

1. Constitution of Synod and opening worship

The Rev'd Andrew Mills, Synod Moderator, welcomed members of the synod meeting, especially those attending for the first time. He constituted the meeting and led the meeting in worship.

Worship included prayer and reflection, together with

- recognition of ministers who had recently moved out of the synod or would do shortly:
Rev'd Carole Marsden from Cumbria Area to serve in West Midlands Synod;
Rev'd Andy Hall from South Area to serve in Wessex Synod;
Rev'd Stuart Radcliffe from South Area to serve in Mersey Synod.
Rev'd Dave Coaker from Lancashire Area to serve in Eastern Synod.
- recognition of ministers who would soon retire:
Rev'd Ron Wilson from Cumbria Area;
Rev'd John Piper from Central Area
- recognition of ordination jubilees of ministers residing in the synod:
Rev'd David Jenkins - 50 years of ministry since ordination
Rev'd Keith Argyle - 50 years of ministry since ordination
Rev'd G Sharpe - 60 years of ministry since ordination
- remembrance of and thanksgiving for the life and ministry of Rev'd Brian Alfred Chadwick, a retired minister who resided in the synod prior to his death in February 2018.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

These were agreed as a correct record. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

3. Synod Manse Scheme - introduction to new proposals

Rev'd Brian Jolly, Synod Clerk, gave a detailed introduction to Resolution 7 [to be debated in the afternoon session]. He drew attention to the wording of the resolution and the notes of explanation which were included in the Book of Reports. Members of the Synod Meeting were encouraged to raise questions about the proposals with him or any of the officers over the lunch break if a face to face conversation would be helpful, by writing questions and positing them on the board provided for this purpose in the entrance hall, or at the beginning of the debate in the afternoon session.

4. Report of the Synod Executive Committee - part 1 [paras 1, 2 & 4-17]

The Clerk introduced the written report, and this was received by the Synod Meeting with thanks.

Following opportunity for questions and discussion in each instance he moved Resolutions 2, 3 and 4.

Resolution 2

Synod appoints Rev'd Martyn Coe to serve as Convenor of the Synod Ministries Committee until the end of the Synod Meeting in March 2021.

Resolution 2 was passed with 0 votes against.

(There were no abstentions)

Resolution 3

Synod appoints:

- i) Rev'd Alistair Smeaton [Area Convenor] to serve as a member of Cumbria Area Pastoral Committee until the end of the March 2021 Synod Meeting;**
- ii) Nick Andrews to serve as a member of Cumbria Area Pastoral Committee until the end of the March 2021 Synod Meeting;**
- iii) Rev'd Jennet McLeod to serve as a member of Cumbria Area Pastoral Committee [representing SWCUA and Cumbria Methodist District] until the end of the March 2021 Synod Meeting;**
- iv) Pam Dent [Lay Preaching Commissioner] to serve as a member of Cumbria Area Pastoral Committee for an additional term of one year, until the end of the Synod Meeting in March 2019.**

Resolution 3 was passed with 0 votes against.

(There were no abstentions)

Resolution 4

Synod appoints Eula Mesquita to serve as a member of South Area Pastoral Committee until the end of the March 2021 Synod Meeting.

Resolution 4 was passed with 0 votes against.

(There were no abstentions)

With the permission of the Synod Meeting the Clerk presented an additional resolution, not printed in the Book of Reports (Resolution 8). Following opportunity for questions and discussion he moved Resolution 8.

Resolution 8

Synod appoints Rev'd Dr Lesley Husselbee as Candidates Secretary, for a further term of three years, until the end of the Synod Meeting in March 2021.

Resolution 8 was passed with 0 votes against.

(There were no abstentions)

With the permission of the Synod Meeting the Clerk spoke about new data protection regulations [often referred to as **GDPR**], a matter not included in the written report of the Executive Committee. The Clerk explained that advice for local churches was available by going to the homepage of the URC website; however, there was some concern over the adequacy and accuracy of this advice, and as soon as these matters had been resolved he would be writing to all ministers in pastoral charge and church secretaries. Several questions were raised and responses made.

It was noted that paragraph 3 and Resolution 1 of the report of the Executive Committee would be presented and debated in the afternoon session.

5. Safeguarding Reference Group Report [paras 69-77]

The report was received with thanks. There were no questions arising from the report.

6. Keld Resources Centre Report [paras 78-82]

The report was received with thanks. There were no questions arising from the report.

7. Candidates Report [paras 83-86]

The report was received with thanks. There were no questions arising from the report.

8. Ordination and Induction of Daleen ten Cate

The Synod Meeting welcomed Daleen's family and friends for a Service of Worship in which Daleen ten Cate was ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacraments and inducted [through the pattern of Non-Stipendiary Ministry Model 3] to her workplace ministry, within the North Western Synod, as Mission & Discipleship Mentor [Lancashire]. The Moderator presided. Following the service lunch was shared.

9. Synod Manse Scheme – Resolution 7

The Moderator invited questions relating to Resolution 7 which had been introduced by the Clerk earlier in the meeting. Jean Mullineux, Chair of the Synod Trust, Rev'd Mike Aspinall, Synod Property Officer and the Clerk responded to questions, following which the Clerk moved Resolution 7 which was then debated.

Resolution 7

This resolution supersedes Resolution 4 passed by the meeting of Synod on 14th October 2017. The purpose remains the same – as approved by Synod several times: to get all manses into the Synod Manse Scheme.

Synod agrees to the following changes of policy in relation to manses:

- (a) When a manse currently occupied by a minister or church related community worker is transferred to the Synod Manse Scheme, the amount payable to the pastorate by the Synod under the transitional arrangements will be the higher of the amount calculated under the previous arrangements and 35% of the market value of the property. Any such payment will be, in effect, a grant from the Synod and will be for the general purposes of the local church(es).**
- (b) When a local church or pastorate agrees to transfer a manse which is not being used to house a minister or CRCW into the Synod Manse Scheme then that property will normally be sold and then:**
 - 65% of the net proceeds of sale will be transferred to the Synod Manse Fund and**
 - 35% of the net proceeds of sale will be placed in an account(s) in the name(s) of the transferring church(es), and will be available for the general purposes of the church(es).**
- (c) When a local church agrees to transfer its manse fund into the Synod Manse Scheme then:**
 - 65% of that fund will be credited to the Synod Manse Fund and**
 - 35% will be retained by the local church and will be available for the general purposes of the local church.**
- (d) The "grants" referred to in (a) above will be charged to the Synod Manse Fund,**

as were payments made under the previous transitional arrangements. These are actually more like re-distributions of the proceeds of sale of redundant manses than ordinary grants.

(e) The spending of any of these amounts received or retained by local churches on capital expenditure will be subject to the normal approvals by Area Pastoral Committees and Synod Resources Committee.

(f) The offer of 35% of the market value of a manse or manse fund transferred into the Synod Manse Scheme will only be available for local churches that pass enabling church meeting resolutions by 30 September 2018.

(g) The above proposals will be applied retrospectively to those manses and manse funds that have already been transferred into the Synod Manse Scheme.

(h) These proposals will only be implemented if they are affordable by the Synod. That requires that all or almost all of the "manses" not being used to house ministers or church related community workers are transferred into the Synod Manse Scheme and sold. This affordability will be decided by the Trust Management Committee.

(i) In line with General Assembly guidance and Synod policy that ex manses should not be retained as investment properties, the Synod / Trust will not give consent to any new lettings of manses that are not in the Synod Manse Scheme, once current tenants have moved out, other than in exceptional circumstances.

(j) The calculation of the capital charge element of the Ministry and Mission Fund assessment of each local church will be changed to include the market value of any (share of a) manse under its control, in the same way that manse funds are already included. The annual capital charge is 2% of the capital value. This change will be implemented in the calculation of the 2020 Ministry and Mission Fund assessments, which will be carried out in 2019 based on the capital values at the end of 2018.

(k) Future ministers and church related community workers called into the Synod will be housed only in manses owned by the Synod or held under the terms of the Synod Manse Scheme. This means that a manse currently occupied by a minister or CRCW, which is not part of the Synod Manse Scheme, will become redundant when that person moves out.

(l) Where a manse is not transferred into the Synod Manse Scheme, and it is no longer used to house a minister or church related community worker, the Synod may ask the District Council, pursuant to paragraph 5 part II Second Schedule of the URC Acts, to consult with the local church(es) and to consider whether the District Council will make a recommendation to the Synod that the manse should be sold. If a recommendation is made and if an appropriate Synod resolution is passed, then the manse will be sold. If a manse is sold pursuant to this provision, the net proceeds of sale are applied as the Synod resolves and will, therefore, be credited to the Synod Manse Fund.

(m) Where a local church believes that it will suffer serious financial problems as a result of these proposals, the Synod Resources Committee with the relevant Area Pastoral Committee will work with them to seek ways of resolving those problems.

Resolution 7 was passed with 1 vote against.

(There were 7 abstentions)

10. Report of the Executive Committee - part 2 [para 3]

With the permission of the Synod Meeting the Clerk invited Barbara Redmond to speak about the Synod's Global Partnership Link with Chaiyi Presbytery, Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. Mrs Redmond spoke to a PowerPoint presentation and the Synod Meeting was grateful to her for the ways in which she described the ways in which the link had been developed over the years.

This Global Link had recently been reviewed by a group convened by Mrs Redmond and the report of the Review Group had been made available to members of the Synod Meeting.

The Clerk moved Resolution 1 and opportunity was provided for questions and comments.

Resolution 1

Synod welcomes the report of the review of the Global Link with Chaiyi Presbytery, Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, and adopts the recommendation of the Executive Committee that the link be maintained and developed over the next three years.

Resolution 1 was passed with 0 votes against.

[There were 0 abstentions]

11. Report of the Resources Committee and Trust Management Committee [paras 18-68]

Jean Mullineux presented the report, which was received with thanks.

Mrs Mullineux moved resolutions 5 and 6 and opportunity was provided for questions.

Resolution 5

Synod gives thanks for the sacrificial giving in its local churches that led to a total contribution from them to the URC Ministry and Mission Fund in 2017 of £1,924,000

Resolution 5 was passed with 0 votes against.

[There were 0 abstentions]

Resolution 6

Synod approves the payment of £60,200 via the URC Trust to the URC Lay Staff Pension Scheme by June 2018, recognising that this payment is discharging part of the Synod's legal liability for the current deficit on the scheme.

Resolution 6 was passed with 0 votes against.

[There were 0 abstentions]

12. Report of the Mission and Discipleship Committee

Rev'd Dr Marion Tugwood presented an oral report of the recent work of the committee, reminding the Synod Meeting that the functions and membership of the committee were detailed in paragraph 15 of the report of the Executive Committee. Dr Tugwood referred especially to the committee's oversight of the work of the Mission & Discipleship Team, recent conversations with Northern College to explore the sharing of resources and expertise, and the commissioning by the committee of a review of children and youth work in the synod.

Dr Tugwood's report was received with thanks, and there was opportunity for questions and comments.

14. Report of the Synod Pastoral Committee

Rev'd Dr Marion Tugwood presented an oral report of the recent work of the committee, which included the support of Area Pastoral Committee Committees and their convenors in their work. She noted that:

- ▶ serious governance issues had arisen in several churches where elders' meetings were failing to meet their statutory responsibilities as managing trustees;
- ▶ there were instances where local churches were not acting in accordance with United Reformed Church policy regarding lay presidency at the sacraments, and a reminder would shortly be issued to local churches;
- ▶ work was currently being undertaken by representatives of the Northerly Synods regarding lay leadership;
- ▶ it was hoped to be able to include up to 8 new opportunities for ministry in this synod on the [vacancy] list within the next few months.

Dr Tugwood's report was received, with thanks.

In response to a question from Bernie Stevens over the size of Missional Partnerships, Dr Tugwood reminded the meeting that the composition of Missional Partnerships had been determined by the Synod Pastoral Committee on the recommendation of Area Pastoral Committees, following a series of Roadshows, and consultation by Area Pastoral Committees with local churches.

15. Reports of Area Pastoral Committees [paras 87-154]

The meeting agreed with the suggestion of the Moderator that these reports be received en-bloc. They were received, with thanks.

16. Officer retirements

The Moderator paid tribute to John Rea on his retirement from various synod duties, including as Vice-chair of the Synod Trust, and to Pat Rea for her support of John in these roles over many years. Gifts were presented to them.

The Moderator paid tribute to John Piper on his retirement as Synod Treasurer following seven years of service, and to Marilyn Piper for her support of John in this role. The Moderator noted that John was absent from the meeting due to a recent accident which resulted in surgery to his leg. Gifts were presented to Marilyn for herself and John, and she agreed to convey the deep gratitude and good wishes of the Synod Meeting to John along with the assurance of ongoing prayerful support.

17. Thanks to Westbury Gardens and an invitation to Oasis, Salford for the next Synod Meeting on Saturday 8 October 2018

Rev'd Stuart Nixon expressed the thanks of the Synod Meeting to Westbury Gardens for their gracious hospitality.

He invited members of the Synod Meeting to Oasis, Salford for the October 2018 meeting.

18. Derek Estill

On behalf of the Synod Meeting, the Moderator offered good wishes and the assurance of prayerful support to Derek Estill, Church Secretary of Westbury Gardens United Reformed Church, as he serves as one of the Moderators of General Assembly from July 2018 - July 2020.

19. Closing worship. The Moderator led the meeting in worship.

Appendix

Attendance at the synod meeting on 17 March 2018

Registered as present: Moderator, 98 voting Members and 25 associate members/observers

They were:

Voting members of Synod:

33 Serving ministers / CRCW Mr Barnes, A Dalton, L Kam

Revd: B Acty, N Adkinson, M Aspinall, M Bates, R Borg, M Breeze, M Coe, S Coop, A Haigh, D Harkison, D Ireland, M Jarmany, L Jewitt, B Jolly, C Lewis-Smith, N Mark, S Nixon, P Noonan, A Poolton, A Scott, L Talbot, A Termie, K Thorpe, M Tugwood, M Walsh, R Watson, M Whiffen, J Williams, R Wilson, R Wollaston

65 Local Church representatives:

Mr B Ainsworth, Mrs J Ashworth, Mr P Awbery-Beck, Mr S Baker, Mrs J Baker, Mrs A Bogg, Mr S Bromley, Mr N Carter, Mr A Clark, Mrs P Dent, Mr A Dunsmore, Mr T Edisbury, Mr D Estill, Miss D Fitzpatrick, Mrs V Graham, Mrs P Goodridge, Mrs K Grand, Mrs S Green, Ms H Grierson, Mr A Guthrie, Mrs A Haigh, Mrs S Heginbotham, Mr G Hill, Mr M Hinchliffe, Mrs J Holden, Ms R Hooper, Mrs S Jesson, Mr G Jones, Mr A Jones, Mr G Kynaston, Mrs K Lacy, Mrs B Laird, Mrs S Lawson, Mrs J Liddell, Mrs L Lonsdale, Mrs L Lucy, Mrs M McGreavy, Mrs H Mellor, Mr P Melvin, Mr P Mullineux, Mr G Murrin, Mrs J Myers, Mrs A Ollerenshaw, Mrs M Piper, Miss M Prescott, Mrs H Price, Mrs H Rawcliffe, Mr G Robinson, Mrs M Settle, Ms R Shepherd, Mrs W Smith, Mr K Snaith, Mrs M Southern, Mr B Stevens, Revd M Tait, Mrs H Twigg, Mrs J Ward, Mr D Watson, Ms S Weal, Mr J White, Mr K Whiting, Mr M Williams, Mrs D Wilson, Mrs M Wolstenholme, Mr E Wrennall

5 Associate members

Revds: P Brewerton, D Firth, D Greenwood, L Husselbee, P Ward

7 Co-opted

Mrs J Mullineux, Miss M Pitcher, Mr J Rea, Mrs B Redmond, Mrs C Sutcliffe, Dr M Pickles, Revd P Ward

5 Students

Ms L Battle, Miss A Fritchely, Mr J Hill, Mr A Littlejohns, Mr A Mudharara

20 Observers: Mrs M Abel, Mrs A Baker, Ms R Cronshaw, Mr P Crook, Mrs M Dexter-Brown, Mrs E Fletcher, Mrs P Greenwood, Mr K Greer, Mr W Johnson, Mrs N Jones, Mr G Ollerenshaw, Mrs J Popay, R Radcliffe, Mrs P Rea, Mr M Rogers, Mr N Shaw, Dr G Sides, Mr D Smith, Mr I Topping, Dr C Whitehead

7 Staff: Mr A Rutherford & Mrs H Wall

Mission Discipleship Mentors: Revds: D Fraser, D Holland D ten Cate

Mission & Discipleship Consultant: Mr L Moore

Learning Development Officer: Revd T Mountain

Apologies:

7 serving ministers/CRCWs:

Revds: R Bradley, L Cottam, S Moore, J Piper, R Jackson, A Smeaton, S Wild

9 Associate members

Revds: F Houston, N Lemon, L Mullen, J Robinson, E Sheppard, D Spence, K Spence, A Stokes, A Trinder

15 Local Church representatives:

Mrs J Adams, Mrs H Bryrom, Mrs P Carpenter, Mrs R Finlinson, Mr I Lloyd, Mr G McCrone, Mrs D McKnight, Ms J Jones, Mrs L Morrell, Miss V Riley, Mrs B Ross, Mrs L Saunders, Mrs A Scott, Mr G Shaw, Mr J Skipworth

College: Revd R Selby

Students:

Miss A Smith