases. What we have not done is attempt to take any account of changes to our way of working which reflect any response to our 'new normal' as mentioned in paragraph 18 above.

Appendix

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH Ministry & Mission Fund Summary Budget and Projections 2021 to 2023

Department/ Project	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	Actual	Budget	Budget	Projection	Projection
	£	£	£	£	£
Income					
Ministry and Mission contributions	(18,816,761)	(18,476,500)	(17,442,285)	(17,616,708)	(17,616,709)
Pensions - additional funding	(537,976)	(300,000)	(300,000)	(300,000)	(300,000)
Investment and other income					
Dividends	(931,795)	(925,000)	(925,000)	(925,000)	(925,000)
Donations	(8,908)	0	0	0	0
Specific legacies	(5,000)	0	0	0	0
Grants/Income - Memorial Hall Trust/Fu	(290,742)	(288,000)	(288,000)	(288,000)	(288,000)
Net other interest & bank charges	(10,983)	(8,000)	0	0	0
Other income, including property rentals	(146,413)	(162,400)	(167,300)	(167,300)	(167,300)
	(1,393,839)	(1,383,400)	(1,380,300)	(1,380,300)	(1,380,300)
Total income	(20,748,577)	(20,159,900)	(19,122,585)	(19,297,008)	(19,297,009)
Expenditure					
Discipleship Dept.					
Ministry					
Local and special ministries and CRCWs	13,253,105	13,698,000	12,910,700	12,910,700	13,100,700
Synod Moderators - stipends and expens	641,313	739,000	709,500	695,588	681,949
Ministries department	347,111	334,600	431,300	434,300	437,300
Pastoral & welfare	1,232	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
	14,242,760	14,773,600	14,053,500	14,042,588	14,221,949
Education & Learning					
Initial training for ministry	678,150	547,570	479,985	474,018	474,018
Continuing training for ministry	120,067	95,500	116,500	96,500	96,500
Resource Centres support	627,919	638,640	699,000	714,000	720,000
	1,426,136	1,281,710	1,295,485	1,284,518	1,290,518
Stepwise	130,175	120,000	119,000	122,300	124,300
Lay preachers support	5,708	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
On-line learning	57,814	60,000	58,700	60,700	61,700
Discipleship Development	0	25,000	2,500	22,500	22,500
Education & Learning department	167,124	168,000	148,100	151,400	153,400
	1,786,956	1,663,310	1,630,785	1,648,418	1,659,418
Children's and Youth Work					
Staff costs	210,139	216,500	206,600	210,600	214,600
Management, resources and programme	62,307	111,200	111,200	111,200	111,200
	272,446	327,700	317,800	321,800	325,800
Safeguarding					
Safeguarding policy and practice	96,401	199,500	197,800	182,800	184,800
Discipleship Secretariat					
Deputy General Secretary - Discipleship	64,861	83,600	10,125	40,500	41,310
Mission Dept.					
Mission dept staff and core costs	499,237	529,200	509,900	518,900	527,900
Mission programmes and memberships	186,651	250,200	260,050	260,050	260,050
	685,888	779,400	769,950	778,950	787,950
National Ecumenical Officers	33,435	36,500	36,700	36,700	36,700
	719,323	815,900	806,650	815,650	824,650
Administration & Resources Dept.					
Central Secretariat	284,655	270,500	284,200	288,200	292,200
Facilities	374,714	385,000	357,700	360,700	363,700
Human Resources	82,001	89,000	86,800	87,800	88,800
IT Services	214,795	237,700	232,000	234,000	236,000
Finance	415,087	385,400	377,900	383,900	389,900
Communications	464,739	464,800	475,200	484,200	493,200
	1,835,990	1,832,400	1,813,800	1,838,800	1,863,800
Governance					
Church Councils	167,058	63,000	188,500	188,500	188,500
Professional fees	105,574	100,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
Other	72,934	76,000	94,100	94,600	95,100
	345,566	339,000	402,600	403,100	403,600
Apprenticeship levy	45,754	55,000	50,000	51,000	52,000
Irrecoverable VAT	141,374	140,000	140,000	140,000	140,000
Property maintenance costs	39,003	55,696	57,500	57,500	57,500
Total expenditure	19,590,434	20,285,706	19,480,560	19,542,156	19,774,827
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	1,158,142	(70,110)	(357,975)	(245,148)	(477,818)

Paper E2

URC Pension schemes – a conversation in progress

Pensions Committee and Finance Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	John Piper john.piper30@ntworld.com Ian Hardie ianzhardie@gmail.com
Action required	None at this stage.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The paper provides an update on the complex process of consultation across the URC family that is currently underway.
Main points	This paper is just an update on the ongoing process, so there is nothing significant to report at this stage. It is hoped that it will be possible to provide a more substantial progress report to the March 2021 meeting of Mission Council.
Previous relevant documents	Paper G3 for November 2019 Mission Council. Paper titled “URC Pension Schemes – facing up to some serious challenges” written for General Assembly 2020 and considered by Mission Council in July 2020.
Consultation has taken place with...	The Integrated Risk Management project group and the directors of the URC Ministers’ Pension Trust.

Summary of impact

Financial	None at this stage, but will be substantial.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Ministers' Pension Scheme
3. Final Salary (lay staff) scheme
4. Future pensions

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The United Reformed Church has two defined benefit pension schemes where the basis of calculating pensions is predetermined. The URC Ministers' Pension Fund covers most ministers and church related community workers. The URC Final Salary Scheme is mostly for the Church's lay staff. The pension at retirement for the ministers' scheme is based on final stipend and years of service. For the final salary scheme, it is based on the highest 12 months' salary in the three years up to retirement and years of service. The Church and the members make regular contributions to these schemes, but the final cost can only be estimated. The Church as employer is legally obliged to provide any further funding that is required.
- 1.2 The assets of the ministers' scheme are held in the Ministers' Pension Fund (MPF). The corporate trustee of this Fund is the URC Ministers Pension Trust Limited (MPT). Its directors are all members of the Church.
- 1.3 The URC Final Salary Scheme is managed by an external body, TPT Retirement Solutions, which acts as trustee. The central URC, including Westminster College, is the principal employer. Most of the synods and Northern College are also participating employers in this scheme.
- 1.4 The significant pension issues and associated costs facing the Church, which primarily relate to the MPF, were described in the pensions paper written for General Assembly 2020 and considered by the meeting of Mission Council in July 2020. Those issues are not all spelt out in detail again here. It remains the case that the Church family is having to deal with these issues at a particularly uncertain time for Church finances at every level, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.5 The purpose of this paper is to report on developments since that General Assembly paper was written and to describe the consultation process that is underway. It is hoped that by the time of the next meeting of Mission Council substantial progress will have been made which can be reported to that meeting.

2. URC Ministers' Pension Scheme

2.1 Current valuation

The last actuarial valuation of the MPF took place as at 1 January 2018. On the 'technical provisions' basis, this showed a deficit of £4.0 million on assets of £140 million. Using the same basis of calculation, as at 30 June 2020 the MPF was more or less breaking even with assets and liabilities of around £170 million. The choice of investment managers and the choice of equity investments, in line with the Church's policy on ethical investment, meant that the MPF did not suffer as much

as might have been expected from the market turmoil earlier this year. The Pensions Regulator (tPR) has made clear that the next valuation will have to be on a much more prudent basis. tPR only agreed to sign off the 2018 valuation after the URC Trust paid an extra £1.5 million into the MPF.

2.2 Actuarial valuation as at 1 January 2021 and long-term funding objective.

In July 2020, the directors of MPT met with the actuary of the MPF to consider their approach to the valuation due at the beginning of next year. Final decisions about the basis of this valuation will be taken by the MPT board during the first half of next year. However, the direction of travel is now clearer.

tPR is wanting the trustees of all defined benefit schemes to focus primarily on the Long-term Objective (LTO) which is the estimated date at which the scheme will become 'significantly mature'. A scheme becomes mature when it is paying out more than is coming in, because of the number of pensioners in relation to the number of active members. This is a natural phenomenon. The actuary has estimated that the MPF will be 'significantly mature' by around 2030.

By the time of the LTO, tPR expects the risk of future deficits requiring further employer contributions to be substantially reduced. This will require a significant change to the investments being held. Less risky assets are likely to deliver lower returns, meaning that this will increase the cost to the Church still further.

The latest estimate from the actuary is that the **total cost of getting from here to the LTO in ten years will be around £45 million of additional funding.**

A significant proportion of this figure will be reflected in the deficit as at 1 January 2021. Because of the relatively short time to the LTO, it is the overall total rather than the 2021 deficit which will need to be our main focus.

2.3 Consultation with synod trusts and the URC Trust.

At the end of August, a briefing was issued to the directors of the synod trusts and the URC trust. Any member of Mission Council who has not already received a copy of this briefing paper, and would like to receive one, only has to ask.

This briefing paper was based on the outcome of the July meeting of MPT directors. Clearly, finding around £45 million over the next ten years will be very challenging. As a means of starting a conversation, the briefing paper made some suggestions of ways in which 'fair shares' of the total burden might be calculated and agreed.

The final section of this paper was a series of questions for the synod trusts, with responses requested by the end of September.

A collation of all these responses will be circulated to all participants in October.

The best next step would be a big meeting of representatives of all the URC trusts at which they could all participate in a discussion and, hopefully, in the development of an agreed way forward. The continuing Covid-19 restrictions make a physical meeting of this size impossible and it is questionable whether an on-line discussion

between so many people would be effective. So, we have to adopt a different albeit second best approach.

The current plan is that the next stage will be for the authors of this paper to have separate meetings with representatives of the six financially strongest synods and also of the URC Trust. This would not be to make any final decisions, but in the hope that it would help us move towards an overall proposal that might gain general approval.

An update will be provided to all the URC trusts early in January. It may be that this will include a proposed way forward, but it is more likely that a further round of conversations will be necessary in the first quarter of 2021.

The URC family will have to come to at least a preliminary view about how the 2021 MPF deficit is to be funded by the summer of 2021.

3. Final Salary (lay staff) Scheme

3.1 Actuarial valuation as at 30 September 2019.

The previous valuation of the Final Salary Scheme in 2016 on the 'technical provisions' basis showed a deficit of £5.7 million on assets of £23 million. In response to this serious situation, the participating employers agreed to inject around £3.5 million of capital in 2017/18.

The most recent valuation of the Final Salary Scheme as at 30 September 2019 has just been concluded. On the 'technical provisions' basis, it showed a surplus of £2.7 million on assets of £36 million. As a result of this, the deficit contributions which are currently 3% of salaries will stop at the end of 2020. However, the cost of future service contributions is going up by, coincidentally, about 3%, because of the persistence of low interest rates. From 2021, expenses will be charged separately rather than being included in the future service rates so the effect will be slightly different for each employer but overall the cost will remain roughly the same. The actuary of this scheme has taken account of its estimated LTO when calculating the new future service contribution rates.

4. Future pensions

Since the financial crisis of 2008, interest rates have remained at historically low levels far longer than anyone expected. This has meant much lower than expected returns on the assets of defined benefit pension funds which has led to significantly increased costs for employers. This trend continues.

On top of this, tPR's expectation is that the assets of a pension fund will be substantially de-risked as it approaches maturity. This is likely to further increase costs to the point of raising serious questions about value for money.

A resolution of Mission Council in July 2020 made clear that the Church remains committed to providing good pensions for its ministers and its staff. The Pensions Committee is overseeing work, with external advisors, to establish what good well-designed defined contribution schemes might look like. The aim is to enable the

Church to take an informed decision about whether to stay with the current schemes, or change to different arrangements. The hope is that at least an in principle decision by the Church will be possible by the summer of 2021.

Paper F1

Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Ministers of Word and Sacraments, Church Related Community Workers and Elders

Ministries Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Whittle (Committee Convener) moderator@urceastern.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council adopts the revisions to the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Ministers of Word and Sacraments, the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Church Related Community Workers and the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Elders as laid out in Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	An update of all the three papers in light of the Mission Council decision (July 2020) on mandatory pastoral supervision for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and CRCWs and in line with the URC's Policy and good practice guidance in safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk (5th Edition) (GP5).
Main points	An update to include the place of mandatory training safeguarding in all three policies.
Previous relevant documents	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of ministers of Word and Sacraments (2010)2. Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Church Related Community Workers (2010)3. Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Elders4. Good Practice 5 (2020).
Consultation has taken place with...	URC Safeguarding Adviser.

Summary of impact

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

1. The decision of Mission Council (July 2020) papers that pastoral supervision for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers should be mandatory has necessitated revisions to the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Church Related Community Workers to reflect best practice as outline in the safeguarding document Good Practice 5.
2. These papers have not been revised since 2010.
3. Similar revisions have been made to the Guidelines on conduct and behaviour of Elders in order to be consistent in our expectations of the behaviour and conduct in all three ministries.
4. In order that papers on pastoral supervision could be sent out in a timely manner following Mission Council July 2020, the revisions have already been made and Ministries Committee is now asking Mission Council to agree to their adoption.

Appendix 1

Guidelines on conduct and behaviour for Ministers of Word and Sacraments

1. Introduction

This paper sets down expectations of Ministers of Word and Sacraments within the United Reformed Church. Parallel papers about the expectations of Church Related Community Workers and Elders are to be read alongside this document.

2. Basis of Union

The foundation for the conduct of Ministers is in the Basis of Union, summarised in Schedule E paragraph two,

'Ministers must conduct themselves and exercise all aspects of their ministries in a manner which is compatible with the unity and peace of the United

Reformed Church and the affirmation made by ministers at ordination and induction (Schedule C) and the Statement concerning the Nature, Faith and Order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) in accordance with which ministers undertake to exercise their ministry.'

The relevant promises in Schedule C are:

- a) 'to live a holy life and to maintain the truth of the Gospel whatever trouble or persecution may arise';
- b) 'to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully, to lead the church in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, to take your part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the church in its mission to the world; and
- c) as a Minister of the United Reformed Church 'to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church'.

3. Standards of professional behaviour

3a Personal integrity and health

- To live a Christian life as a person of prayer and integrity.
- To recognise the need for and have concern for a healthy lifestyle, to balance availability and accessibility to ministry demands with time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared with them in confidence, except when required by law to do otherwise eg when children or adults are experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse, harm or neglect, or when there is a safety issue affecting the whole congregation.
- To safeguard people and protect the more vulnerable by attending and refreshing mandatory URC Safeguarding training (basic, intermediate and advanced) and having a working knowledge of the URC's Safeguarding policy and guidance (Good Practice 5) and its code of conduct in working with children and adults at risk (Appendices A3 and A4).
- To be aware of and maintain appropriate boundaries by undertaking mandatory URC Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training and promoting safe and healthy relationships with those they come in contact with.
- To exercise care and sensitivity in seeking counsel from colleagues and to protect the identity of third parties unless permission has been granted.
- To attend meetings, respond to correspondence and keep appropriate records efficiently and effectively, having regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations requirements (GDPR).
- To observe the URC's gift policy for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers and to account carefully for expenses and any funds held on behalf of others.
- Not to undertake duties whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs or when medically advised not to do so.

- To refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material (Good Practice 5 section 3.3.10).
- Not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.

3b Relationships with ministerial colleagues

All Ministers:

- To strive to protect colleagues from prejudicial discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility in a pastorate served by another Minister and to support the direction of church life initiated through the leadership of the pastorate.
- To respect the work of predecessors and successors and deal honourably with their record.
- To consider carefully the location of retirement housing and try to avoid living in the immediate area of past pastorates.

Ministers in pastoral charge:

- To support the ministry of other Ministers and not interfere with the conduct of ministry or the direction of church life of other pastorates.
- To sever all professional ties with a previous pastorate and refer any requests or enquires of previous pastorates to the Interim Moderator or new Minister.
- To welcome retired colleagues and those Ministers serving the wider church as members and worshippers in the pastorate.

3c Relationship with elders, members and others

- To regard all persons with equal love and concern.
- To uphold values of faithfulness, trust and respect.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.
- Not to seek to influence inappropriately a pastorate in the call of a new minister.
- To work collaboratively and value the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To seek advice from colleagues or other professionals who may offer specialist advice if in doubt about one's competence to deal with any issue or situation.
- To consult and liaise with the church Safeguarding Coordinator (or the Synod Safeguarding Officer if a coordinator has not been appointed or been available) when a safeguarding concern, allegation or incident arises.
- To consult with colleagues, Elders and others as appropriate when considering taking on extra work.
- To observe proper boundaries in relationships and not to enter into a sexual relationship with anyone in their care.
- Not to meet alone with a child, a young person, children or young people under the age of 18. If a child or young person wants to discuss a personal matter, follow Good Practice G5 Guidance on Lone Working 8.3.7.

3d Relationship with Councils of the Church

- To be active in the councils of the Church.
- To accept the oversight of synod and the pastoral care of Synod Moderators.
- To submit to disciplinary procedures when initiated by the councils of the church and to inform as soon as possible the Synod Clerk and Synod Moderator, or where appropriate the Secretary for Ministries, when involved in legal proceedings (civil or criminal).
- To undertake mandatory training including Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training, Safeguarding training at an appropriate level, Pastoral Supervision and any other mandatory training deemed appropriate.
- To work to the agreed terms of settlement.
- To be aware of the guidelines for on-going ministerial training issued by the Education and Learning Committee.

Appendix 2

Guidelines on conduct and behaviour for Church Related Community Workers

1. Introduction

This paper sets down expectations of Church Related Community Workers within the United Reformed Church. Parallel papers about the expectations of ministers of Word and Sacrament and Elders are to be read alongside this document.

2. Basis of Union

The foundation for the conduct of Church Related Community Workers is in the Basis of Union, paragraph 22,

‘Some are called to the ministry of Church Related Community Work. After approved preparation and training, they may be called to be Church Related Community Workers in a post approved by the United Reformed Church, are then commissioned and inducted to their office to serve for a designated period. This commissioning and induction shall be in accord with Schedules D and F. Church Related Community Workers are commissioned to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community, to discern with others God’s will for the well-being of the community, and to endeavour to enable the church to live out its calling to proclaim the love and mercy of God through working with others in both church and community for peace and justice in the world. Their service may be stipendiary or non-stipendiary, and in the latter case their service is given within the area of a synod and in a context it has approved.

CRCWs make promises as laid out in Schedule F, in particular they promise ,to live a holy life, and to maintain the truth of the gospel, whatever trouble or persecution may arise; to care for, to challenge and to pray for the community, to discern with others God's will for the well-being of the community; to take their part in the councils of the Church and to enable the church to live out its calling to proclaim the love and mercy of God through working with others in both church and community for peace and justice in the world, and as a church related community worker of the United Reformed Church to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour to always build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.'

3. Standards of professional behaviour

3a. Personal integrity and health

- To live a Christian life as a person of prayer and integrity.
- To recognise the need for and have concern for a healthy lifestyle, to balance availability and accessibility to ministry demands with time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared with them in confidence, except when required by law to do otherwise eg when children or adults are experiencing or at risk of experiencing abuse, harm or neglect, or when there is a safety issue affecting the whole community.
- To safeguard people and protect the more vulnerable by attending and refreshing mandatory URC Safeguarding training (basic, intermediate and advanced) and having a working knowledge of the URC's Safeguarding policy and guidance (Good Practice 5) and its code of conduct in working with children and adults at risk (Appendices A3 and A4).
- To be aware of and maintain appropriate boundaries by undertaking mandatory URC Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training and promoting safe and healthy relationships with those they come in contact with.
- To exercise care and sensitivity in seeking counsel from colleagues and to protect the identity of third parties unless permission has been granted.
- To attend meetings, respond to correspondence and keep appropriate records efficiently and effectively, having regard to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulations requirements (GDPR).
- To observe the URC's gift policy for Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers and to account carefully for expenses and any funds held on behalf of others. Not to undertake duties whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs or when medically advised not to do so.
- To refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material (Good Practice 5 section 3.3.10).
- Not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.

3b Relationships with ministerial colleagues

- To support the ministry of other CRCWs and Ministers of Word and Sacrament and not interfere with the conduct of ministry or the direction of church life of other pastorates.
- To strive to protect colleagues from prejudicial discrimination on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation.

- To sever all professional ties with a previous post and refer any requests or enquires of previous posts to the interim moderator or new CRCW.
- To respect the work of predecessors and successors and deal honourably with their record.
To consider carefully the location of retirement housing and try to avoid living in the immediate area of past posts.
- To welcome retired colleagues as members of the pastorate.

3c *Relationship with Elders, members and others*

- To regard all persons they come into contact with with equal love and concern.
- To uphold values of faithfulness, trust and respect.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.
- Not to seek to influence inappropriately a pastorate in the call of a new Minister.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility in a pastorate served by another CRCW or a Minister of Word and Sacrament and to support the direction of church life initiated through the leadership of the pastorate.
- To work collaboratively and safeguard the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To seek advice from colleagues or other professionals who may offer specialist advice if in doubt about one's competence to deal with an issue or situation.
- To consult and liaise with the church Safeguarding Coordinator (or the Synod Safeguarding Officer if a coordinator has not been appointed or been available) when a safeguarding concern, allegation or incident arises.
- To consult with colleagues, Elders and others as appropriate when considering taking on extra work.
- To observe proper boundaries in relationships and not to enter into a sexual relationship with anyone in their care.
- Not to meet alone with a child, a young person, children or young people under the age of 18. If a child or young person wants to discuss a personal matter, follow Good Practice G5 Guidance on Lone Working 8.3.7.

3d *Relationship with Councils of the Church*

- To be active in the councils of the Church.
- To accept the oversight of Synod and the pastoral care of Synod Moderators.
- To submit to disciplinary procedures when initiated by the councils of the church and to inform as soon as possible the Synod Clerk and Synod Moderator, or where appropriate the Secretary for Ministries, when involved in legal proceedings (civil or criminal).
- To undertake mandatory training including Safer Sacred Space Boundaries training, Safeguarding training at an appropriate level, Pastoral Supervision and any other mandatory training deemed appropriate.
- To work to the agreed terms of settlement.
- To be aware of the guidelines for on-going ministerial training issued by the Education and Learning Committee.

Appendix 3

Guidelines on conduct and behaviour for Elders

1. Introduction

This paper sets down expectations of Elders in relation to Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs) within the United Reformed Church. Parallel papers about the expectations of ministers and CRCWs are to be read alongside this document.

2. Basis of Union

The foundation for the conduct of ministers is in the Basis of Union, summarised in Schedule E paragraph two,

‘Ministers must conduct themselves and exercise all aspects of their ministries in a manner which is compatible with the unity and peace of the United Reformed Church and the affirmation made by ministers at ordination and induction (Schedule C) and the Statement concerning the nature, faith and order of the United Reformed Church (Schedule D) in accordance with which ministers undertake to exercise their ministry.’

The relevant promises in Schedule C are

- a) ‘to live a holy life and to maintain the truth of the Gospel whatever trouble or persecution may arise’
- b) ‘to fulfil the duties of your charge faithfully, to lead the church in worship, to preach the Word and administer the Sacraments, to exercise pastoral care and oversight, to take your part in the councils of the Church, and to give leadership to the church in its mission to the world, and
- c) as a minister of the United Reformed Church ‘to seek its well-being, purity and peace, to cherish love towards all other churches and to endeavour always to build up the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church’.

Elders ‘share with Ministers of the Word and Sacrament in the pastoral oversight and leadership of the local churches, taking counsel together in the elders’ meeting for the whole church and having severally groups of members particularly entrusted to their pastoral care. They are ‘associated with ministers in all the councils of the Church’. Elders promise at their ordination to ‘accept the office of elder of the United Reformed Church’ and promise ‘to perform its duties faithfully’.

Elders and members receive ministers at their induction or CRCWs at their commissioning ‘as from God’ to serve among them and with them in the world. They promise to pray for the Minister/CRCW, to seek together the will of God and ‘give due

honour, consideration and encouragement, building one another up in faith, hope and love’.

Members promise, ‘in dependence on God’s grace, to be faithful in private and public worship, to live in the fellowship of the church and to share in its work’, and to give and serve, as God enables them, ‘for the advancement of his kingdom throughout the world’ They also promise ‘by that same grace, to follow Christ and to seek to do and to bear his will’ all the days of their life’

3. Standards of Christian behaviour

3a *Personal integrity and health*

- To live a Christian life as persons of prayer and integrity.
- To be committed to growing in faith and discipleship and developing the gifts each has been given.
- To be aware of the need of Ministers, Elders and members to have appropriate boundaries that safeguard personal and spiritual health and welfare, to promote healthy relationships with others and not to do anything to undermine the spiritual health of another.
- To undertake URC safeguarding training as appropriate and have a working knowledge of the URC’s Good Practice 5.
- To recognise the need for Ministers, Elders and members to have a healthy lifestyle and to balance demands on Ministers’/CRCWs’ availability and accessibility with respect for Ministers’/CRCWs’ time for family and friends, personal renewal and rest and spiritual growth.
- To maintain strict confidentiality of all matters shared in confidence, except when required by law to do otherwise, eg with regard to the safety of children and adults at risk, and to respect Ministers’ needs to maintain that same confidentiality.
- To exercise care and sensitivity when seeking counsel from others and in discussion about pastoral concerns, in order that the identity of any person shall not be revealed unless permission has been granted.
- To refrain from using privilege or power for personal advantage or gain, whether financial, emotional, sexual or material (Good Practice 5 section 3.3.10).

3b *Relationships with Ministers*

- To work collaboratively with Ministers/CRCWs and Elders and members in all aspects of the life of the pastorate.
- To support the Ministers/CRCWs, through prayer, encouragement and partnership, including honouring the terms of settlement with regard to holidays, financial benefits and continuing training.
- To regard all persons with equal respect and concern and not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation, including Ministers/CRCWs.
- To honour the Ministers/CRCWs currently called to serve and not invite or encourage other ministers to be involved in the life of the church or to offer pastoral care without the Ministers’/CRCWs’ consent.
- To refrain from raising pastoral issues with a previous Minister/CRCW.
- To respect the work of previous Ministers/CRCWs and deal honourably with their record.

- To welcome retired Ministers/CRCWs as members and worshippers in the pastorate.

3c *Relationship with Elders, members and others*

- To regard all persons with equal love and concern.
- To uphold values of faithfulness, trust and respect.
- To share leadership and pastoral care with others called to these purposes.
- To work collaboratively and safeguard the contribution of the whole church in decision-making processes.
- To seek advice from others if in doubt about one's competence to deal with any issue or situation.
- To consider very carefully taking any position of responsibility and to support the direction of church life initiated through the Ministers/CRCWs, Elders and Church Meetings.
- Not to enter a sexual relationship with anyone in their care.
- Not to be alone with a child or children or young people or adult at risk in a place quite separate from others. If a child or young person wants to discuss a personal matter, follow Good Practice G5 Guidance on Lone Working 8.3.7.

3d *Relationship with councils of the Church*

- To recognise that the pastorate is part of the wider United Reformed Church and that the Ministers/CRCWs are committed to play their part in the wider councils of the Church and in ecumenical relationships.
- To engage positively with all the councils of the church.
- To participate in synod's consultation and review of the pastorate as appropriate.

Paper F2

United Reformed Church Ministerial Capability Process

Ministries Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Whittle (committee convener) moderator@urceastern.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council adopts the URC Ministerial Capability Process as detailed in Appendix 1 of Paper F2

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The URC Ministerial Capability Process needs updating to reflect current best practice.
Main points	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Synod Moderator is now able to start the process.2. The Synod Pastoral Committee or equivalent sets up a Synod Pastoral Committee Capability Panel for any formal hearing if matters cannot be resolved informally.3. Appeals to the process are made to the Ministries Committee.
Previous relevant documents	Capability Procedure and Process 2008.
Consultation has taken place with...	MIND URC Legal Adviser.

Summary of impact

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

Background

1. The United Reformed Church is committed to introducing best practice in relation to terms and conditions of service for Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers.
2. The Capability Procedure is designed to provide a clear framework of support to all Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Church Related Community Workers

called to serve in the United Reformed Church, and as such should be set alongside the Incapacity and the Disciplinary Procedures.

3. The current process is out of date and is largely unworkable because it relies on the local church meeting to start the process, something which the local church meeting is reluctant to do. The local church then appeals to the Synod Moderator to 'do something' about a minister or Church Related Community Worker who underperforms but cannot as they are unable to begin the process. The new process allows the Synod Moderator to begin the process.
4. Greater clarity is now given to who conducts the formal stage of the process by the introduction of a Synod Pastoral Committee Capability Panel.
5. Any appeal to the process is now made to the Ministries Committee rather than to the Synod Moderator with details about how the Appeals against action for poor performance will be conducted.

Appendix one

The United Reformed Church Ministerial Capability Process

1. About this process

- 1.1 The primary aim of this process is to provide a pastoral framework to maintain satisfactory performance standards and to encourage improvement where necessary.
- 1.2 It is the Church's policy to ensure that concerns over performance are dealt with fairly and that steps are taken to establish the facts and to give Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers of the United Reformed Church (hereafter both referred to as ministers), the opportunity to respond at a hearing before any formal action is taken.
- 1.3 This process applies to all ministers regardless of length of service.
- 1.4 This policy does not apply to cases involving genuine sickness, misconduct or incapacity. Where such issues arise reference should be made to the appropriate policy or procedure.

- 1.5 It is expected that most performance-related matters will be identified and addressed informally without engaging in the formal stages of the procedure.
- 1.6 The doctrinal and institutional framework within which all Ministers of Word and Sacraments and Church Related Community Workers agree to serve is set out in the Basis of Union and Structure of the URC. In performing the duties inherent in their vocation, ministers, being church office holders, relate to the Church through its four principal councils: General Assembly, Synod, Elders' Meeting and Church Meeting. The General Assembly decides stipend levels and terms of service through the Plan for Partnership with local churches. The synod gives support and oversight to the ministers serving within its geographical boundaries and defines the role of any who serve in a synod rather than a local post. The role of ministers in pastoral charge of one or more local churches includes particular tasks and goals identified by the Church Meeting of each church, and co-operation with the Elders' Meeting in leadership, pastoral oversight and conducting their other business. The ethos of the relationship between the councils of the Church and ministers is one of mutual support and accountability.'

2. Scope

- 2.1 The capability process is not a quick fix remedy to address issues of underperformance; it is in place to be used as a tool for working collaboratively with local churches, minister, and synod, where possible, to an agreed process to achieve the best outcome for all concerned.
- 2.2 If managed correctly underperformance issues may take between 3 and 12 months to resolve. This is not to put an unnecessary burden on the minister or pastorate but to demonstrate that the United Reformed Church is committed to addressing capability issues within a system that promotes consistency, impartiality, equality and fairness.
- 2.3 At all times throughout the process pastorates/posts are reminded to respond sensitively respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the minister in question.
- 2.4 This procedure does not form part of a Ministers terms of settlement and it may be amended at any time.
- 2.5 This procedure was adopted by Mission Council acting on behalf of General Assembly on

3. Capability

- 3.1 The United Reformed Church recognises the various roles a call to ministry encompasses not least the sacramental, prophetic, community development and leadership roles set within the context of pastoral relationships and responsibilities. It therefore accepts that when addressing issues of underperformance, these areas will be considered as part of the overall performance level of the minister concerned. It will be for the local churches (or, in the case of a synod post, the synod), together with the minister, with the guidance of the Synod Moderator, to identify and agree, the particular

expectations it requires of its ministers. A role description should be discussed and agreed prior to induction or commissioning; and be consequent to a pastorate/post's objectives and mission and the role description. These should be included in any signed terms of settlement.

- 3.2 Ministers cannot be expected to improve on performance if they are not aware of what is expected of them. The LMMR process, the Marks of Ministry (Mission Council May 2019), Guidelines for the conduct of Ministers (2010) and the Ministerial working hours (General Assembly 2010) are useful guides.

4. Performance below an expected minimum standard

- 4.1 Underperformance arises where it is believed, by the Church Meeting or the Elders' Meeting of a local church, by the Synod Moderator in conjunction with the Synod Pastoral Committee (or, in the case of a synod post, with the Synod Committee primarily responsible for the work of that post) that the minister is not meeting the role descriptions, individual performance standards and expectations of where he/she is called to serve.

5. Health-related underperformance

- 5.1 If underperformance is due to an identifiable and relatively short term health related matter the minister should be encouraged to take sick leave. The Synod Moderator may ask the Secretary for Ministries for an Occupational Health check and/or may refer the matter to the General Assembly Pastoral Reference and Welfare committee.
- 5.2 Consideration will be given to whether poor performance may be related to a disability and, if so, whether there are reasonable adjustments that could be made to the minister's working arrangements, including changing their duties or providing additional equipment or training. Consideration may also be given in making adjustments to this process in appropriate cases.
- 5.3 If the minister wishes to discuss this or inform the Church of any medical condition they consider relevant, they should contact their Synod Moderator or the Synod Moderator's deputy.

6. Capability and its relations to the Ministerial Disciplinary and Incapacity Procedures

The Capability Process should be read in conjunction with:

- i) The Ministerial Disciplinary Procedure where it is believed that the poor performance may be due to misconduct;
- ii) the Incapacity Procedure where the problem may be as a result of incapacity on account of (i) medical and /or psychiatric illness or (ii) psychological disorder or (iii) addiction.

7. Performance issues – the informal procedure

- 7.1 In the first instance, performance issues should normally be dealt with informally although if serious issues are involved the formal stage may be initiated.
- 7.2 The main purpose of the informal discussion is to understand the cause of the shortcomings and to find a way to bring performance to the required standard. The procedure must not be used in response to complaints that are found to be frivolous or unsubstantiated.
- 7.3 If the elders or congregation of a local church, or those responsible for the work of a synod post, have concerns with a minister's level of performance over a period of time, this shall initially be dealt with by the Elders meeting and/or Synod Moderator (or their representative) by way of an informal discussion. A trusted friend of both the local church (or the responsible synod committee) and the minister, should be designated by the Elders' Meeting or responsible committee to act as convener for a meeting between their representatives and the minister. This might be an elder or minister/church related community worker from a neighbouring local church, a member of the corresponding committee of a neighbouring synod, or a pastoral advisor.
- 7.4 If the minister serves a group or joint pastorate, the Synod Moderator (or their representative) shall consult with the other churches involved in the pastorate in order to ascertain whether the concerns apply only to one church or are shared by others in the pastorate. If the concerns relate to one church within the pastorate, agreement needs to be reached that in the informal meeting the views of all the churches will be represented.
- 7.5 In an LEP, where concerns are raised about a minister of another denomination, the Synod Moderator will consult with their counterpart from the other denomination about the particular performance issues and agree the process to be used to resolve said issues. Where appropriate structures of another denomination raise concerns about a minister of the URC serving in an LEP, paragraphs [7.2 and 7.3] shall apply with necessary modifications, and a representative of the concerned denomination shall be invited to attend the informal discussion
- 7.6 The convener of the informal discussion will agree a plan of action with the minister to:
- a) clarify the required standards
 - b) identify areas of concern
 - c) establish the likely causes of poor performance and identify any training needs;and/or
 - d) set targets for improvement and a timescale for review (recommended monitoring every three weeks during period and review after three months).

- 7.7 Where appropriate, a note of any such informal discussions may be placed on the minister's file but will be ignored for the purposes of any future capability hearings. The formal procedure should be used for more serious cases, or in any case where an earlier informal discussion has not resulted in a satisfactory improvement.
- 7.8 The formal procedure will depend on the circumstances but may involve reviewing the minister's file including any appraisal records, gathering any relevant documents, monitoring the ministry and, if appropriate, interviewing the minister and/or other individuals confidentially regarding the minister's performance.

8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 The Church's aim is to deal with performance matters sensitively and with due respect for the privacy of any individuals involved. All must treat as confidential any information communicated to them in connection with a matter which is subject to this capability process.
- 8.2 The minister, and anyone accompanying them (including witnesses), must not make electronic recordings of any meetings or hearings conducted under this process.
- 8.3 The minister will normally be told the names of any witnesses whose evidence is relevant to the capability hearing, unless the Synod Pastoral Committee Capability Panel (SPCCP) believe that a witness's identity should remain confidential.

9. Notification of a capability hearing

- 9.1 If the Elders or congregation of a local church, or those responsible for the work of a synod post, have more serious concerns with a minister's level of performance over a period of time, or do not believe that an earlier informal discussion has resulted in satisfactory improvement, they may request the Synod Pastoral Committee to appoint a panel to hold a formal capability hearing. This [the Synod Pastoral Committee Capability Panel or SPCCP] will inform the minister that it has been appointed, providing a written statement of the concerns reported to it regarding the minister's performance, the reasons for those concerns, and the likely outcome if the Committee decides after the hearing that the minister's performance has been unsatisfactory. The notification will also include the following where appropriate:
- a) A summary of relevant information gathered as part of any investigation
 - b) A copy of any relevant documents which will be used at the capability hearing
 - c) A copy of any relevant witness statements, except where a witness's identity is to be kept confidential, in which case the SPCCP will give the minister as much information as possible while maintaining confidentiality.

- 9.2 The SPCCP will give the minister written notice of the date, time and place of the capability hearing. The hearing will be held as soon as reasonably practicable, but the minister will be given a reasonable amount of time to prepare their case based on the information the SPCCP has given the minister.

10. Right to be accompanied at hearings

- 10.1 The minister may bring a companion to any capability hearing or appeal hearing under this procedure. The companion may be either a trade union representative or a fellow minister. The minister must tell the Convener of the hearing panel who their chosen companion is in good time before the hearing.
- 10.2 If the minister's companion is unavailable at the time a hearing is scheduled and will not be available for more than five working days, the SPCCP may require the minister to choose someone else.
- 10.3 The SPCCP may, at its discretion, allow minister to bring a companion who is not a fellow-minister or union representative (for example, a member of their family) where this will help overcome a particular difficulty caused by a disability.

11. Procedure at capability hearings

- 11.1 If the minister or their companion cannot attend the hearing, they should inform the Convener of the Synod Pastoral Committee Capability Panel (SPCCP) immediately and an alternative time will normally be arranged giving at least seven working days' notice. The minister must make every effort to attend the hearing and failure to attend without good reason (e.g. health reasons) may result in a decision being taken in the minister's absence. It may also be treated as a failure to fulfil the duties of the minister's charge or post, as promised in the affirmations made at ordination or induction, which could result in disciplinary action.
- 11.2 The minister may bring a companion with them to the hearing (see paragraph 15.3). The companion may make representations, ask questions, and sum up the minister's case, but will not be allowed to answer questions on the minister's behalf. The minister may confer privately with their companion at any time during the hearing.
- 11.3 The minister may ask relevant witnesses to appear at the hearing, provided the minister gives the SPCCP sufficient advance notice to arrange their attendance. The minister will be given the opportunity to respond to any information given by a witness and to ask them questions.
- 11.4 The aims of a capability hearing will usually include:
- a) Setting out the required standards that the SPCCP believes the minister may have failed to meet and going through any relevant evidence that they

have gathered.

- b) Allowing the minister to ask questions, present evidence, call witnesses, respond to evidence and make representations;
 - c) Establishing the likely causes of poor performance including any reasons why any measures taken so far have not led to the required improvement;
 - d) Identifying whether there are further measures, an improvement plan, such as additional training or supervision, which may improve performance;
 - e) Where appropriate, discussing targets for improvement and a timescale for review;
 - f) Establishing whether underperformance requires a referral into the Ministerial disciplinary process or Ministerial Incapacity process.
- 11.5 A hearing may be adjourned if the SPCCP needs to gather any further information or give consideration to matters discussed at the hearing. The minister will be given a reasonable opportunity to consider any new information obtained before the hearing is reconvened.
- 11.6 The SPCCP will inform the minister in writing of its decision and its reasons for it, usually within ten days of the capability hearing. (Where possible the SPCCP will also explain this information to the minister in person).

12. Stage one capability hearing: [first written warning and improvement plan]

- 12.1 Following a stage one capability hearing, if the SPCCP decides that the minister's performance is unsatisfactory, the SPCCP will give the minister a warning and an improvement plan setting out:
- a) the areas in which the minister has not met the required performance standards
 - b) targets for improvement
 - c) any measures, such as additional training or supervision, which will be taken with a view to improving performance
 - d) a period for review
 - e) the consequences of failing to improve within the review period, or of further unsatisfactory performance. (This could include a warning regarding the pastorate /scoping).
- 12.2 The warning and improvement plan will normally remain active for six months from the end of the review period. After the active period the warning will remain permanently on the minister's file but will be disregarded in deciding the outcome of any future capability proceedings.

- 12.3 The minister's performance will be monitored during the review period and the SPCCP will write to inform the minister of the outcome:
- a) If the SPCCP is satisfied with the minister's performance, no further action will be taken
 - b) If the SPCCP is not satisfied, the matter may be progressed to a stage two capability hearing: or
 - c) If the SPCCP feels that there has been a substantial but insufficient improvement, the review period may be extended.

13. Stage two capability hearing

13.1 If the minister's performance does not improve within the review period set out in the improvement notice, or if there is further evidence of poor performance while the improvement notice is still active, the SPCCP may decide to hold a stage two Capability Hearing. The SPCCP will send the minister written notification as set out in paragraph 13.2.

13.2 Following the hearing, in accordance with the process in paragraph 15, if the minister's explanation, for their continued gaps in performance levels, is found to be unacceptable, the SPCCP may consider a range of options:

- a) a period of further training/retreat/sabbatical for the minister;
- b) a recommendation to both the local churches and the minister that the minister should seek a call elsewhere;
- c) to ask the Synod Moderator to provide advice and assistance to the minister to seek another pastorate/post more suited to their abilities;
- d) a recommendation that the Synod Moderator initiate either the Ministerial Incapacity Procedure or the Section O Process on the grounds that non-attainment of performance levels may be as a result of mental or physical incapacity or misconduct.

13.3 The minister and the church secretary will be notified of the decisions of the meeting within ten days of the hearing.

14. Recurrence of underperformance

In the event of unsatisfactory performance after the improvement notice has ceased to be active a new reference into the capability process must be made.

15. Appeals against action for poor performance

- 15.1 If the minister feels that a decision about poor performance under this process is wrong or unjust, they should appeal in writing, using the Assembly Appeals Process.

Paper F3

Non-stipendiary Church Related Community Work (NS CRCW) ministry

Ministries Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Paul Whittle moderator@urceastern.org.uk
Action required	To approve a variation to NS CRCW ministry as it was defined and agreed by General Assembly 2004.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council resolves that ‘locally called and locally appointed’ non-stipendiary Church Related Community Workers would be expected to follow an individually designed training path as determined by the Education and Learning Committee in consultation with the RCL that is relevant to their local context and local opportunities.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	While the academic and professional training path for non-stipendiary CRCWs is to the same standard as for stipendiary CRCWs for the general models, the aim of this paper is to remove the training restrictions for locally called, locally appointed non-stipendiary CRCWs.
Main points	This will hopefully increase the potential for church members engaged with local community development initiatives to be called, trained and accredited into a recognised ministry. The actual training requirements will be for the Education and Learning Committee to determine.
Previous relevant documents	The Report to Mission Council about Church-Related Community Work (September 1998); Church Related Community Work (CRCW) as a Non-Stipendiary Ministry (General Assembly 2004).
Consultation has taken place with...	CRCW programme sub-committee (six meetings since May 2018), ministries committee (three meetings since September 2018), Education and Learning committee (September 2020), Northern College (four meetings since January 2018), CRCWs (ongoing). The General Secretary.

Summary of impact

Financial	Cost of training. Students expenses.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Potential NS Certificates of Eligibility applications. Common Awards programme more widely available to potential students from other denominations.

1. The present situation

1.1. In 2004, General Assembly agreed to extend the principles of non-stipendiary ministry to CRCW ministry. This was ratified by the 2005 General Assembly including the consequential changes to the Plan for Partnership.

Resolutions included;

- ‘non-stipendiary CRCW candidates would be expected to follow the same training path as for stipendiary CRCWs’,
- ‘The minimum level of qualifications and achievement of the stated core competencies to become an accredited stipendiary CRCW would also be applicable for accredited Non-stipendiary Church Related Community Workers’,
- ‘NS CRCWs service is given within the area of a District or area Council and in a context it has approved’, with District responsibilities ‘To appoint, or to concur in the appointment of, non-stipendiary ministers and church related community workers to their particular service and to review this service at stated intervals’,
- ‘The calling and Commissioning of NS CRCWs would follow the same process as for a stipendiary CRCW which in turn observes and is similar to the protocol for calling Ministers of Word and Sacraments’,
- ‘The procedures and decisions required to transfer between stipendiary and non-stipendiary service for ministers of Word and Sacraments also apply for the transfer between stipendiary and non-stipendiary church related community work,’ and,
- Non-stipendiary CRCWs would be fully recognised as part of the CRCW programme and therefore be included in all the support networks and events available to accredited CRCWs via the CRCW Office. The agreements made by all parties in The CRCW Covenant would also be deemed to be applicable to NS CRCWs, apart from those referring to The Plan for Partnership (section 11, i & ii.).

1.2. There are two significant differences in the understanding of NS CRCW ministry to the accepted view of NS ministry of Word and Sacraments (NS MWS) that have been agreed by General Assembly;

- a) Within NS CRCW Model One: ‘There is a specific case for ‘locally called and locally appointed’ CRCWs, as has already been recognised for some non-stipendiary ministers of Word and Sacraments within that Model One. This case is particularly strong in the field of community ministry where people may have lived, worked and developed relationships with local residents for the majority of their lifetime in their neighbourhood, and who subsequently demonstrate a calling to the ministry of Church Related Community Work, but as a particular service and calling back within their specific neighbourhood. Whereas the vast majority of CRCWs see their lifelong calling as being to the whole church, there are nevertheless one or two CRCWs who have been commissioned in recent years who have demonstrated a strong calling back to their own neighbourhoods, plus a

few others who have been unable to pursue a potential calling because of the present unavailability of a particular route to exercise community ministry in their own neighbourhood.'

- b) Within NS CRCW Model Three: 'ministers and church related community workers in secular employment and church related community workers working for the URC or other Christian organisations or denominations. 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 or area Council.'

This is a wider-embracing understanding of Model Three of NSMs 'working in secular employment' which was 'extended to embrace those URC-accredited CRCWs who may work for and receive remuneration from other denominations, Christian agencies or para-church organisations as church related community workers but still retain their URC local church membership and relationships. They could still be recognised as URC NS CRCWs but as being employed and paid by these other organisations.'

2. Clearing the way for local NS CRCW ministry

- 2.1. Although 'locally called and locally appointed' NS CRCWs are permissible under the 2004 GA Resolutions, it has been the lack of a 'locally trained' context which has been a major barrier to becoming an accredited local NS CRCW. In fact, the absence of a 'locally trained' option has been the main reason for at least one NS CRCW candidate not going forward from Assessment Conference and a number of other potential candidates not pursuing a call.
- 2.2. Observations and information from CRCWs in local contexts, from requests to the CRCW Office by local churches for support with their local community initiatives, and from stories of disciples demonstrating their faith in action in their neighbourhoods via the 'Walking the Way' initiative, all indicate that there are numerous church members present and engaged with various neighbourhood and community initiatives in their locality. Only a few of these Christian community activists and volunteers will pursue a potential call to CRCW ministry anywhere in the URC, either stipendiary or non-stipendiary, but there may be a much larger number of people who might consider a call to become a NS CRCW if they can access the required training and continue to minister in their local context for the required minimum of ten hours per week.
- 2.3. The resolving by Mission Council (November 2018), acting on behalf of General Assembly, to authorise a Model Four NS ministry for Word and Sacraments has opened up locally trained options for NS MWS overseen by the Education and Learning (E&L) committee.
- 2.4. Using a similar framework, and in a similar way to the E&L committee agreeing that, 'someone who is called to Model Four NS MWS would undertake the same assessment processes and be assigned to a Resource Centre for Learning (RCL) for their Education for Ministry (EM) One, even though the formation and equipping is undertaken locally', The Revd Dr Noel Irwin, Tutor in Public Theology and Church Related Community Work at Northern College, in association with the Principal of Northern College, Secretary for Ministries and the CRCW

Development Worker is exploring and writing paths for qualification for NS CRCW ministry for those who are called to NS (Model One) CRCW.

- 2.5. While there is an ongoing debate as to what exactly that qualification will look like, including the breadth of community development professional standards that should be upheld, there is general agreement between the different parties that a Diploma level academic standard is not required for this particular model of NS CRCW ministry. (A Diploma in Contextual Theology is the minimum qualification to become a stipendiary CRCW.)
- 2.6. Consequently, Mission Council is being asked to add this Resolution to the criteria for NS CRCW ministry and to allow the E&L committee to determine exactly what the level of qualification will be.
- 2.7. For all other models of NS CRCW ministry other than 'locally called, locally appointed', non-stipendiary CRCW candidates would be expected to follow the same training path as for stipendiary CRCWs and the minimum level of qualifications and achievement of the stated core competencies to become an accredited stipendiary CRCW would remain as being applicable for accredited non-stipendiary Church Related Community Workers.
- 2.8. A specimen role description and person specification, the guidance for Synods to appoint a NS (Model One) CRCW and the monitoring and review process for this particular local NS CRCW ministry are available on request to:
steve.summers@urc.org.uk

Paper G1

Update on current work

Mission Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Sarah Lane Cawte, Convener of Mission Committee slanecawte@gmail.com Francis Brienen, Deputy General Secretary (Mission) francis.brienen@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information and decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council encourages all churches and individuals to keep in mind the significant environmental impact of single-use plastics. While there may be occasions during this pandemic when it is impossible to avoid the use of single-use plastic items, their use should be kept to an absolute minimum. They should also be carefully disposed of in a way that minimises their impact on the environment.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update on the work of the Mission Committee.
Main points	Updates on Legacies of Slavery task group work, resolution on becoming an anti-racist church, Partners in Mission, Beirut emergency appeal, Church and Society/JPIT work, Ecumenical and Interfaith matters, review of the National Rural Officer post, evaluation of vision2020, Greenbelt, resolution on single use plastics.
Previous relevant documents	Paper I1 to Mission Council, March 2020.
Consultation has taken place with...	Legacies of Slavery task group, Equalities Committee, National Synod of Scotland, Rural Strategy Group and NRO review group, Greenbelt planning group.

Summary of impact

Financial	Costs to Assembly of the various items in the paper are covered by the mission committee budget.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

1. Legacies of slavery (LoS)

- 1.1. Mission Committee received an update from the Legacies of Slavery task group. In November 2019 the Legacies of Slavery task group presented its initial findings to Mission Council. Mission Council made a number of recommendations to which the task group subsequently began its response. Then came the lockdown due to the pandemic, necessarily delaying the task group's progress. At the same time, the disproportionate impact of the virus on black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and the killing of George Floyd in the US sparked a widespread outcry against the structural racism impacting black communities around the world.
- 1.2. At the subsequent synod clerks meeting, Alan Yates was urged to make some LoS resources available in time for the autumn synods. The task group sought to respond to this request. However, the group recognised a need to review its work in light of the changed context and felt that the material that was originally planned needed to be reviewed and amended. It was decided to collate a body of (pre-existing) resources covering the breadth of themes the task group itself is seeking to address, to be made available in time for the beginning of October, Black History Month. The aim was to resource and encourage local reflection, conversation and engagement. The Legacies of Slavery resources are now available on the URC website (www.urc.org.uk/legacies-of-slavery).
- 1.3. The task group is still working towards the denomination-wide consultation to be formally launched at General Assembly 2021, with a view to bringing specific resolutions to General Assembly 2022, an aim which feels particularly apt, this being the URC's Jubilee year.

2. Resolution on becoming an anti-racist church

The Mission Committee agreed to bring a resolution to Mission Council on committing the URC to a journey towards being an anti-racist church. See Mission Council paper G2.

3. Partners in Mission

- 3.1. We continue to give thanks for the work of our mission partners through the Council for World Mission. The Taiwanese and Mandarin Speaking Fellowship at Lumen URC, London continues to be blessed by the ministry of the Revd Yufen Chen from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Much of her ministry has taken place online, but this has enabled her to reach people well beyond the fellowship, London and the UK.
- 3.2. Ms Alison Gibbs, who is working with the United Church of Zambia, had to return to the UK in March for a medical emergency. After treatment and a long recuperation, she returned to Mabel Shaw school in Mbereshi, Zambia in August. The extension of her term of service until the end of 2021 has now been formally approved by CWM.

- 3.3. Ms So Young Jung continues her ministry in South London with Korean young people, having developed a range of creative ways to reach and keep in touch with them, especially during lockdown.
- 3.4. Ms Selena Tai (assistant chaplain for Taiwanese and Mandarin speaking students, St Peter's House, Manchester) was furloughed during lockdown, but has now returned to her ministry.

4. Beirut Emergency Appeal

- 4.1. Following the devastating explosion in Beirut in August 2020, the global and intercultural ministries staff launched a URC-wide emergency appeal to support the relief efforts of our local partner in Beirut, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon. The appeal ran until the end of September, with the intention that proceeds are match-funded through the URC's World Church and Mission Fund.

5. Church and Society/Joint Public Issues Team

- 5.1. The Church and Society team, together with others, were involved in the development and launch of the 'New reality, same mission' booklet, to enable individuals and local churches to explore questions of community presence and engagement and social justice in the new reality which we all face. (www.urc.org.uk/same-mission)
- 5.2. The Joint Public Issues team conducted research into poverty under lockdown and identified the build-up of debt by low-income households as a major impending problem which was not being addressed by others. JPIT committed significant time and energy to researching this issue, building alliances, preparing a report and developing a campaign to 'Reset the Debt'. The campaign was launched on 4 October: www.ResetTheDebt.uk

6. Ecumenical and Interfaith matters

- 6.1. Mission Committee received a report on conversations with the Church of Scotland on possible areas for future joint working. These include representation in the Conference of European Churches and the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, possible involvement in the Church of Scotland's English-speaking congregation in Rome, and cooperation on matters involving Israel-Palestine. These conversations are at an early stage and more will be reported at a future meeting of Mission Council.
- 6.2. Working with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), the URC has taken the lead in a pilot initiative for National Interfaith Week (8-15 November 2020), whereby a small number of churches commit to hold conversations with their local mosque. URC churches from Surrey, Salford and Blackburn are taking part in this year's pilot. The hope is that this programme might become a model for larger scale conversations in future years.
- 6.3. Two General Assembly themed digital discussions were held in July, the first one featuring a panel drawn from participants of the 2019 educational visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the second a lecture from the Revd Dr

Munther Isaac of the Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. Both were extremely successful and drew large audiences. Munther Isaac's lecture has been recorded and will be rerun on Tuesday 17 November at 7pm using Zoom. Anyone who wishes to attend this closed session should email carole.sired@urc.org.uk to register.

7. Review of the National Rural Officer post

- 7.1. The Methodist Conference has approved the new Connexional Evangelism and Growth strategy, and by implication the creation of a full time National Rural Officer post, starting in the summer of 2021. The focus of the post will be on equipping the Methodist Church to be a confident and vibrant Christian presence in rural communities, particularly focusing on evangelism, church growth, and pioneering/planting new Christian communities.
- 7.2. This effectively means an end to the shared National Rural Officer post from August 2021, when the Revd Elizabeth Clark retires. Conversations on the future of this post for the URC are still ongoing and it is expected that a proposal for a way forward will be brought to the mission committee in February 2021.

8. Evaluation of Vision2020

- 8.1. In the light of the cancellation of General Assembly 2020 mission committee agreed to extend the evaluation of vision2020 and to bring a full report with recommendations to General Assembly in July 2021.

9. Greenbelt 2020 and 2021

- 9.1. The traditional Greenbelt August Bank Holiday weekend for 2020 was limited to online activity. Our creative URC team have contributed with blogs from URC Youth and Roo Stewart, craft ideas and other website material. For 2021, URC at Greenbelt will continue our 'revolting Christians' theme and we are aiming for a larger presence at the Festival. Sam Richards and the CYDO team will be heading the youth provision at Greenbelt. We are investigating the possibility of running a family friendly café tent, which would host talks, music, crafts and much more.

10. Single use plastics

- 10.1. The URC's commitment to caring for God's creation is expressed in its Environmental Policy (adopted by General Assembly in 2016) which sets out an intent "to reduce our carbon footprint, improve recycling, minimise waste and improve efficiencies on finite natural resources in all of our operations."
- 10.2. In this context, the Synod of Scotland's Church & Society committee brought to Mission Committee a concern about the huge increase in the use of disposable items during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially single-use plastics. While some of this has been driven by necessity, it has resulted in higher levels of waste, litter

and ocean pollution. It threatens to stall and even reverse the welcome progress made in recent years in tackling the single-use plastic problem.

- 10.3. Mission Committee discussed the Synod of Scotland's concern and agreed to propose the following resolution to Mission Council:

Mission Council encourages all churches and individuals to keep in mind the significant environmental impact of single-use plastics. While there may be occasions during this pandemic when it is impossible to avoid the use of single-use plastic items, their use should be kept to an absolute minimum. They should also be carefully disposed of in a way that minimises their impact on the environment.

Paper G2

Towards being an anti-racist Church

Mission Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Sarah Lane Cawte, Convenor of Mission Committee slanecawte@gmail.com Karen Campbell, Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries karen.campbell@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council resolves: (i) Acting on behalf of General Assembly, to commit the United Reformed Church to a journey towards being an anti-racist Church, identifying barriers within all parts of its life - including local, synod and Assembly structures and processes, and initiating strategies to combat racism within its own body and in the wider community/society. (ii) To instruct the mission committee to explore and develop initiatives to address the barriers within our structures, and to develop resources to equip and empower the United Reformed Church to begin the process of education and change in all parts of its life. (iii) To instruct the mission committee to report on progress to the March 2021 meeting of Mission Council, and to future meetings of Mission Council and General Assembly, including any specific objectives identified.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	A commitment to working towards being an actively anti-racist Church.
Main points	Building on the URC's history of racial justice work and racial justice awareness to commit the Church to a journey beyond 'not racist' to actively identifying and addressing racism in every aspect of its life.
Previous relevant documents	Assembly resolutions as detailed in the paper.
Consultation has taken place with...	General Secretary, equalities committee.

Summary of impact

Financial	Costs to Assembly are covered by the mission committee budget.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	This links with work done by CTE and CWM. Interest in the resolution has been expressed by Methodist colleagues.

1. The United Reformed Church stands in solidarity with the struggles of black people (of all ethnicities) - in the UK and globally - for freedom, justice and equality.
2. The killing of George Floyd in the US in May 2020, and the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on black communities, has highlighted the continuing evil of systemic racial injustice around the world. We have heard the impassioned outcry against this current situation, with many people - both black and white - seeking change and declaring that Black Lives Matter. We have sought to listen to those voices.
3. Mission Council, November 2020, unreservedly affirms that Black Lives – the lives of black, Asian and minority ethnic people - do matter in the life, work and existence of our Church. At the same time, we recognise that we are an imperfect body, existing in a world shaped by white supremacy. We are repeatedly reminded - by voices both within and outside the Church - that our Church, too, has been shaped by racist ideals. We lament the truth that many aspects of our lived reality do not reflect the values to which we aspire - values seen in the Word of God as revealed through the life of Jesus Christ and through our holy scriptures.
4. We have sought to recognise and address this disparity over many years and point to our long history of promoting learning and positive action aimed at bringing about racial justice in our Church and world. Previous resolutions include:
 - 1980 - urging local churches to study the question of racism, both locally and nationally, and to contribute to the creation of a multi-racial society in Britain;
 - 1994 - calling the URC to prayer and action to find ways to listen to the voices of people of different cultural backgrounds, and the adoption of an Equal Opportunities Policy;
 - 1996 - creation of a post to develop multi-racial and multi-cultural ministry; and
 - 2007 - recognising the continuing legacy of the transatlantic slave trade and committing ourselves to the continuing struggle for justice for all who are oppressed.
5. We affirm the statement released by the CTE Presidents on 28 July 2020, calling all churches to travel together on the journey of racial justice, and we recommit the United Reformed Church to addressing injustices both within our church life and in wider society.
6. At the present time, we are actively engaging with the Council for World Mission's (CWM) Legacies of Slavery project and Core Group Report 2018. We reaffirm the work of the URC Legacies of Slavery task group, appointed by the mission committee to help the Church respond meaningfully to the issues and findings

raised by the CWM document through a process of local church and synod engagement, with a view to bringing recommendations to General Assembly 2022.

7. Building on our past and current work, Mission Council commits the whole United Reformed Church to embark on a journey beyond good intentions, beyond being 'not racist', towards active anti-racist living. This commitment is neither an initiative nor a project, but a pledge for our future existence as one body with many parts - valuing the presence and gifts of all our sisters and brothers equally, and affirming each individual as being equally made in the image of God.

Mission Council resolves:

- (i) Acting on behalf of General Assembly, to commit the United Reformed Church to a journey towards being an anti-racist Church, identifying barriers within all parts of its life - including local, synod and Assembly structures and processes, and initiating strategies to combat racism within its own body and in the wider community/society.**
- (ii) To instruct the mission committee to explore and develop initiatives to address the barriers within our structures, and to develop resources to equip and empower the United Reformed Church to begin the process of education and change in all parts of its life.**
- (iii) To instruct the mission committee to report on progress to the March 2021 meeting of Mission Council, and to future meetings of Mission Council and General Assembly, including any specific objectives identified.**

Paper H1

List of nominations

Nominations Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Ray Adams ray.adams12@btinternet.com George Faris nominations.secretary@urc.org.uk
Action required	
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Mission Council notes the changes set out in Section 1 of the report to the list of Nominations agreed at the July 2020 meeting of Mission Council.2) Mission Council notes and approves the changes set out in Section 2 of the report to the list of Nominations agreed at the July 2020 meeting of Mission Council.3) Mission Council appoints according to the nominations in Section 3 of the report.4) Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Mission Council extends the tenure of the Revd Clare Downing as Moderator of Wessex Synod from 1 January 2023 to 31 August 2026.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) To clarify various details of the nominations list.2) To appoint and reappoint members of various committees and representatives of the Church.3) To make several appointments on behalf of General Assembly.4) To note proposed appointments to be made at General Assembly 2021.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	Nominations list as at July 2020: https://urc.org.uk/images/Yearbook/Nominations-List.pdf
Consultation has taken place with...	All synods are represented on the Committee.

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Some roles involve ecumenical contact and collaboration.

1. Amendments to published list of nominations to be noted

Mission Council is asked to note the following amendments to the Nominations list that was agreed at the July 2020 meeting of Mission Council.

Appointments made by the Officers of Assembly

The Officers of Assembly, acting on behalf of General Assembly, appointed those listed below:

Ref	Committee/Group	Name	Role	From	To
2.3	MIND Advisory Group	The Revd Dominic Grant	Consultant for Ministers and CRCWs**	Aug20	GA24
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	Dr David N Jones	Deputy Convenor**	Aug20	GA21
5.5	URC Trust	The Revd James Breslin	Member**	Aug20	GA24

Key: ** = new appointment

1.8 Environmental Task Group

Ms Charis Ollerenshaw has resigned.

3.1.3 Interfaith Enabling Group

Change *Co-opted member* to *Co-opted Members*.

4.3 Children's and Youth Work Committee

Ms Charmaine Mutare has resigned.

5.2 Communications Committee

Change *Ms Jo Aldred* to *Ms Joy Aldred*.

5.5 URC Trust

The Revd Nick Mark lives in the National Synod of Scotland (13).

7.1 World Council of Churches Assembly

Postponed from 2021 to 2022.

2. Amendments to published list of nominations for approval

Mission Council is asked to note and approve the following amendments to the Nominations list that was agreed at the July 2020 meeting of Mission Council:

4.2.2 Stepwise Task and Finish Group

The Mission Committee representative is the Revd Stuart Radcliffe.

4.3.1 Pilots Subcommittee

- i. The Children and Youth Development Officer and team representative is Ms Megan Tillbrook [2021].
- ii. The URC Youth Pilots representative is Ms Megan Westgarth [2021].

3. New appointments and re-appointments

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

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Committee/Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
1.4	Resource Sharing Task Group	The Revd Steve Faber**	Synod Moderator	Nov20	GA24
2.6	Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee	The Revd Brian Jolly**	Synod Moderator	Nov20	GA24
3.1	Mission Committee	The Revd Murray George (3)**	Member**	Nov20	GA24
3.1	Mission Committee	The Revd Clare Davison (4)**	Member**	Nov20	GA24
4.1	Ministries Committee	The Revd Jamie Kissack**	Synod Moderator	Nov20	GA24
7.13	European Churches' Environmental Network	The Revd David Coleman**	Representative**	Nov20	-

Key: ** = new appointment, † = extension of term of service.

3.2 Wessex Synod Moderator review group

The group, convened by the Revd Peter Henderson, met in July. The outcome of the review has been positive, and Mission Council is invited to resolve as follows:

Acting on behalf of General Assembly, Mission Council extends the tenure of the Revd Clare Downing as Moderator of Wessex Synod from 1 January 2023 to 31 August 2026.

4. Appointments to be made at General Assembly 2021

The Nominations Committee advises that those listed below have accepted invitations to serve from the end of next year's General Assembly, which will be asked to appoint them. This is a provisional list - there will be further nominations for consideration at General Assembly.

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Committee/Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	The Revd Nigel Adkinson (2)	Member†	GA21	GA26
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	Mr Ian Corless (9)	Member†	GA21	GA26
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	Dr David Jones (5)	Deputy Convenor†	GA21	GA26
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	Dr David Jones (5)	Member†	GA21	GA26
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	Mrs Janet Virr (4)	Member†	GA21	GA26
3.1.3	Interfaith Enabling Group	Ms Victoria Turner	Member**	GA21	GA25

Key: ** = new appointment, † = extension of term of service.

Paper H2

Supplementary nominations report

Nominations Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Ray Adams ray.adams12@btinternet.com George Faris nominations.secretary@urc.org.uk
Action required	
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Mission Council notes the change set out in Section one of the report to the list of Nominations agreed at the July 2020 meeting of Mission Council.2) Mission Council appoints according to the nominations in Section two of the report.3) Mission Council appoints the Revd George Watt to be Moderator of the Thames North Synod from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2028.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) To clarify various details of the nominations list.2) To appoint a replacement member of the Interfaith Enabling Group.3) To appoint a new moderator for the Thames North Synod.4) To note proposed appointments to be made at General Assembly 2021.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	Nominations list as at July 2020: www.urc.org.uk/images/Yearbook/Nominations-List.pdf
Consultation has taken place with...	All synods are represented on the Committee

Summary of impact

Financial	None.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Some roles involve ecumenical contact and collaboration.

1. Amendment to published list of nominations to be noted

Mission Council is asked to note the following amendment to the Nominations list that was agreed at the July 2020 meeting of Mission Council.

3.1.3 Interfaith Enabling Group

The Revd Ann Jack has resigned.

2. New appointments

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

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Committee/Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
3.1.3	Interfaith Enabling Group	Ms Victoria Turner	Member	Nov20	GA25

Key: ** = new appointment, † = extension of term of service.

Thames North Synod Moderator

The Thames North Synod Moderator Nominating Group brings forward the name of the Revd George Watt, presently serving in Southern Synod.

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, is invited to resolve as follows:

Mission Council appoints the Revd George Watt to be Moderator of the Thames North Synod from 1 June 2021 to 31 May 2028.

3. Appointments to be made at General Assembly 2021

The Nominations Committee advises that those listed below have accepted invitations to serve from the end of next year's General Assembly, which will be asked to appoint them. This is a provisional list - there will be further nominations for consideration at General Assembly.

<i>Ref</i>	<i>Committee/Group</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	The Revd Nigel Adkinson (2)	Member†	GA21	GA26
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	Mr Ian Corless (9)	Member†	GA21	GA26
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	Dr David Jones (5)	Deputy Convenor†	GA21	GA26
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	Dr David Jones (5)	Member†	GA21	GA26
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	The Revd David Miller (6)	Member†	GA21	GA26
2.4	Disciplinary Process Commission Panel	Mrs Janet Virr (4)	Member†	GA21	GA26

Key: ** = new appointment, † = extension of term of service.

Paper I1

Update to terms of reference

Pastoral Reference and Welfare Committee

Basic information

Contact name and email address	David Grosch-Miller david.grosch-miller@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<p>Mission Council agrees to make the following amendments to the Terms of Reference of the PRWC</p> <p>“ 1(a) The Assembly pastoral reference and welfare committee will consider the cases of United Reformed Church ministers and congregations which are referred to it because of some perceived pastoral need by Mission Council, synods, committees, Synod Moderators or Officers of Assembly. and when the continuation of a minister’s service in an existing pastoral charge or within the URC is in question”</p> <p>“1(f) The committee, in consultation with the finance committee, will determine the level of welfare grants to be paid from Assembly funds.”</p> <p>4. Composition • A former Moderator of General Assembly who shall be the Convenor. • The General Secretary • Two lay people • One Minister in pastoral charge • One Synod Moderator • The Treasurer • The convener of the welfare sub-committee • The Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) who will act as secretary</p> <p>“5. Attendance (a) The minister whose case is being considered by the committee may request a meeting with the committee in person if he or she so wishes. Alternatively, the The committee may invite the minister to meet some or all its members. In either case the The minister may be accompanied by a friend if he or she so wishes. (b) The committee has the discretion to invite other persons involved in a case to meet it.”</p> <p>“6. Relationship to Structure The committee will report to the General Assembly at its biennial annual meeting. However, the report will only deal with general matters and the committee will not report on, nor may it be questioned on, individual cases.”</p>

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To update the committee's terms of reference.
Main points	To remove the restriction of acting only when the continuation of a minister's service is in question and to include welfare grants in remit.
Previous relevant documents	Section H of the Manual as updated June 2017.
Consultation has taken place with...	Synod Moderators, Secretary of Education and Learning, Secretary of Ministries, Manager of Retired Ministers Housing Society.

Summary of impact

Financial	No alteration to existing budgets.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	None.

1. Background

- 1a) The existing Terms of Reference (ToR) limit the work of the pastoral reference and welfare committee (PRWC) to 'consider the cases of United Reformed Church ministers which are referred to it because of some perceived pastoral need.... when the continuation of a minister's service in an existing pastoral charge or within the URC is in question' (see Section H of the Manual as updated June 2017).
- 1b) The committee has often been regarded as the 'committee of last resort', by which it is understood that when local church and synod have exhausted all other ways of resolving a pastoral need involving minister and congregation then the help of PRWC could be sought. The ToR make it clear that the primary function of the committee is to help the minister move on from a situation that has become unhealthy and the committee may authorise stipend payments and other costs to be made while a solution to the pastoral need is found.
- 1c) The understanding of PRWC as the 'committee of last resort' has led to a broadening of the committee's work. When a pastoral or welfare need has arisen, and there has been no other obvious place within the structures for that need to be addressed, it has been referred to PRWC.
- 1d) Examples of the kind of matters referred include:
 - i. the provision of stipend and housing at the end of a fixed term appointment
 - ii. housing and financial assistance for spouses and families following marital breakdown of a minister
 - iii. the breakdown of relations between individuals, who are not ministers, and Synods or other councils of the URC
 - iv. the breakdown of relations between congregations and Synods
 - v. assistance with costs of altering a retired minister's privately owned housing to accommodate increased disability

- vi. assistance with costs of improvements to RMHS property where the tenant has an equity share but cannot afford her/his share of the costs.
- vii. financial difficulties of retired ministers
- viii. financial difficulties of the widows and widowers of ministers.
- ix. financial difficulties of serving ministers

2. Purpose of this report

- 2a) The work of PRWC is confidential and reports are normally received without discussion. From time to time, however, it is appropriate that the wider church should be aware of developing trends that may require the attention of other committees or councils of the United Reformed Church.
- 2b) A proposal to amend the existing terms of reference is tabled alongside this report. The amendments express the existing work of PRWC but do not limit its ability to respond to pastoral and welfare matters that are referred to it.

3. Amendment to existing terms of reference

- 3a) The existing Terms of Reference are given in Section H of the Manual dated June 2017
- 3b) It is proposed to amend 1 (a) of the terms of reference as follows:
 - 1(a) **The Assembly pastoral reference and welfare committee will consider the cases of United Reformed Church ministers and congregations which are referred to it because of some perceived pastoral need by Mission Council, synods, committees, synod moderators or *Officers of Assembly*.** ~~and when the continuation of a minister's service in an existing pastoral charge or within the URC is in question.~~
 - 3c) PRWC has oversight of historic funds that are held for designated purposes and available to stipendiary ministers of the United Reformed Church. The level is set from time to time by PRWC and are paid on application for the following purposes: Education fees for children in independent schools, musical instruments for children, school uniform and equipment, public transport travel costs for school attendance. Further grants are paid at bereavement, as a Christmas gift to widows and widowers and as a contribution to the housing costs of a minister's spouse following divorce or separation. The committee also receives requests for financial assistance to ministers for purposes not covered by the historic funds.
 - 1(f)) **The committee, in consultation with the finance committee, will determine the level of welfare grants to be paid from Assembly funds.**
- 3d) The work of the welfare sub committee has been incorporated into the work of PRWC and the post of convenor of welfare sub committee no longer exists.

4. Composition

- **A former Moderator of General Assembly who shall be the convenor**

- **The General Secretary**
 - **Two lay people**
 - **One minister in pastoral charge**
 - **One Synod Moderator**
 - **The Treasurer**
 - **The convenor of the welfare sub-committee**
 - **The Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) who will act as secretary.**
- 3e) The introduction of a ministerial disciplinary process, an incapacity process and a complaints process now ensures that decisions affecting the standing of a minister are dealt with through other channels. The work of the PRWC increasingly involves giving financial assistance through extending stipend payments or making grants. The committee is of the opinion that it is no longer necessary for ministers to have the right to request a meeting in person where financial assistance is under consideration. The committee will continue to carefully consider any request that has the support of a Synod Moderator or Assembly Officer and may ask for further information in considering its response.

5. Attendance

- a) **The minister whose case is being considered by the committee may request a meeting with the committee in person if he or she so wishes. Alternatively, the committee may invite the minister to meet some or all its members. In either case the minister may be accompanied by a friend if he or she so wishes.**
- b) **The committee has the discretion to invite other persons involved in a case to meet it.”**
- 3f) The Assembly has decided to meet annually and the alteration is a consequence of that decision.

“6 Relationship to Structure The committee will report to the General Assembly at its ~~biennial~~ annual meeting. However, the report will only deal with general matters and the committee will not report on, nor may it be questioned on, individual cases.”

Appendix A

Existing terms of reference

H: Assembly pastoral reference and welfare committee

1. Terms of reference

- a) The Assembly pastoral reference and welfare committee will consider the cases of United Reformed Church ministers which are referred to it because of some perceived pastoral need by Mission Council, synods, committees or synod moderators, and when the continuation of a minister's service in an existing pastoral charge or within the URC is in question.
- b) The committee will seek to enable the minister's service within the URC to be continued if that is seen to be appropriate, and to this end may consider financial support for a course of retraining, or therapy, or counselling.
- c) The committee may initiate discussion about alternative forms of service for a minister, within or outside the URC, and may seek help (practical, financial, professional) in consultation with the minister to make this happen.
- d) The committee may authorise the maintenance of ministry (MoM) sub-committee to provide stipend or part-stipend and may authorise the Chief Finance Officer to pay other necessary expenses (including accommodation costs) to a minister not in pastoral charge for a specific period. Such period will not exceed six months in the first instance but may be extended by the pastoral reference committee. The MoM sub-committee (or such other body as shall in future carry out the functions of the MoM sub-committee) or the Chief Finance Officer will accept this authority for payment. (e) In each case the committee will make clear to the minister concerned the period for which payments will be made and if it may be extended.

2. Limitations on powers

- a) The committee does not have the authority to delete the name of a minister from the Roll of Ministers nor to take any other disciplinary steps against him/her. The committee does not have to be consulted about and does not have the authority over the process of ending the appointment of a minister in pastoral charge, which process is a matter for minister, church meeting and synod pastoral committee or equivalent.
- b) The committee may not be involved with, and must withdraw from, any ongoing discussions, counselling or direct pastoral involvement with any case in which the disciplinary procedures of the Church are being applied against a minister. Nevertheless, the committee may authorise any financial payments allowed under its terms of reference (see 1d).

3. Confidentiality

It is evident that the work of the pastoral reference and welfare committee will be confidential and pastoral. Nevertheless, it will need to keep a record of its meetings. The committee's conclusions should be recorded, given to the person concerned and shared with others directly involved in the matter who need to know the outcome. It would be inappropriate for the committee as a body or individual members of it to divulge any additional information about ministers or churches concerned.

4. Composition

- A former Moderator of General Assembly who shall be the convenor
- The General Secretary
- Two lay people
- One minister in pastoral charge
- One Synod Moderator
- The Treasurer
- The convenor of the welfare sub-committee
- The Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) who will act as secretary.

5. Attendance

- a) The minister whose case is being considered by the committee may request a meeting with the committee in person if he or she so wishes. Alternatively, the committee may invite the minister to meet some or all its members. In either case the minister may be accompanied by a friend if he or she so wishes.
- b) The committee has the discretion to invite other persons involved in a case to meet it.

6. Relationship to structure

The committee will report to the General Assembly at its biennial meeting. However, the report will only deal with general matters and the committee will not report on, nor may it be questioned on, individual cases.

Date of last revision: May 2017

Appendix B

Revised terms of reference

H: Assembly pastoral reference and welfare committee

1. Terms of reference

- a) The Assembly pastoral reference and welfare committee will consider the cases of United Reformed Church ministers and congregations which are referred to it because of some perceived pastoral need by Mission Council, synods, committees, synod moderators or Officers of Assembly.
- b) The committee will seek to enable the minister's service within the URC to be continued if that is seen to be appropriate, and to this end may consider financial

support for a course of retraining, or therapy, or counselling.

- c) The committee may initiate discussion about alternative forms of service for a minister, within or outside the URC, and may seek help (practical, financial, professional) in consultation with the minister to make this happen.
- d) The committee may authorise the maintenance of ministry (MoM) sub-committee to provide stipend or part-stipend and may authorise the Chief Finance Officer to pay other necessary expenses (including accommodation costs) to a minister not in pastoral charge for a specific period. Such period will not exceed six months in the first instance but may be extended by the pastoral reference committee. The MoM sub-committee (or such other body as shall in future carry out the functions of the MoM sub-committee) or the Chief Finance Officer will accept this authority for payment.
- e) In each case the committee will make clear to the minister concerned the period for which payments will be made and if it may be extended.
- f) The committee, in consultation with the finance committee, will determine the level of welfare grants to be paid from Assembly funds.

2. Limitations on powers

- a) The committee does not have the authority to delete the name of a minister from the Roll of Ministers nor to take any other disciplinary steps against him/her. The committee does not have to be consulted about and does not have the authority over the process of ending the appointment of a minister in pastoral charge, which process is a matter for minister, church meeting and synod pastoral committee or equivalent.
- b) The committee may not be involved with, and must withdraw from, any ongoing discussions, counselling or direct pastoral involvement with any case in which the disciplinary procedures of the Church are being applied against a minister. Nevertheless, the committee may authorise any financial payments allowed under its terms of reference (see 1d).

3. Confidentiality

It is evident that the work of the pastoral reference and welfare committee will be confidential and pastoral. Nevertheless, it will need to keep a record of its meetings. The committee's conclusions should be recorded, given to the person concerned and shared with others directly involved in the matter who need to know the outcome. It would be inappropriate for the committee as a body or individual members of it to divulge any additional information about ministers or churches concerned.

4. Composition

- A former Moderator of General Assembly who shall be the convenor
- The General Secretary
- Two lay people

- One minister in pastoral charge
- One Synod Moderator
- The Treasurer
- The Deputy General Secretary (Discipleship) who will act as secretary.

5. Attendance

- a) The committee may invite the minister to meet some or all its members. The minister may be accompanied by a friend if he or she so wishes.
- b) The committee has the discretion to invite other persons involved in a case to meet it.

6. Relationship to structure

The committee will report to the General Assembly at its annual meeting. However, the report will only deal with general matters and the committee will not report on, nor may it be questioned on, individual cases.

Paper J1

Review panel for the renewal of the appointment of the Principal of Westminster College

Human Resources Advisory Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Geoff Shaw, Convenor geoffshaw2810@sky.com Jane Baird, Secretary jane.baird@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council confirms that the review panel for the Principal of Westminster College should be comprised of members of the Board of Governors and a member of the Panel for General Assembly Appointments.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To clarify the body responsible for the review and possible subsequent renewal of the appointment of the Principal of Westminster College.
Main points	The existing position is unclear.
Previous relevant documents	Paper O2 Mission Council November 2019.
Consultation has taken place with...	Chair of Governors, Westminster College.

Summary of impact

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

1. The Principal of Westminster College is a key member of Senatus and an 'Assembly Appointment' of General Assembly.
2. In November 2019 Mission Council agreed that the Principal may serve successive terms beyond the original term of appointment.
3. Recent Principals of Westminster College have not sought to serve more than one term of office.

4. It is therefore necessary to clarify the body responsible for the review and possible subsequent renewal of the appointment of the Principal of Westminster College.
5. Westminster College is overseen by its Board of Governors which must ensure that members of Senatus, especially the Principal, are being effective in their roles.
6. It is also appropriate that the General Assembly is represented at the discussions relating to the renewal of the term of this 'Assembly Appointment'.
7. HRAG therefore recommends that the review panel for the Principal of Westminster College should be comprised of members of the Board of Governors and a member of the Panel for General Assembly appointments.

Paper K1

The Church's risk review process

Risk Process Review Panel

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Alan Yates alan.yates@urc.org.uk Jane Baird jane.baird@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	<p>a) Mission Council receives the Report of the Risk Process Review Panel and acknowledges that the United Reformed Church faces risks which might seriously affect its financial wellbeing, its structures and consequently its ability to proclaim the gospel.</p> <p>b) Mission Council acknowledges the work undertaken by the Panel and confirms that the work of the group is now complete and asks the Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources) to continue to manage the Risk Review process on a biannual basis.</p>

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To update on the work of the Risk Process Review Panel. To bring the risks that the URC faces to the attention of Mission Council and the wider URC.
Main points	The risk review process has been completed for the first time under the updated process. Major risks that the URC faces have been identified. The Risk Process Review Panel has completed its task and is being stood down as the new process becomes 'business as usual'.
Previous relevant documents	Paper L2 Mission Council March 2018 Paper L2 Mission Council May 2019 Paper M2 Mission Council March 2020
Consultation has taken place with...	The Risk Process Review Panel; Convenors and secretaries of various committees /groups and synod representatives who attended training sessions

Summary of impact

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

1. Towards the end of 2017 it was determined that the existing risk review process was in need of updating.
2. In 2018 a risk process review panel was formed. Its members are: Alan Yates (chair), Jane Baird, Michael Davies, Gordon Wanless, Sandi Hallam-Jones, John Samson, Neil Mackenzie and Bill Potter.
3. The panel set about developing a new process. The new process seeks to distinguish between 'issues' ie management problems that are being dealt with on a day to day basis and 'risks' ie those events that might occur and seriously compromise the life of the United Reformed Church.
4. It was further determined that some of the risks are more properly the concern of General Assembly and/or Mission Council rather than United Reformed Church Trust (URCT) and that URCT would have its own Risk Register which would also incorporate risks from other parts of the URC which may result in a call for financial support from URCT.
5. The new process with initiated in August 2019 with requests for the updated schedules to be completed by the end of 2019.
6. The inherent risk (the rating of the risk if no action is taken) and the residual risk (the rating of the risk having taken into account steps to mitigate the likelihood or the impact of the risk) have been assessed by each of the relevant committees or groups.
7. The returns were consolidated, and two Risk Registers created:
 - a) United Reformed Church Trust; and
 - b) General Assembly/Mission Council.
8. United Reformed Church Trust has reviewed its own register and Mission Council is now asked to review and note the risk register which pertains to the life of the United Reformed Church. There is inevitably some overlap of risks as the financial affairs of the United Reformed Church impact directly the work of United Reformed Church Trust.
9. The risk Scores have been categorized as:
 - a) 1-4: Acceptable
 - b) 5-8: Undesirable
 - c) 9-12: Unacceptable
 - d) Over 12: Catastrophic
10. Those risks with an inherent rating of nine or over are detailed in the spreadsheet at the end of this paper.
11. The Major Risks identified are:

- a) Assembly Committees and other groups etc unable to function effectively due to lack of suitably skilled and diverse volunteers. *The Nominations Committee strives to find volunteers to sit on committees and other bodies and represent the URC, but this is increasingly difficult and raises the question as to whether the current structure is sustainable.*
 - b) Unsustainable pressure on central funds due to increased funding requirements of final salary pension schemes. *While no mitigation is shown on the spreadsheet major activity continues to address concerns about the funding of the Pension Schemes.*
 - c) Unsustainable pressure on central funds due to penalties imposed as a result of Safeguarding errors. *Safeguarding continues to be very high profile and major activities have updated and tightened safeguarding procedures; however, the possibility of safeguarding errors cannot be eliminated completely, and the identification of historic safeguarding cases continues to be a possibility.*
 - d) Diminishing student numbers at Westminster College. *The financial position of Westminster College is a cause for concern. Whilst steps have been taken to diversify, 'Diminishing accommodation and conference business' is an additional risk (listed on the 'Less than 9' worksheet).*
12. At the time the 2020 Risk Exercise was undertaken the possibility of a long-term closure of all places of worship within the UK (and beyond) was not contemplated by anybody. COVID-19 has brought about such an event and the URC has found ways of managing the unprecedented circumstances in the short term. However, based on the categorization of risk we are using the impact on 'Service Level' would be classed as Major or Severe and the 'Financial' impact Moderate. The longer-term implications cannot yet be fully assessed. It is inevitable that the pandemic will make the risks that have been identified more difficult to manage due to reduced resources both financial and human.
13. In group work Mission Council members will be asked to consider some of the major risks the URC faces to:
- a) Confirm that they agree that these are risks to the URC.
 - b) Consider whether the identified mitigation is adequate; and, if not, suggest additional steps that could be taken to reduce the likelihood of a risk occurring or the impact if it does.
 - c) Consider whether there are structural changes which might help the URC to manage its risks better.
14. The risk process review panel is content that the updated process has worked well and can meet the needs of the URC and URCT. It concludes that its task is complete and that it can be stood down.
15. Responsibility for managing the process on a biannual basis rests with the Deputy General Secretary (Administration and Resources).
16. Training will be offered to new convenors, secretaries and others every other year around the time the process is initiated.
17. The panel thanks all those who have participated in this process – both the training and the completion of the returns.

18. It is with sadness that the panel notes the death of the Reverend Michael Davies. Michael had been concerned with the URC's Risk Management for many years and had much to contribute to the group. We are grateful for his knowledge and time which he gave unstintingly.

United Reformed Church Risk Register as at 31/12/2019				Consolidated Risk Register				Residual Risk					
Risk Number	Committee/Group	Risk Category	Risk	Probability	Impact	Risk Score	Person responsible for mitigation	Mitigation	Target Date	Probability	Impact	Risk Score	Notes
1a	Nominations Comm	Capability/Service Delivery	Assembly/Committees and other groups etc unable to function effectively due to lack of suitably skilled and diverse volunteers	5	5	25	Secretary	Members of committee seek widest possible input for suggestions of people to serve on committees/groups	01/09/2019	4	5	20	Needs support of whole membership of nominations committee
5a	Finance Comm	Financial	Unsustainable pressure on central funds due to increased funding requirements of final salary pension schemes	3	5	15	Treasurer	Consultations with other parts of URC family in process but outcome will not be known until late-2020 at earliest	31/12/2020	3	5	15	Deputy Treasurer and others are working with the Treasurer in the consultations
5b	Finance Comm	Investments	Unsustainable pressure on central funds due to increased funding requirements of final salary pension schemes	3	5	15	Treasurer	Consultations with other parts of URC family in process but outcome will not be known until late-2020 at earliest	01/01/2021	3	5	15	
5c	Finance Comm	Legal/Regulatory	Unsustainable pressure on central funds due to increased funding requirements of final salary pension schemes	3	5	15	Treasurer	Consultations with other parts of URC family in process but outcome will not be known until late-2020 at earliest	02/01/2021	3	5	15	
10a	Finance Comm	Financial	Unsustainable pressure on central funds due to penalties imposed as a result of Safeguarding errors	3	5	15	DGS (Discipleship)	Although reliant on others for appropriate policy and practices being in place, the finance committee monitors the level of available reserves to ensure money would be available if things go horribly wrong somewhere.	01/09/2019	2	5	10	
6	Westminster College	Financial	Diminishing student numbers	4	4	16	URC Education and Learning Committee	The College is largely dependent upon the Church and the availability of suitable candidates for the ministry. However alternative courses have been created to appeal to independent students to grow student numbers.	24/09/2019	3	3	9	
9	Finance Comm	Capability/Service Delivery	Inability to manage the church's finances effectively due to absence of key member(s) of staff	4	3	12	Treasurer	CFO procedure to be documented - not yet done. Documentation for others and cross-training already exists.	31/08/2020	3	3	9	The Surveyors
12	RMHS	Financial	The Society suffers financial loss and poor value for money because properties are bought above market price	4	4	16	Other named individual	In-house surveyors now visit every property before purchase and compare the market. The Housing Services Officer is ex-estate agent and understands the market	01/09/2019	2	4	8	Housing Services Officer
13	RMHS	Financial	Inappropriate properties are purchased because housing policy and ceiling are not adhered to	4	3	16	Other named individual	The Housing Policy is now in place and no one can work outside this policy without express permission of the Board	01/09/2019	2	4	8	
1	Ases Arr Comm.	Financial	Overspend against Assembly budget	5	3	15	General Secretary	Tracking spending against budget. If overspend is possible then arrangements are adjusted accordingly.	01/09/2019	4	2	8	
16	RMHS	Financial	Delays in letting residential properties leading to financial loss	3	4	12	Other named individual	The Key performance indicators are being developed for Board approval in January. This will ensure that this indicator is strictly monitored	15/02/2020	2	4	8	Housing Services Officer
3	URC Trust	Investments	Loss in value of investments due to poor investment decisions	3	4	12	Convener	Investment decisions are delegated to an expert group v-the Investment Committee	01/09/2019	2	4	8	
8a	URC Trust	Legal/Regulatory	URCT is sued or enjoined in a case relating to a local church or synod arising from poor or illegal practice in that church or synod	4	3	12	Convener	Professional advice taken regarding the legal responsibilities of the synod and rebuttal of claim	01/09/2019	4	2	8	
8b	URC Trust	Reputation	URCT is sued or enjoined in a case relating to a local church or synod arising from poor or illegal practice in that church or synod	4	3	12	Convener	Professional advice taken regarding the legal responsibilities of the synod and rebuttal of claim	02/09/2019	4	2	8	
8c	URC Trust	Financial	URCT is sued or enjoined in a case relating to a local church or synod arising from poor or illegal practice in that church or synod	4	3	12	Convener	Professional advice taken regarding the legal responsibilities of the synod and rebuttal of claim	03/09/2019	4	2	8	
3a	Remuneration Comm	People	Inequity in treatment of staff due to line managers having an inconsistent approach to bonus applications	5	2	10	DGS (A&R)	Bonus application form is clear about requirements to be eligible for a bonus. HR provides managers with the same information	01/09/2019	4	2	8	
3b	Remuneration Comm	Legal/Regulatory	Inequity in treatment of staff due to line managers having an inconsistent approach to bonus applications	5	2	10	DGS (A&R)	Bonus application form is clear about requirements to be eligible for a bonus. HR provides managers with the same information	02/09/2019	4	2	8	
8a	Finance Comm	Capability/Service Delivery	Inability to manage the church's finances effectively due to inadequate/unsupported/obsolete financial systems	4	3	12	CFO	Financial software to be replaced at start of 2020. Payroll system to be upgraded during 2020	30/06/2020	2	3	6	Probability change from 4 to 2 by Jane Baird on consolidation
8b	Finance Comm	Financial	Inability to manage the church's finances effectively due to inadequate/unsupported/obsolete financial systems	4	3	12	CFO	Financial software to be replaced at start of 2020. Payroll system to be upgraded during 2021	01/07/2020	2	3	6	Probability change from 4 to 2 by Jane Baird on consolidation
1a	Finance Comm	Financial	Insufficient funds to meet the financial needs of the Church with consequent reserve reduction impacting our investment return	4	3	12	Treasurer	Robust budget processes basing income forecasts on cautious assumptions, devising expenditure estimates after consultation with budget holders with clear justification to Mission Council for any deficit budgeting	01/09/2019	2	3	6	CFO works closely with the treasurer to oversee the budget process
1b	Finance Comm	Investments	Insufficient funds to meet the financial needs of the Church with consequent reserve reduction impacting our investment return	4	3	12	CFO	Close monitoring of M&M trends and annual leaflet to local churches thanking for and encouraging M&M contributions	01/09/2019	2	3	6	Deputy Treasurer has lead oversight of stewardship issues for the finance committee
4	URC Trust	Investments	Loss in value of investments due to implementation of investment principles agreed by Mission Council or General Assembly.	3	4	12	Treasurer	Treasurer explains potential consequences of decisions to MC/GA before decisions are taken. Maintain regular contact with the fund managers and the URC Investment committee which reports regularly to URCT	01/09/2019	2	3	6	

Risk Number	Committee/ Group	Risk Category	Risk	Inherent Risk			Person responsible for mitigation	Mitigation	Target Date	Residual Risk			Notes
				Probability	Impact	Risk Score				Probability	Impact	Risk Score	
5	URC Trust	Investments	Loss in value of investments due to unprecedented fall in investment markets	3	4	12	Treasurer	Investments are in funds with a spread of assets thereby reducing exposure to fall in one asset class. Fund Managers' performance monitored regularly and compared with market performance	01/09/2019	2	3	6	
21a	CHMG	Capability/ Service Delivery	Tenants of flat are disruptive.	3	3	9	Other named individual	References taken up prior to completion of tenancy agreement. 6 months break clause in agreement. Facilities Manager maintains regular contact with tenants.	01/10/2019	2	3	6	Facilities Manager
21b	CHMG	People	Tenants of flat are disruptive.	3	3	9	Other named individual	References taken up prior to completion of tenancy agreement. 6 months break clause in agreement. Facilities Manager maintains regular contact with tenants.	02/10/2019	2	3	6	Facilities Manager
2a	Investment Comm	Financial	Decisions made by the Pensions Regulator may seriously impact our financial returns	3	3	9	Convener	TPR is trying to reduce the risk of Pension Funds being too dependent upon the sponsors to make up deficits in funding. Discussions are ongoing to help TPR understand our structure and likely risks of being unable to fund the pensions	31/12/2020	2	3	6	We need to work out how best to work within the Pension Regulator guidelines yet obtain good performance. This may require changes of process.
17	RMHS	Financial	Loss of potential income because donors no longer see the relevance of the work of the Society	3	3	9	General Mgr- RMHS	Articles about the work of the RMHS in Reform. RMHS holds a stall at the General Assembly and promotes its work at every opportunity.		3	2	6	Impact reduced from 3 to 2 on consolidation by Jane Baird to recognised that the overall impact for the Trust is less significant than it would be for RMHS
1a	URC Trust	Legal/Regulatory	URCT acts in a way that is in breach of Charity Regulation/ Legislation or other	3	3	9	Convener	Trustees attend regular training. Legal adviser in attendance at meetings and legal advice sought	01/09/2019	2	3	6	
1b	URC Trust	Legal/Regulatory	URCT acts in a way that is in breach of Charity Regulation/ Legislation or other	3	3	9	Convener	Trustees attend regular training. Legal adviser in attendance at meetings and legal advice sought	02/09/2019	2	3	6	
1b	ESL Comm.	Financial	Westminster College experiences fire	1	5	5	Principal - Westminster College	Heat & Smoke detectors throughout the college connected to a central alarm system. Fire instructions widely promulgated. Regular fire drills. Formal report to Management Committee.	02/09/2019	1	5	5	Fire is unlikely to take place but the impact is significant with extreme expenditure to hire alternative facilities and to repair or replace the college or damaged parts of the college..
1b	Investment Comm	Financial	Selection of investments can lead to poor financial performance of our investments	3	3	9	Convener	Working with professional fund managers who understand our URC Policies and the Ethical Principles set out by Mission Council	01/09/2019	2	2	4	The investment committee works in close co-operation with Professional Fund managers and advises the URC Trust and the Pensions Trust
1c	Investment Comm	Financial	Selection of investments can lead to poor financial performance of our investments	3	3	9	Convener	Monitoring the performance of and liaising with our Fund Managers is a vital way to ensure that we are well prepared for the challenges of the financial markets	01/09/2019	2	2	4	Working with trusted and professional fund managers limits this risk
5a	Investment Comm	People	Finding suitably qualified and experienced people to serve on the committee	3	3	9	Secretary	The Secretary monitors this in her dealing with the Nominations Committee when vacancies arise.	01/09/2019	2	2	4	This is the role of the members of the committee and the Trusts we advise
5b	Investment Comm	People	Finding suitably qualified and experienced people to serve on the committee	3	3	9	Convener	Committee members attend a variety of training courses and seminars during the course of the year and they are asked to complete a training form and advise the Secretary of those attended.	01/09/2019	2	2	4	We are always on the lookout for suitably skilled members for our committee
7	Investment Comm	Legal/Regulatory	Meeting Legal and regulatory requirements	3	3	9	Convener	Using appropriate legal input and support from professional advisers	01/09/2019	2	2	4	The Pensions Trust and the URC Trust have legal advisors whose advice is a regular part of Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries
3c	Mission Comm.	Financial	Person/people kidnapped while travelling overseas on URC business.	1	5	5	Other named individual	Travel insurance in place. Crisis Management team and procedure in place. Travellers briefed about location in advance of trip	03/09/2019	1	4	4	
18a	CHMG	People	Harm to tenant or others due to inadequate maintenance of central properties	3	3	9	General Mgr- RMHS	RMHS has established a programme of regular building inspections	30/09/2019	1	3	3	
19	CHMG	Financial	Tenants of 2nd floor default	3	3	9	DGS (A&R)	Financial solvency checked prior to completion of tenancy agreement	30/09/2019	1	3	3	
18b	CHMG	Legal/Regulatory	Harm to tenant or others due to inadequate maintenance of central properties	3	3	9	General Mgr- RMHS	RMHS has established a programme of regular building inspections	30/09/2019	1	3	3	
11	RMHS	Financial	Properties are sold below market price because adequate due diligence was not done	3	3	9	Other named individual	In-house surveyors now visit every property before sale, for their appraisal. The Housing Services Officer is ex-estate agent and understands the market	01/09/2019	1	3	3	The Surveyors
14	RMHS	Financial	Rent arrears accrue because of inaccurate rent debit charges and poor collection activities	3	3	9	Other named individual	Finance team now provide monthly rent reconciliation information to enable staff to deal with or prevent issues early	01/09/2019	1	3	3	Housing Services Officer
4b	Ass Arr Comm.	Financial	GA cannot take place as planned to unexpected unavailability or inaccessibility of the venue.	1	5	5	General Secretary	Ensure that the contract clauses cover such eventualities.	01/09/2019	1	3	3	
1a	Investment Comm	Reputation	Selection of investments can create a reputational risk	3	3	9	Convener	Ensuring that the investments chosen meet with URC Policies and the Ethical Principles set out by Mission Council	01/09/2019	1	2	2	The whole committee takes this responsibility and advises both URC Trust and Pensions Trust. There are regular meetings with Investment Managers to ensure the risk is minimised.
3a	Investment Comm	Financial	Poor selection of fund managers	3	3	9	Convener	The Committee analyses the performance of fund managers both in respect of financial performance and adherence to the Ethical and Responsible principles we have defined	01/09/2019	1	2	2	We regularly check the performance of fund managers.

Paper L1

URC's safeguarding training framework

Safeguarding Advisory Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Ioannis Athanasiou safeguarding@urc.org.uk John Bradbury john.bradbury@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. On behalf of the General Assembly, Mission Council, adopts the safeguarding training framework for use across the United Reformed Church.2. Mission Council instructs the Safeguarding Advisory Group to oversee the implementation of the framework in partnership with Synods.3. Mission Council resolves that training for those office bearers, staff and volunteers indicated within the framework shall be mandatory. It instructs the Safeguarding Advisory Group to ensure appropriate monitoring and compliance.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The Past Case Review indicated the need for standardised mandatory safeguarding training for those working with children, young people and adults at risk of harm (page 21 in the Learning Group report). The Safeguarding Advisory Group was instructed by the Mission Council (November 2018) to implement the recommendations of the learning group. This paper aims to introduce and describe the Safeguarding Training Framework and provides a table of those roles for whom the training is mandatory.
Previous relevant documents	Resolution 29 and its two appendices, General Assembly, Book of Reports 2020 (pages 227-254) Paper R3 at Mission Council, March 2020 Paper R2 at Mission Council, November 2019 Paper R2 at Mission Council, May 2019 Paper R2 at Mission Council, November 2018.
Consultation has taken place with...	Members of SAG Safeguarding Training Review Working Group

	Synod Safeguarding Officers Safeguarding Practice Group (SSPG) Synod Moderators Church Safeguarding Coordinators Safeguarding Training Coordinators of other denominations.
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Summary of impact

Financial	Synods will make their own funding arrangements related to safeguarding training provision for local churches. They will also have the capacity to access Assembly-level support if required.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	The URC is a member of a national ecumenical group that shares good practice and resources for safeguarding training.

We recognise that it is everyone’s responsibility to safeguard others. The United Reformed Church needs to ensure that some people holding specific roles and responsibilities are specifically equipped to protect vulnerable groups.

In 2018 Mission Council, in alignment with the recommendations of the PCR Report, agreed that safeguarding training is mandatory for those working with children and young people. The adoption of the Safeguarding Strategic Plan (2020-2025) in November 2019 prioritises appropriate and accessible safeguarding training for all those who are accountable for and working with children, young people and adults (strategic priority 5). The Safeguarding Strategic Plan (2020-2025) refers specifically to the need for a standardised training programme to be used across the denomination.

As part of this process, Mission Council understood that this was a significant undertaking and approved the appointment of a Training and Development Coordinator a year ago to oversee this process, consult with and support Synods to standardise and implement the training programme. A Safeguarding Training Review Group was created which is comprised of Synod Safeguarding Officers, Synod Training Officers and members of the Safeguarding Advisory Group. Their task has been to develop this training framework to be used across the denomination. The group is chaired by the Training and Development Coordinator, Penny McGee, and reports to the Safeguarding Advisory Group.

The Framework has been reviewed by all Synod Safeguarding Officers and their feedback has been incorporated into the document. Local church safeguarding coordinators were also consulted with 18 responses being received. Feedback has also been sought from survivors of abuse who have reviewed the document in its entirety and provided feedback. The majority of those who have reviewed the framework believe that it is sensible and robust and they believe that they will be able to implement it in their local areas. Equally, the majority of those who have reviewed the framework understand and respect the need for a standardised approach to safeguarding which is supported by the PCR as well the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA).

The Safeguarding Training Framework details the tiered structure of the training; basic, intermediate and advanced. It is hoped that basic training will be taken up by a wide range of people involved with the life of the church such as members, volunteers and staff. Some role holders in the life of the church, paid or voluntary, are required to undertake safeguarding training; for these individuals that will be either at intermediary

or advanced level, we recognise the commitment of time that many volunteers give to enable church life to thrive, and that this may feel like an imposition that takes the valuable time of busy people. We hope that the church will see that asking certain role holders to give a few hours every few years to think carefully about how we can be a safe church is part of us responding appropriately to those who in the past we have all too frequently failed to keep safe. The aim is that we become a safer church for all.

The framework clarifies the purpose and content of each training package as well as a detailed list of specialist modules that are currently being developed. A tiered system will ensure that safeguarding training reflects the roles of individuals in a church community that sees safeguarding as being everybody's responsibility. The tiered system also aligns with Good Practice 5 and the requirement of the Synods to offer regular safeguarding training arranged and agreed by the Synod Safeguarding Officers, while covering all aspects of good practice. The packages have been created with PowerPoints, training guides and workbooks which have already been shared in Synods and endorsed by Synod Safeguarding Officers/Advisers. Due to the global pandemic, the modules have been developed so that they can be used in face to face and online settings. Indeed, the basic and intermediate modules are currently being used across the denomination and the feedback from participants is overwhelmingly positive.

After two years of consultation, preparations and trialled delivery in some synods, the Safeguarding Advisory Group (SAG) decided on 2 October to set up an Implementation Plan which will address all practicalities of rolling out this training framework across the denomination in consultation and close collaboration with Synod Safeguarding Officers/Advisers. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will be developed alongside a Safeguarding Training Privacy Notice for participants. A centralised recording system is currently under development in collaboration with Synod Safeguarding Officers/Advisers and will be ready to be used across the denomination following this Mission Council's decision. The URC central database has been updated and customised so that the recording and monitoring of training is supported without needing additional software or further funding.

Safeguarding training framework and practice guidance

Structure and scope of document

This document sets out the context in which the safeguarding training programme of the United Reformed Church (URC) is practiced and reviewed. The purpose of this document is to ensure consistency in safeguarding training policy and practice throughout the URC and supports the overall goal that all church workers, paid and voluntary, have a standard of safeguarding training that is sufficient to enable them to carry out their individual roles. Regardless of the role, it is helpful for everyone to understand safeguarding in order to protect children, young people and adults at risk.

The framework aligns with our safeguarding policy and guidance, Good Practice 5 (GP5) and recognises the responsibilities placed upon faith-based organisations to comply with "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (2018) (WTSC). This states that;

"Every VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise), faith-based organisation and private sector organisation or agency should have policies in place to safeguard and protect children from harm. These should be followed, and systems should be in place to ensure compliance in this. Individual practitioners, whether paid or volunteer, should be

aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding and protecting children from harm, how they should respond to child protection concerns and how to make a referral to local authority children's social care or the police if necessary." (WTSC 2018 paragraph 61, page 71)

This training framework seeks to go further to detail the training which will support all participants to fully comply with their safeguarding responsibilities. This framework recognises the Care Act 2014 as the legal basis for adult safeguarding in England whilst the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 cover the provisions of this Act in Wales. This document seeks to codify the URC's commitment to promoting the safety and wellbeing of those with "care and support needs" but also those who may not fall within legal definitions but who, nonetheless, may be more vulnerable to experiencing abuse or neglect.

To reflect the needs of each Synod, congregation and affiliated group, their participants and their worshipping communities, the safeguarding training programme of the United Reformed Church has been segmented into basic, intermediate and advanced training packages that can be delivered in person or online. The intended audience of this document is those directly involved with safeguarding training such as Synod Safeguarding Officers and local church safeguarding coordinators. However, this document is relevant to anyone who wishes to understand more about the process and content of safeguarding training in the URC. A full list of the types of safeguarding training and the requested attendees can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this document.

1. URC's Safeguarding Training Policy

1.1 An ethos of care and service

Safeguarding people is integral to the URC's mission. The URC strives to create a church environment that is safe for all and that supports and recognises the experiences of those who have been abused or neglected. We also support those who have abused to live an offence free life with appropriate care and support.

In order to achieve this goal, URC will offer regular mandatory safeguarding training for all those working with children and adults at risk as well as those responsible for their care, to know how to promote the welfare of those in their care, and reduce the likelihood of harm, abuse or neglect. They also need to know how to respond effectively to concerns or allegations of abuse should they arise.

Faith based communities aim to offer a place of safety and trust for everyone, where people care for each other regardless of their circumstances. They are 'open communities' where everyone is welcome. This also means that Church communities are vulnerable to those who seek to harm others and the potential for grooming of adults and children, and those who work with and care for them, is high in communities where people believe the best in each other. The URC is a small denomination where people often know each other very well, may be related to each other and may carry out several roles within the Church. This can lead to a conflict of interests in some cases or even hinder the reporting and investigating process of allegations.

The presence of robust safeguarding policies is one part of supporting a safer church for all. These need to be supported with a training provision that reflects the different roles

that everyone has and fosters a culture and ethos that has the protection of the vulnerable and marginalised at its heart.

1.2 Needs of the training participants and trainers

Due to the widespread nature of abuse, it is very likely that there will be people participating in the training that have experienced abuse either as children or as adults, or have been impacted by the abuse of someone they know. Training is designed to equip participants with skills and knowledge such that they can adequately protect people from any form of abuse, harm or neglect. It is not intended to be unduly upsetting or triggering for participants.

All training includes a warning to participants that the content may be upsetting, and participants should feel able to recognise whether they are finding a topic particularly difficult for whatever reason. Learning aims and objectives allow participants to prepare for the content ahead and to make an informed decision about how to manage any emotional implications for themselves. Trainers are available, during breaks, to speak with participants who may be finding some of the material difficult and there will be signposting to different support groups and agencies that can provide further help and support. Equally, when individuals are encouraged to attend training, they can be familiar with the content of the provision and they can discuss any areas of potential concern ahead of the training date.

The individual needs of the participants are considered in training materials and those who have additional needs will be supported to be able to access the content fully. It is the role of church safeguarding coordinators to be aware of any additional needs of participants. They need to pass this information to synod safeguarding officers who will make any reasonable adjustments to the delivery of training in conversation with the participants.

When training is conducted in person, it is far easier to support participants who may become distressed. Participants can speak to trainers or leave the room if they find the topics difficult. In an online setting, this can be harder, however, it is not unmanageable. Trainers can support those in online forums by giving a content warning at the beginning and advising participants that they can leave the training if they feel that they need to. If participants do not wish to draw attention to themselves by leaving the meeting, then audio can be paused, and an instant message sent to the trainer advising that they feel unable to continue with the training. The trainer can then support the person at the end of the training session and signpost them to support agencies that can provide out of hours support if this is required. For those who have experienced trauma, it may be that a discussion with that person is required to support them to access training in the safest way possible for them.

2. Basic training

Basic training represents the training that will be available to all within the life of the church and the hope is that there will be a wide take up. It also forms the first part of the intermediary and advanced training that some role holders who work with children, young people and adults at risk will be required to undertake. Basic training is designed to give an overall understanding of safeguarding and would be beneficial for anyone seeking to enhance their knowledge of good practice and to ensure the safety of church. A table that lists the type of training for different roles within the URC is contained in 'Section 8' of this document.

2.1 Components of basic training

Basic training will equip participants with the following:

- An understanding of why safeguarding is important in a church context. This includes an understanding of the processes and procedures of the United Reformed Church and how these could be subject to exploitation by those wishing to groom.
- The current legislation, policy and guidance that underpins our responsibilities and duties as well as an appreciation of the URC Safeguarding Policy (GP5) and its appendices which are applicable across the denomination.
- A knowledge of the types of abuse and neglect that can be experienced as well as an understanding of the signs that could be displayed by children, young people and adults at risk.
- The ability to;
 - **recognise** the signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect.
 - **respond** supportively to potential survivors of abuse as well their families, or to potential perpetrators of abuse and anyone else impacted by safeguarding concerns.
 - **record** any safeguarding information and disclosures in an appropriate manner which preserves best evidence.
 - **report** safeguarding concerns internally through the appropriate safeguarding channels or, in the case of emergency, to feel able to refer directly to the Police or Children's Services.
- An understanding that safeguarding is taken seriously by the URC and that anyone who reports a concern will be supported and taken seriously without fear of reprisals. This is linked to an understanding of the need for confidentiality and transparency during the entire process.
- A collaborative environment with the opportunity to discuss real case studies in a safe space where participants will be supported to manage their own emotions and feelings whilst fostering a collective ethos for safeguarding.
- An awareness of the impact of grooming, both individually and as a worshipping community.
- An understanding of good practice and how maintaining a safe environment daily supports the safety of children, young people and adults at risk.
- An understanding of the role of church Safeguarding Coordinators and Synod Safeguarding Officers, and how they can support you in your roles within the church.
- An understanding of the importance of getting our responses right. This will be illustrated through the voice of survivors, their experiences of abuse, how the abuse affected them and how inadequate safeguarding practices impacted their lives, sometimes having the effect of retraumatising them.

2.2 Delivery of basic training:

The basic training package has been adapted to be delivered online or in person, according to need and circumstance.

The training package for physical delivery has been supplemented with case studies and activities to embed learning and to encourage a culture of collaboration, peer learning and discussion.

The case studies relate to specific issues raised within the training. Synod Safeguarding Officers can choose their own case examples from their experience of working in different safeguarding environments. Case studies should be carefully chosen to ensure that they are appropriate for participants and to mitigate against the possibility of examples being used that participants may be personally aware of.

Each session is estimated to last approximately 60-90 minutes but can be longer if there is good discussion and everyone consents to continue. Where training is being delivered online, it is suggested that there should be a maximum of 12-15 participants, but this is ultimately up to the trainer to decide. This enables the trainer to ensure that all participants are being adequately supported and to manage the delivery of the content. When the course is delivered online, the trainer has the autonomy to decide whether it should be delivered over two sessions depending on the needs of the group.

3 Intermediate safeguarding training

3.1 Components of intermediate safeguarding training

For certain role holders within the life of the church Intermediate training will be required (please see the table in Appendix one). The intermediate training aims to enhance the knowledge already gained in the basic training and focus on how to maintain safer practices within the general day to day activities of the congregation or group.

Intermediate training will equip participants with the following:

- An understanding of legal obligations placed upon faith-based organisations including the role of Trustees and Elders as those with “primary responsibility” for safeguarding (Charity Commission).
- An understanding of the unique role that churches play bringing together the community and the safeguarding concerns that this can present.
- An understanding of how good practice can be implemented in the following areas.
 - Security in church buildings
 - Food hygiene
 - Safe transportation
 - Insurance and hire of premises
- Introduction to the requirements of Safer Recruitment and how this needs to be carried out in their Church. Participants will understand the need, both practically and legally, for safer recruitment to be carried out, in respect of volunteers and paid workers, the barriers to achieving this and how to overcome these.
- An understanding of how to keep adequate records and seek appropriate consent in relation to Church activities.
- A review of how to respond to safeguarding concerns using the 4R (recognise, respond, record, report) approach and inappropriate behaviours to challenge.
- An understanding of how to manage allegations made against church staff, paid or voluntary, or lay or ordained.
- An understanding of how to recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns online, as well as guidance regarding how to stay safe online.

3.2 Delivery of intermediate training

The intermediate training can be delivered online or in physical settings depending on the need of the trainer and the participants. The online module contains the same core content as the group delivery package, but the group delivery package is supplemented

with further case studies and a workbook to embed learning. Where this training is being delivered online, it is suggested that there should be a maximum number of 12-15 participants, but this is ultimately the trainer's decision. This enables the trainer to ensure that all participants are being adequately supported and to manage the delivery of the content. When the course is delivered online, the trainer has the autonomy to decide whether it should be delivered over two sessions depending on the needs of the group.

4. Advanced safeguarding training

The purpose of the advanced safeguarding training is to support those who have safeguarding leadership roles to manage their responsibilities and oversee safeguarding arrangements and practice on a permanent basis. It is a requirement for those who hold specific safeguarding leadership responsibilities (please see the table in Appendix one). As part of our commitment to embedding a culture of safeguarding within the whole Church it is also a requirement for all ministers and CRCWs, who do not explicitly hold safeguarding leadership responsibilities but who are frequently, in reality, called upon to support those who do. It will draw upon concepts from basic and intermediate training and will explore these in greater detail.

Advanced training seeks to allow participants to understand more complex and nuanced safeguarding ideas and to take an active role in directing others in the church and promoting effective practices in and beyond their Church.

Advanced training also builds upon the premise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility but there are those who have specific responsibilities for creating and sustaining a healthy and positive culture in respect of safeguarding. This applies within the URC and in the working relations with statutory authorities and other denominations/agencies.

4.1 Components of advanced safeguarding training

Advanced training is designed to equip participants with the following:

- An understanding of how attitudes and values can impact safeguarding decision making and how to recognise our own biases and prejudices.
- A deeper understanding of managing the safer recruitment process and its importance in creating safer places with suitable people in them.
- A working knowledge of how to support those who may pose a risk to children or adults at risk whilst maintaining policies that place safeguarding at the heart of the Church.
- An understanding of policies and practices in managing allegations for workers who serve the Church on a paid or voluntary basis.
- An understanding of working with multiagency partners, including how to manage thresholds of harm and collate information in the most useful way. This includes how to work with the Designated Officer (previously LADO).
- An advanced understanding of safeguarding adults at risk including how to manage issues of capacity and when to override consent in a person's best interest.
- The ability to respond to grooming in a systemic way recognising its impact on the whole organisation. This includes being aware of the stages of grooming and how to have and maintain safe relationships with appropriate boundaries in place.

- An understanding of how to recognise and respond appropriately to domestic abuse, including an awareness of how deeply held values can create a culture where abuse is condoned.
- An understanding of how to develop effective policies and procedures that support Church to be as safe as possible.
- An understanding of the overall structure of the Church and the role of safeguarding designated persons (Church Safeguarding Coordinators and Synod Safeguarding Officers and Advisers), and how they can support local Churches to effectively safeguard their worshipping groups.
- An advanced understanding of how to recognise, respond, record and report safeguarding concerns, deal with allegations, complaints and disciplinary procedures, and how to support others in the Church.

4.2 Delivery of advanced training

The advanced training package will support Synods to deliver the package physically or online depending on local needs.

The advanced modules require a far more in-depth discussion to embed learning and ideally this would be delivered in person. This would enable a more collaborative environment where individuals could share knowledge and good practice with each other.

However, if this is not possible then these modules will be adapted to be delivered online, with activities and case studies that support participants' learning.

5. Flexibility of delivery

The demographic of the denomination is vastly different across Synods, with an array of different training and learning needs identified. As such, where one Synod may be able to offer modular training sessions over the course of several weeks, another Synod may only be able to offer one training session which covers the entirety of the basic and intermediate content. In order to ensure that safeguarding training is made as accessible as possible there needs to be some flexibility in how Synods deliver the training provisions. Synods will have the capacity to adopt the package to their needs as long as the core content is covered.

6. Ensuring minimum standards across the denomination

As part of the PCR Learning Group recommendations, there is a clear argument for why safeguarding should be a special topic area that transcends ordinary URC structures. A standardised approach would offer much improved survivor experience, capacity to learn from frontline practice and the ability for all those involved in safeguarding in the URC to present robust evidence of good practice. It is therefore important that a standard is set for training with regards to contents and requirements. This can only be effectively achieved through a standard package, which enables Synods to deliver safeguarding training in line with URC's safeguarding policy (Good Practice 5).

Synod Safeguarding Officers lead on safeguarding within their Synods. In order to achieve the above goal, they have the responsibility of arranging the delivery of safeguarding training and may wish to designate others to deliver it. Synod Safeguarding Officers should ensure that the process of selecting trainers is based on

their proven ability to ensure the quality of the training provision. 'Train the Trainer' modules may be useful in these circumstances. Synod Safeguarding Officers should be available in person to support a delegated person until they are confident that they are able to manage the requirements of this training framework. Consideration should also be given as to whether Synod Safeguarding Officers would be available either in person or on the telephone during training sessions run by a trainer, to ensure that the person delivering training feels supported to manage questions that may arise that may not be their area of expertise.

The Safeguarding Training and Development Coordinator at Church House can provide ongoing support to Synods to deliver all levels of training and, when the need is identified, can be involved in training other persons to deliver training in more local settings. This supports the Synod Safeguarding Officers to manage their workloads and supports the overall goal of ensuring that as many people as possible are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

7. Monitoring and compliance

It is important that safeguarding training is monitored and refreshed every three years to enable people to remain confident about how to respond, and to keep up to date with good practice. Refresher training should be completed at a three-yearly interval and will keep knowledge and skills up to date. Refresher training should be undertaken at the highest required level. For example, a leader of youth work activities who would have been initially required to complete basic training, and then intermediate safeguarding training should be refreshed in the intermediate module only every three years.

7.1 Ensuring attendance and engagement with training

It is the responsibility of the Church Meeting and the central role of Church Safeguarding Coordinator(s) to ensure that the people involved in regulated activities with children or adults (including Ministers, CRCWs, staff and volunteers) have undergone safeguarding training. To this end, a booking system will be introduced to ensure participant attendance and engagement will be adequately and consistently recorded and reviewed. Attendance records will be kept at every training event and linked with the URC central database. The central safeguarding office will use a system that will provide monitoring records to churches and Synods with no further cost to the URC. The central database provides a platform tailored to training recording and monitoring. Practically speaking, Synod Safeguarding Officers or an approved trainer will deliver the relevant training, and then collate a record of who attended. This will be then be recorded on the URC database which will enable Synod Safeguarding Officers to have oversight of who needs training, at what level and when they are due for a refresher. Synod Safeguarding Officers will then be able to get in touch with local church safeguarding coordinators and advise them of what refresher training is needed within their church so that coordinators can then support those in their churches to attend.

Certificates will be given for those who complete training, as a way for participants to demonstrate their own personal development.

Safeguarding training is designed as a safe space for participants to learn and expand their understanding. Where participants do not engage, this will be discussed with them afterwards to ascertain if there are any issues preventing this and to find a way that they can successfully engage in learning. If individuals consistently fail to engage with training, and there is no explanation for this, or if they behave in an inappropriate

manner or are disruptive they will be spoken with after the training and this will be followed up with their line manager, the person accountable for them (a supervisor for a volunteering group for instance) or other appropriate person in the Church. In the case of Ministers and CRCWs this will be addressed with their Synod Moderator. Where participants do not attend the entire training session, they will not be awarded a completion certificate.

7.2 Outcomes of non-attendance

The table that lists specific roles attending specific levels of training sets up an expected standard for the whole denomination. Attendance is encouraged for all, but mandatory for those as set out in Section 8. According to Good Practice 5, a worker is a person who is appointed by the church to work with children or adults at risk on behalf of the church, on a paid or voluntary basis. This term includes Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs), youth workers, adult workers, and others, including volunteers, who are involved in regulated work and activities with children, young people and adults at risk. The basic training package has been designed so that it is appropriate for everyone, regardless of their current levels of understanding.

In case of workers' non-attendance, this will be addressed with their line manager or the person accountable for them or other appropriate person in the Church. If the individual concerned is a Minister or a CRCW, then the Synod Safeguarding Officer will inform the Synod Moderator who has pastoral oversight and who is responsible for warning and disciplinary processes. There will be a process of warnings and time limits for Ministers and CRCWs to complete safeguarding training. Further details will be contained in the Implementation Plan which will be devised by the Safeguarding Advisory Group and activated in consultation with the Ministries office at Church House.

As part of the safeguarding annual return process, church safeguarding coordinators will be expected to collate a record of safeguarding training within their church. This can then be reviewed by the Synod Safeguarding Officers. This will enable areas to be identified where there is a need for more support and the Training and Development Coordinator can work collaboratively with Synod Safeguarding Officers and local church coordinators to put a strategy in place to improve attendance rates.

7.3 Ensuring quality of safeguarding training across the denomination

Quality assurance will be monitored through the feedback from the participants which is collated at the end of every training session. This ensures that comments can be listened to and training programmes improved in the light of such feedback. A further quality assurance system will be embedded in the annual church returns process. This will enable the denomination to have a picture of the quality of the safeguarding training provision annually as well as to review the training needs of specific roles and assess the areas of strength and where further support may be needed.

The Safeguarding Advisory Group will support Synods where the returns indicate that there are outstanding training needs or that the quality of training needs to be improved. There will be an opportunity for areas of strength in the denomination to be showcased, such as through the safeguarding newsletter, and there could be a peer review system which would support the sharing of good practice and good ideas across the Synod. Mission Council and General Assembly will be regularly informed about the implementation of the safeguarding training framework and the uptake of training.

7.4 Indicators of success

Success indicators include:

- Training programmes coproduced by the Safeguarding Training Review Group and Synod Safeguarding Officers are in use across the denomination with accompanying guidance, handbooks and workbooks and these are kept up to date reflecting any changes in practice, policy and legislation.
- Adequate supervision and support are provided across the denomination to support all involved in safeguarding, relevant to their roles and responsibilities.
- Members, office-holders and workers of the church, paid and voluntary, will articulate an appropriate understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities and this will be contained in the feedback provided at the end of training sessions.
- There will be an increase in the number of Elders, and other leaders attending training. In turn this will improve the quality of feedback that is collected.
- There will be numerical evidence of training attended and a system to monitor attendance, non-attendance and renewals.
- Those with additional responsibilities will be able to access specialist training modules eg DBS verifiers, those providing pastoral care, those in charge of managing complaints and historical abuse.
- Training packages are shared with ecumenical partners who can certify the URC training as being of a good enough standard to be used in Local Ecumenical Partnerships and by other denominations.

8. Attendees

8.1 Basic training

Basic training is designed to be useful and accessible to the widest range of those who participate in the life of the church. This might include:

- Local church employees (such as administrative or facilities staff)
- Synod staff or officers
- Members of Synod or General Assembly committees
- Church Members
- Volunteers in local church projects.

The wider the range of people who can access it, the more successful we will be in embedding an ethos of safe practice within the whole church. For those with roles who are required to do mandatory training at Intermediate or Advanced level, basic training will form the first part of their training package.

8.2 Intermediate training

The content contained in the intermediate training package enhances and embeds the learning from the basic package and everyone would be encouraged to continue their learning journey. However, the following people are identified as participants who are required to attend due to their roles within the church. This list is not exhaustive, however. It is for Synods to determine whether there are additional role holders for whom Intermediate Training would be mandatory. This might include situations where Synods have forms of accredited lay leadership, where an individual is serving as an interim Moderator who does not otherwise fall within the categories below, or individuals who regularly lead worship but who are not formally authorised or recognised. The intention is that anyone whose role causes them to engage with children or vulnerable adults be trained to Intermediate level.

- Church Safeguarding Coordinators and their Deputies
- Members of the Safeguarding Advisory Group
- Active Ministers, including Synod Moderators, retired ministers who meet the requirements of active ministry and CRCWs
- Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs)
- Serving Elders
- Youth/Children/Adult/Pastoral Workers
- Section O Investigation, Commission and Appeal Panel Members
- Accredited and recognised Lay preachers
- Pastoral visitors
- Directors of the URC Trust Company, Directors of Synod Trust Companies, Trustees of Synod Charities and trustees of the local church charity.

8.3 Advanced Training

With regards to the advanced module, the following people are considered to hold safeguarding leadership responsibilities and need to have an advanced understanding of safeguarding;

Mandatory List of attendees

- Synod Safeguarding Officers and Advisers
- Managers of Synod Safeguarding Officers
- Synod Moderators
- Church Safeguarding Coordinators and their Deputies
- Members of the Safeguarding Advisory Group
- URC trustees, synod trustees, and Elders as local church trustees, including those with safeguarding oversight delegated by the elders meeting.

In addition, to foster a culture of safeguarding across the denomination, and to enable them to understand safeguarding processes at an advanced level, and support appropriately those with safeguarding leadership responsibilities (Church Safeguarding Coordinators and Synod Safeguarding Officers), active Ministers will also be required to attend advanced safeguarding training.

8.4 Elders' and Ministers' Learning

The members of the elders meeting in a local church (i.e. the minister together with the serving elders) have major responsibilities for safeguarding. Many Elders appoint safeguarding coordinators to oversee this work or have an Elder who holds safeguarding expertise and can then bring this to the Elders meetings, similar to the structure of other governing bodies. With this flexibility in mind, all Elders should complete the basic and intermediate training and at least one Elder from a local church should complete the advanced training module so that they are able to comply with their legal obligations effectively. The Elders meeting have the responsibility of deciding who will complete the advanced training.

Safer Sacred Space is not safeguarding training. It is a professional boundary training, mandatory for Ministers and CRCWs, which includes safeguarding awareness, but it does not substitute safeguarding training. Safer Sacred Space will continue to be delivered in synods in the preestablished manner without alteration. New learning opportunities for ministers and CRCWs (such as pastoral care for survivors of abuse) will be considered by the Safeguarding Advisory Group.

9. Specialist training modules

Due to varying needs and experiences across Synods, more specialist modules will be developed to meet specific and more specialised training needs..

Drawing from the PCR Learning Group recommendations, annual safeguarding reports of the Church (synods' and the denomination) and current practice, specialist modules will cover the following identified areas;

- Understanding and responding to spiritual abuse and bullying
- Pastoral care and support for survivors of historical abuse
- Supporting those impacted by domestic violence and abuse (DVA), this will include all of those affected by DVA e.g. women, men, child on adult DVA and DVA in same sex relationships.
- Responding to gangs and serious youth violence, including criminal exploitation.
- Recognising and responding to child sexual exploitation and grooming.
- Safeguarding and supporting adults at risk, including those impacted by mental health conditions, financial abuse and fraud and an awareness of how to support those who present as suicidal.
- Supporting those impacted by substance misuse issues and their families.
- Understanding the impact of trauma on the developing brain and the cumulative impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).
- Safer Recruitment, DBS Eligibility, PVG legislation on checks.
- Safeguarding Governance for URC and Synod Trust Directors and trustees.

10. Transferability of other relevant training

It is commonly agreed between Christian denominations that in single congregation LEPs, the church will decide which safeguarding policy to follow and all denominations involved are aware of this. Where an LEP decides to use a policy other than the URC, then they have an obligation to let all sponsoring denominations know which policy they are following. The delivery of safeguarding training should line up with the policy that the LEP follows.

In order to work effectively with our ecumenical partners, there is a move towards mutual recognition of each other's courses based on agreed levels. This would enable those who are mandated to undertake safeguarding training to move between different denominations without having to repeat training programmes. It would also enable individuals to choose which training they wished to attend as there would be a consistent standard and content agreed. This enables the delivery of the safeguarding strategic plan and the PCR Learning Group recommendations that closer working with our ecumenical colleagues supports a safer denomination.

The Synod of Scotland currently utilises the training provision offered by the Church of Scotland. A plan will be formulated in liaison with the Synod of Scotland to review their current arrangements to explore how existing training provision will fulfil the requirements of this URC framework. The purpose is to benchmark across the Church and enable the Synod of Scotland to be part of the process in setting up our 'own' standards and culture of safeguarding in the United Reformed Church.

11. Continuing development for Synod Safeguarding Officers/Advisors

The development of Synod Safeguarding Officers is a vital part of ensuring a consistent and robust safeguarding training programme across the denomination. As part of the Safeguarding Strategic Plan, Synod Safeguarding Officers are leaders in safeguarding across the denomination and they need opportunities to develop their skill set and share their expertise. The Synod Safeguarding Practice Group (SSPG) meeting is held every three months where training and personal development is discussed, and Synod Safeguarding Officers can suggest areas that they wish to develop. There is General Assembly funding available to support continuous professional development for synod safeguarding leads.

Appendix 1: Quick guide to safeguarding training participants and content

Basic training	Provides a basic awareness of child protection and safeguarding adults and is appropriate for those involved in regulated activities and optional for everyone. It forms the first part of mandatory training for certain role holders.	
Intermediate training	Mandatory for certain role holders. Provides a greater understanding of safeguarding people, premises and programmes.	
Advanced training	Mandatory for certain role holders. Provides an in depth understanding of leading and managing safeguarding, including how to embed good practice guidance into practice.	
Specialist training	Bespoke training created in response to areas of safeguarding policy and practice.	
Roles requiring mandatory training:	Intermediate Training	Advanced Training
Synod Safeguarding Officers/Advisors	✓	✓
Managers of Synod Safeguarding Officers/Advisors	✓	✓
Church Safeguarding Coordinators	✓	✓
Deputy Church Safeguarding Coordinator	✓	✓
Members of the Safeguarding Advisory Group, Synod Safeguarding Committees and Reference Groups	✓	✓
Active Ministers, retired ministers who meet the requirements of active ministry.	✓	✓
Church Related Community Workers (CRCWs)	✓	✓
Synod Moderators	✓	✓
Youth and Children Workers	✓	
Adult Workers	✓	
Managers of Children, Youth and Adults Workers	✓	✓
Pastoral Workers	✓	
Synod Clerks	✓	
Section O Investigation, Commission and Appeal Panel Members	✓	
Accredited and Recognised Lay Preachers	✓	
Pastoral Visitors	✓	
URC Trustees and Synod Trustees	✓	✓*
Elders	✓	✓*

*please see section 8.4 relating the training of Elders

Paper M1

Continuing on the Way of Jesus

Walking the Way steering group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Francis Brienen francis.brienen@urc.org.uk
Action required	For information only.
Draft resolution(s)	N/A

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	This paper provides a summary of the Walking the Way steering group's work since Mission Council met in July 2020.
Main points	The steering group's work in communications, resources and accompaniment/mentoring continues. Plans for the URC's 50th anniversary continue. The group has agreed the shape of its own work on online church, which will focus on developing disciples online. The group continues to consider the long-term future of discipleship as a focus across the URC.
Previous relevant documents	Mission Council 11/15 papers M1 and M2 Mission Council 3/16 paper M1 General Assembly reports 2016, p.11 Mission Council 11/18 paper I2 Mission Council 11/19 paper I3 Mission Council 03/20 paper I3 General Assembly reports 2020, p.195.
Consultation has taken place with...	Mission Education and Learning Communications Children's and Youth Work Finance.

Summary of impact

Financial	The budget proposed by Finance, if passed, will enable the steering group's work to continue until the end of the calendar year 2021.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	The ecumenical and interfaith implications of our work, including planning for the URC's 50th anniversary, are being considered.

1. General update

1.1 Since Mission Council last met in July 2020, the work of the Walking the Way steering group has continued under the following general headings:

1.1.1 Communications – over the past few months, the Project Manager has enjoyed Zoom conversations with the steering group's main contacts in synods and various networks, catching up on what's been happening and asking if there is anything the Walking the Way steering group can do to help. The latest edition of the Walking the Way newsletter was e-mailed to all churches. We can see at a glance that of the approximately 3,000 newsletters sent, almost 2,000 were opened, and were looked at nearly 7,000 times, with only five asking to be unsubscribed. The Walking the Way social media accounts ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)) have also been kept up to date with regular content on discipleship for a range of audiences.

1.1.2 Resources – the latest versions of the Walking the Way [resource map](#), [steering group resources](#) and [synod/local church](#) recommended resources are now available. Walking the Way resources for use around [Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday](#), as well as resources for use in [Harvest celebrations](#), have also been published. A URC information booklet entitled '[Doing online differently](#)' has been released to help open up fresh thinking about online technology in relation to discipleship development, along with [suggested additional materials](#) which might be useful in this. As individuals and local churches consider and engage with the emerging new reality, the steering group continues to highlight '[New reality, same mission](#)' and '[Continuing to support each other](#)' as potentially useful resources.

1.1.3 Accompaniment/Mentoring – the current crisis has been challenging in terms of progressing the pilot accompaniment programme being explored with the [London Institute for Contemporary Christianity \(LICC\)](#) in Southern and Mersey synods, but work has been ongoing to keep participants and their churches connected and supporting each other in these difficult times, as well as gathering information on how their participation in the pilot has helped to develop their perspectives on discipleship. All of this data continues to influence the steering group in considering accompaniment and mentoring in discipleship within the URC. Stepwise, which continues to be developed as a programmatic element of Walking the Way: living the life of Jesus today, also has much wisdom to offer, especially in accompanying people on their journey of discipleship.

1.1.4 URC's 50th anniversary planning – the planning group continues to meet as it explores various possibilities for denominational and regional celebrations of this important occasion. This will be explored further in group discussions at this meeting of Mission Council.

1.2 In all of this, and in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis, the bold and innovative responses of many individuals and local churches, in sharing the love of Jesus, holding communities together and responding to God's presence in every aspect of life, has been truly inspiring.

2. Online Church

- 2.1 At its meeting in September, the steering group was able to digest the content of discussions on online church so far, including with Synod Moderators, Synod Clerks, URC Youth and Church House Connective, in more detail.
- 2.2 As a result of this, the steering group has agreed three main points with regards to its own work on online church:
 - 2.2.1 The focus of the steering group must be firmly on discipleship. It is excellent that much is being done in exploring online worship and fellowship, but the steering group must focus, above all other concerns and priorities, on equipping whole-of-life disciples online.
 - 2.2.2 Existing and emerging approaches must be celebrated and supported. There are already so many platforms, approaches and materials available and emerging as we speak. We need to celebrate and build on these, rather than add more to the already growing list of choices people have.
 - 2.2.3 A network is needed to help share wisdom, experience and practice. When so much is going on, we need a network, rather than a task group, where people who are engaged directly in developing online churches can share insight and wisdom with a focus on discipleship.
- 2.3 A couple of steering group members have agreed to consider how these principles might be developed further.
- 2.4 In addition, the Walking the Way project manager will remain in contact with networks across the United Reformed Church which are engaged in online church development to share good practice and explore the discipleship implications of this work.

3. The future

- 3.1 The Walking the Way steering group is very grateful to Mission Council for its decision in July to encourage those responsible for the finances of the Church to find funding for Walking the Way until the end of the calendar year 2021.
- 3.2 The budget proposed to Mission Council at this meeting, if approved, will enable this to happen.
- 3.3 The steering group will use this time to continue its work and consider long-term ways of encouraging whole-of-life discipleship as a top priority across the United Reformed Church.

Paper N1

Appointment of the Moderator of the Synod of Scotland

Officers of the General Assembly

Basic information

Contact name and email address	The Revd Dr John P Bradbury (General Secretary) john.bradbury@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision.
Draft resolution(s)	Mission Council, acting on behalf of the General Assembly appoints the Revd Paul Whittle as Moderator of the National Synod of Scotland from 1 January 2021 until December 31 2023.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	The appointment of a Synod Moderator to engage in a piece of interim ministry with the Synod of Scotland.
Main points	
Previous relevant documents	
Consultation has taken place with...	The Officers of the Synod of Scotland and the Executive of the Synod of Scotland.

Summary of impact

Financial	
External (e.g. ecumenical)	

Following the call of the Revd David Pickering back to local pastorate ministry in September 2020, conversations between the Officers of the General Assembly and the Officers of the Synod of Scotland led to the conclusion that an appointment of a Synod Moderator for a shorter than usual period of time, and more swiftly than might be usual, would be helpful. This would be understood as appointing a Moderator of the Synod to undertake a piece of interim ministry work within the Synod.

David Pickering's service as Moderator was for a period of four years, which concluded at the September meeting of the Synod at which he was warmly thanked for his service.

The Synod has faced some complex and difficult governance issues in the last couple of years that had their roots deep in the past. Whilst an effective plan has been put in place

to enable the Synod to resolve these issues and move forward constructively, there is some pastoral hurt left by recent episodes.

Given this context, and the concern expressed by the Officers of the Synod and the Executive of the Synod, the Officers of the Assembly determined to explore a potential appointment for an interim period.

The Revd Paul Whittle commended himself to the Officers as someone to approach to consider whether he might feel called to service in this way. Paul was ordained and served his first pastorate in Scotland, a nation with which he has considerable affinity. He also brings long experience as a Synod Moderator, and has a sufficient period of service to offer before his anticipated retirement date to offer effective ministry, but equally to allow the Synod to move to making an appointment using the normal processes and for a standard term sooner rather than later. Having been approached, Paul agreed that this was a piece of ministry he felt he might have a call to exercise and agreed to explore the possibility further through an appointment process which might lead to a nomination.

The Executive of the Synod of Scotland were invited to appoint four members of a nominating group and did so: the Revd Fiona Bennett; the Revd Andy Braunston; Mrs. Lesley Richmond and Dr Jim Merilees. Given the circumstance and the pressure of time, they were joined by three of the Officers of the General Assembly to form a nomination group: The Revd Dr John Bradbury, the Revd Clare Downing and the Revd Michael Hopkins.

The Revd Whittle was invited to draft a minister's profile. Having considered this, the nominating group determined to meet with Paul, and in a Zoom meeting in late September, Paul made a presentation and was interviewed. The panel discerned a strong match between the gifts and graces that Paul brings to ministry and the needs of the Synod. It is our conviction that a call from God was discerned and Paul was invited to accept a nomination which he did.

It is our conviction that Paul's pastoral gifts, his long experience of the role of a Moderator, and his understanding of the Scottish context fit him well for the demands of this piece of ministry.

The appointment runs to the end of December 2023. This runs slightly beyond Paul's expected retirement date of August 2023. This is to allow the ministry to run for a full three years, a period of time which for this piece of interim ministry may be desirable. It does not prevent Paul from retiring in August 2023 if that seems appropriate, but means that would that extra period of time enable this piece of transitional ministry to reach a better conclusion, we would not need to seek an extension from Mission Council or General Assembly for this to happen.

Paper 01

URC 50th Anniversary: update

Walking the Way Steering Group

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Francis Brienen francis.brienen@urc.org.uk Andy Jackson andy.jackson@urc.org.uk
Action required	For discussion.
Draft resolution(s)	None.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	Update on the work of the 50 th Anniversary planning group and questions for discussion at Mission Council.
Main points	Appointment of a planning group, updates and questions about ideas for events and resources.
Previous relevant documents	Paper I4 to Mission Council, March 2020. www.urc.org.uk/images/MissionCouncil/March2020/I4_-_MC_March_2020_-_50th_Anniversary.pdf
Consultation has taken place with...	Since March 2020 conversations have taken place with the Synod Moderators, the URC History Society, the Publications Board and the Communications Committee.

Summary of impact

Financial	Currently no task meeting costs, as all are taking place by Zoom. Future costs will depend on plans made.
External (e.g. ecumenical)	Methodist colleagues have been informed of our plans. There are plans for a joint 50 th publication with the Congregational Federation, based on the past, present and future.

1. Appointment of planning group

- 1.1. Since March, the Walking the Way steering group has appointed a 50th anniversary planning group, comprising Ann-Marie Abbasah, Peter Ball, John Bradbury, Francis Brienen (co-convenor), Philip Brooks, Karen Campbell, Nicola Furley-Smith, Andy Jackson (co-convenor), Simon Peters and Sam Richards. Two more members are being sought.

- 1.2. The planning group will serve as a project co-ordination group rather and will oversee the Jubilee planning in its overall direction. Sub-groups will be formed to take on different parts of the planning. The planning group will report regularly to the Walking the Way steering group.
- 1.3 The Revds David Cornick and Robert Pope are working on a book to mark the 50th anniversary as is Steve Tomkins, editor of *Reform* and author of the critically acclaimed book about the Mayflower. The three are working together on various aspects of their books. The Revd Anne Sardeson is looking at a book about the hymnody and hymn-writers of the URC, and as *Reform* will be celebrating its 50th anniversary too, the team are starting to plan a series of articles about the anniversary of the URC.
- 1.4. The planning group would value the insights of Mission Council on the various ideas for the celebrations it is currently exploring. These include the following:

2. What form should celebrations take?

- 2.1 The planning group is envisaging the holding of a combination of local, regional and denominational events throughout the Jubilee year (2022). The first event to mark the celebration will be the URC Youth Assembly, taking place in January 2022. URC Youth's theme for 2022 is Jubilee.
 - 2.1.1. A provisional booking for Saturday 1 October 2022 has been made with the Methodist Central Hall in London, where on 5 October 1972 the Uniting Assembly took place. The day will include a programme of activities, culminating in an act of celebration and worship.
 - 2.1.2. We are also exploring the possibility of holding a service of worship at St Mary Undercroft at the House of Commons on 21 June 2022, marking exactly 50 years since the URC Bill was approved in the House of Commons.
- 2.2. The day at Westminster Central Hall would be part of a series of events to mark the Jubilee throughout the year. We hope that the event would be surrounded by regional events and activities run by synods and local churches across the denomination. A small subgroup is thinking about these further. Ideas that have been suggested include encouraging local churches to host a birthday party, having regional events that could be linked up online, having regional events that build up to the October event.

Questions to Mission Council:

- Do you think a combination of local, regional and denominational events would work?
- What suggestions can you make for any of these events?
- How do you think these events could be linked, both in content and practically?

3. Worship

- 3.1. A small group has begun thinking about worship for the Jubilee. Resources to help local churches, regional events and a central event shape worship will be important.

3.2. The idea of a hymn/song competition has also been raised.

Questions to Mission Council:

What do you think of these ideas? What other things could you suggest?

4. Looking forward

4.1. Marking the Jubilee will be an opportunity not only for looking back and giving thanks, but also for looking forward. What would we like to see as the legacy of this year of celebration? Should we aim to do 50 new things to mark 50 years as the United Reformed Church? What could these be? Activities in the community, setting up fresh expressions or new communities of faith, ways of living greener?

Question for Mission Council:

What five things would your group like to see as a legacy of the Jubilee?



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