

# Paper M2

Clerk

Standing orders consultation

United Reformed Church  
2016



# Paper M2

## Clerk Standing Orders Consultation

### Basic Information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Michael Hopkins <a href="mailto:clerk@urc.org.uk">clerk@urc.org.uk</a>
<b>Action required</b>	Completion of questionnaire by Thursday lunchtime
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	n/a

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	Information gathering exercise
<b>Main points</b>	The Clerk seeks the views of Mission Council members, via an anonymous questionnaire, on whether, and if so what, changes might be desired in the Standing Orders
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	n/a
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	The General Secretary

### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	n/a
<b>External (e.g. ecumenical)</b>	n/a

# Standing Orders Consultation

1. Feedback received by the Clerk after the 2016 General Assembly indicates clear and continuing dissatisfaction with the decision-making processes of the United Reformed Church from some members of the church.
2. However, I am cautious about suggesting rapid changes in response to any particular debate, because knee jerk reactions do not always make a sound basis for long term decision-making.
3. I am also aware that complaints from some members may or may not represent the views of a significant majority.
4. I am further aware that there can be an element of “peer pressure” both to like and to dislike Consensus Decision Making.
5. I am still further aware that there might be a wider range of views on a number of possible options.
6. Therefore, I am issuing an anonymous questionnaire to members of Mission Council, so that their views can be made known as openly as possible. This questionnaire is printed twice: once so that Mission Council members can keep a copy in their papers, and again so that a copy can be returned.
7. Please return your questionnaire to the box on the table at the back by the end of the morning session on Thursday, so that the results can be collated and analysed in time for a response to be given before Mission Council ends.
8. The questionnaire results will of themselves not be decision-making, it is **ADVISORY ONLY**. However, if any changes are proposed in future, the advice given will be used to shape those changes.

**QUESTIONNAIRE – FILE COPY**

*For all questions:*

*1 = strongly disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = strongly agree.*

The Standing Orders are currently too complicated

1      2      3      4      5

Consensus Decision Making should be used for all business where it is legally possible.

1      2      3      4      5

Consensus Decision Making is a useful “tool in the box” amongst other methods

1      2      3      4      5

Consensus Decision Making is helpful for complex discussions, but not for decisions

1      2      3      4      5

Consensus Decision Making should be abandoned

1      2      3      4      5

En bloc business is a helpful way to agree matters that do not require discussion

1      2      3      4      5

It would be helpful if Consensus Decision Making and Majority Voting could somehow be integrated

1      2      3      4      5

Differences between Consensus Decision Making and Majority Voting should be standardized, e.g. time limits for speeches and for proposing resolutions

1      2      3      4      5

When Consensus Decision Making was agreed in 2007, that system was effectively inserted into our existing Standing Orders. How would you feel about an attempt to edit them into a more coherent whole?

1      2      3      4      5

Do you wish to make any other comments?

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