



*The North Western Synod*  
of the **United Reformed Church**



**Book of Reports for Synod Meeting on**  
Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020, 10:30am

**The United Reformed Church**  
**of St. Andrew & St. George**

St George's Road  
Bolton  
BL1 2BX

# Important Information

## Apologies

**If you cannot attend Synod please send apologies to the Synod Office, in advance of the meeting, as they will not be taken from the floor.**

E-mail: [office@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:office@nwsynod.org.uk)

Tel: 0161 789 5583

If you are unable to attend please ensure that someone from your church or a neighbouring church collects the synod envelope for you.

## Attendance Expenses Voting Card

When you register you will receive: **name badge, expenses form and voting card** (where applicable)

## Parking

There is limited disabled parking available but please let the office know by 19<sup>th</sup> March if you require a space.

## Stewards

There will be stewards both inside and outside the church. Please do not hesitate to ask one of them if you require assistance.

## Refreshments

Tea and coffee will be served on arrival, and will be available at the end of the afternoon.

A light lunch will be provided on this occasion.

Dear friends

I look forward to meeting you at our Synod Meeting at St. Andrew & St George in Bolton when we will have opportunity to worship together and to discuss various ways in which we cooperate together in God's mission. I am grateful to the support of the Minister, Elders and Members of the church for their willingness again to host our gathering.

Our morning is devoted to the induction of the Rev'd Brian Jolly as the new Moderator of the North Western Synod, Derek Estill, one of the Moderators of General Assembly, and Rev'd Ruth Whitehead, Moderator of South Western Synod, will be leading us in that service. We will also be joined by friends from the wider URC family and by Ecumenical partners from across the area served by our churches. A light lunch will be provided following the induction service.

Our agenda for the afternoon will include time for receiving reports from committees which work on our behalf between Synod Meetings, to hear about a recent visit of representatives of the United Reformed Church to Israel and Palestine, and to be consider how we as a Synod and as local churches respond to the climate crisis, led by one of our Green Apostles, Rev'd Kate Gray.

Please find the time to reflect prayerfully on these papers and their implications for our ministry and mission together and in our own local churches.

I look forward to seeing you in Bolton on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March.

Mike Hart  
Interim Synod Clerk

# Agenda

## Synod Meeting Agenda 21<sup>st</sup> March

9.30 Arrivals & Registration  
Tea & Coffee

**10.30 Induction of Rev Brian Jolly as Synod Moderator**

12.00 Light Lunch provided

**13.15 Synod Meeting**

Constitution of Meeting

Welcome to new attendees

Ministerial Movements

Opening Prayers

Minutes of meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Eco Church Update and resolutions

Report of Synod & Area Pastoral Committees

Report from Ministries Committee

Report of the Candidate Secretary

Report on URC visit to Israel & Palestine

Report of Synod Resources Committee

Report of Synod Executive Committee

Nominations and Appointments

News items & presentations

Closing worship

Next meeting: Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at Wilmslow URC.

**Not later than 16.30 Close of meeting**

## Reports for the Synod meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020

### Resolution on Divestment from Investments in Fossil Fuels for North Western Synod from Green Apostle Revd. Kate Gray MA

#### GLOBAL DIVESTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

1. East Midlands and Northern Synods of the URC are joining the Global Divestment Announcement this March when The World Council of Churches, the Global Catholic Climate Movement, Green Anglicans, Operation Noah and GreenFaith invite religious and spiritual institutions from around the world to join a multi-faith global divestment announcement on 26-28 March 2020.
2. I would like NW Synod to divest from fossil fuels and join others in the declaration at the end of March 2020. What do you think? Are we ready to do this at Synod?
3. The following is an extract from the announcement about the Bright Now campaign from Operation Noah who are co-ordinating this initiative.
4. Any groups interested in joining the announcement will confirm (i) that they have divested from fossil fuel investments; or (ii) that they will divest from any investments in fossil fuels as soon as possible, and within five years at the latest; or (iii) that they do not hold any fossil fuel investments and will not invest in fossil fuels in the future.
5. Divestment from fossil fuel holdings is a powerful act of faith that hundreds of religious institutions around the world have taken to respond to the climate emergency. It represents the shifting of investments out of an industry that is a primary cause of climate change. Furthermore, an increasing number of values-driven investors are investing in solutions to the crisis, and are financing enterprises and initiatives providing access to clean, affordable energy, including zero-carbon energy solutions for the 850 million people without access to electricity.
6. If your faith institution has made a commitment to divest from fossil fuels that has not yet been announced, or would be able to do so by **19<sup>th</sup> March 2020**, please contact us by then so that your

commitment can be included in the multi-faith announcement (and so that we can secure a quote from you for inclusion in materials related to the announcement). The announcement will coincide with the Economy of Francesco conference in Assisi, Italy, at which prominent economists will be joined by 2,000 young adults from around the world.

7. For Churches and faith organisations in the UK for information and support is easily available, contact James Buchanan from Operation Noah on [james.buchanan@operationnoah.org](mailto:james.buchanan@operationnoah.org)

**James Buchanan**

Bright Now Campaign Manager

Bright Now - the campaign for fossil free churches

## Resolution 1

**The Synod Meeting resolves to remove all investments in fossil fuel producing companies held by the North Western Synod as soon as possible, in line with the revised ethical guidelines approved by Mission Council in May 2019; commits to not investing in fossil fuels in future; and requests Synod Officers to report on compliance at the next Synod Meeting.**

**NW Synod encourages all local churches to: divest from fossil fuel investments by the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021; release a short statement to Bright Now; and commends the following resolution for use in local church meetings in 2020-21:**

**Local church: [Name of church], commits to divest any existing fossil fuel investments as soon as possible and within 5 years (for churches with existing fossil fuel investments) and pledges not to invest in fossil fuels in the future.**

## **DRAFT NORTH WESTERN SYNOD ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

### **March 2020 From Green Apostle Revd Kate Gray MA**

8. The summary statement below is offered as a draft Environmental Policy for adoption by this Synod. The statement has been developed by the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group. This summary and a more detailed policy statement will be circulated to local churches following this meeting for consideration and discussion. It is planned that these will be dynamic documents and will be updated regularly with information disseminated through the Synod website.

### **Resolution 2**

#### **The Synod Meeting resolves**

- i) To acknowledge with thanks, the work of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group in developing the draft Synod Environmental Policy**
- ii) To encourage local churches to study and discuss the draft policy and to submit any proposed improvements to the JPIC Group**
- iii) To ask JPIC to work towards bringing the Policy with any revisions to the Synod meeting to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2020 for approval and adoption.**

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY SUMMARY

1. **Affirmation** As the North Western Synod of the United Reformed Church, we affirm with General Assembly that living lightly on the Earth, caring for God's Creation and protecting the environment are fundamental Gospel commitments, central to our Missional Discipleship.
2. **Synod acknowledges** humankind's culpability for causing grievous harm to poorer peoples and to creation in general. Humanity is confronted by two crises of its own making: **climate change/global heating** and **loss of biodiversity** linked with ecological degradation. We commit to work within the wider Church and with partners outside the Church to seek to transform this double injustice.
3. **Synod recognises** the significance and hope of the 2015 Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the imperatives of the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5%, the 2019 United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation report on the state of the world's biodiversity for food and agriculture and the global Fridays for the Future campaign on climate change by young people.
4. **Synod pledges to shrink the Synod 'carbon footprint'** (the total greenhouse gas emissions caused by all church activities including those related to travel and those embodied in buildings, building work and in equipment purchased) to net zero as rapidly as practicable. At the same time individual members should be helped to make corresponding life-style adjustments. The following targets are commensurate with the UK achieving net zero by 2045 and the world by 2055:

**2030 target:** to reduce the day-to-day CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Synod activities and churches to net zero.

**2040 target:** to reduce the total carbon footprint of the Synod (as defined above) to net zero.



The expanded environmental policy indicates how these targets may be achieved by audits and actions such as switching to 100% renewable electricity and gas.

5. **Synod pledges to seek to protect biodiversity** by all means and vigorously to combat the causes of biodiversity loss. Synod encourages church members to make time to enjoy nature as part of their discipleship, to engage with political representatives, and to campaign with others.
6. **Synod encourages local churches to undertake systematic audits** of Synod and church buildings and activities for example to: eliminate single use plastics and other hard-to-recycle materials, use eco-friendly cleaning materials, enhance any church land (applying organic principles), significantly reduce use of meat, fish and dairy products in catering, and other appropriate changes.
7. **Synod promotes the 5 R's:** REFUSE, REDUCE, REUSE, REPAIR, RECYCLE.
8. **Synod pledges to work towards achieving Eco Synod status and to commend Eco church to local congregations.** Synod will implement measures to support people in living joyfully, simply and responsibly with respect to God's Creation including: promoting an environmental theology, training preachers and leaders, appointing 'Green Apostles', celebrating 'Time for Creation', undertaking practical projects, producing community artwork celebrating the Creator God and working in collaboration with other denominations, other Faiths and local environmental groups.
9. **Synod pledges to support and encourage the Youth and Children's work of the synod** in activities and campaigns to address climate change and respond to the challenge of biodiversity loss.

## **SYNOD PASTORAL COMMITTEE**

Convenor: Marion Tugwood

1. The committee has met once since the last meeting of Synod. Normally the committee meets five times during the year.
2. The committee works closely with the Area Pastoral Committees and thanks are due to the Conveners and members of those committees who undertake much of the care and support of local churches and missional partnership. Dr. Michael Pickles retires as convener of Lancashire Area Pastoral Committee and we are grateful for his commitment to the role during his term of office. Rev'd Dr. Kirsty Thorpe was also due to retire from convening South Area Pastoral Committee, but has agreed to continue in her role for a further year whilst the review of Synod structures takes place; we are grateful to Kirsty for this continued service.
3. As noted in the Area reports, we give thanks for the ministries of Rev'd Sarah Moore and Rev'd Nick Mark in the Cumbria Area.  
  
We ask God's blessing on Rev'd Mark Bates and Rev'd Annette Haigh as they leave the Synod to exercise ministry in other Synods.  
  
The committee has given concurrence to their Calls.  
  
We rejoice that the Synod has called Rev'd Janet Calderley to the Lancashire West Missional Partnership, and Ordinands Lee Battle and Daniel Harris to the Manchester South and Bury and Rochdale Missional Partnerships respectively. By the meeting of Synod, Janet will have been Inducted to her new ministry and we look forward to two Ordinations in the summer.
4. Reviews of the CRCW (at Levenshulme Inspire URC and Together Making a Difference, Blackburn) were undertaken on behalf of the Synod. Alison Dalton's CRCW ministry at the Building Bridges Project has come to an end, and a comprehensive evaluation and report of the work that has been achieved through Alison's working alongside church and community was commissioned and produced as an example of good practice and to provide information on the variety of work that CRCWs are involved with. The SCM post at Oasis, Salford was reviewed and is being redesigned following the departure of Rev'd Stuart Nixon.

5. The committee has offered support to elderships where particular challenges have been identified.
6. The committee is thankful for the work of the conveners of Missional Partnership Steering Groups, and is pleased to report that by the October Synod, all of the Partnerships will have been commissioned. There is a great sense of churches working together and seeking to get to know more about each other as the Steering Groups develop. Prayerfully discerning the way forward for Partnerships and the mission priorities of the churches is the next significant step in their lives.

New Opportunities for Ministry in the North Western Synod are a feature of the national vacancy list and more will appear on the list over the coming months. We pray that God will prompt those seeking new ministry to come our Synod.

7. The committee is aware of the requests from churches for training and development of elders and others, and is working closely with the Ministries committee to determine how we can best fulfil these needs across the Synod. A joint meeting of the two committees is planned to assist in this work.
8. The committee acknowledges all the work that is undertaken within the congregations of the Synod. Please do remember to share your good news stories through the Synod newsletter and via your reps at Steering Groups, so that we can all learn from one another and prayerfully support one another as we seek to be a sign of God's Kingdom in our localities across the North West.

## CUMBRIA AREA PASTORAL COMMITTEE

Pastoral Convenor: Martyn Coe

1. Kerry Roughton (God For All programme and strategy officer) keeps us up to date with the God For All refresh process. A theme being picked up by the process was a concern by respondents that environment and social action need to play a greater part in God For All. A thorough review of the process is underway and a new strategy will be brought to the autumn meeting of synod for ratification.
2. Staffing changes in the county: Sarah Moore has now moved to Scotland. as a result of this Martyn Coe has reduced engagement in local churches to provide county support as Area Coordinator.
3. Nick Mark has retired and moved to Scotland we thank him for all he has contributed to our common life.
4. A new pioneer minister for the Western Dales has been appointed. Jointly funded by the URC, C of E and Methodists. Becca Gilbert is a priest working in Ely at the moment. She will be licensed in April. She will work as part of the team in the Mission Community with some Sunday responsibilities but her main effort is not to prop up the inherited church but to forge new ways of working in the dales. We look forward to welcoming her as a part of the Partnership team.
5. Work started on the 106 Highgate building of Kendal URC. This will be the new home for the church from this autumn with a formal dedication service being held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October.
6. Dalton Community Church (URC & Methodist) is in the process of putting funding and permissions together for refurbishment of their building.
7. Although some folk have been persuaded to take on new roles, as with other areas we are challenged to fill posts when existing volunteers stand down.
8. Recognising that the moderator is doing what he can to fill ministerial posts we are concerned that Methodist friends will need clarity of a new appointment to SW Cumbria before the cut off for stationing.
9. Carver Uniting Church is in the process of agreeing to make the local Windermere Methodist Church a Class of the Methodist Part of the united congregation.
10. As the APC and steering group are coterminous we are having to take care to ensure everyone understands the different hats they are wearing!

## LANCASHIRE AREA PASTORAL COMMITTEE

Pastoral Convenor: Michael Pickles

### Area Pastoral Committee

1. The Area Pastoral Committee currently comprises:

Dr Michael Pickles (Convenor),  
Miss Margery Pitcher (Secretary)  
Mr Gordon Bell (Finance Officer)  
Rev'd Liz Jewitt (Ecumenical Officer)  
Mr Ken Snaith (Pastoral Review Co-ordinator)  
Mr Danny Wilson (Lay Preaching Commissioner)  
Mrs Lynn Lonsdale (Co-opted Member)  
Rev'd Michele Jarmany (Co-opted Member)  
Synod Officers *ex officio*.

Four members of the committee complete their current term of office at the March Synod: Convenor, Secretary, Lay Preaching Commissioner and a Co-opted Member.

2. Each committee member is linked with a group of churches and contacts the Church Secretary prior to an APC meeting, through which the churches may raise issues or share good news stories to be brought to the meeting.

### Ministerial and Pastoral

3. We give thanks for the life of ministry of Rev'd Gwyneth (Gwen) Thomas, Who served at Trinity Brownhill 1985-88, and Revd Donald Whitehead, who served at Adlington 1962-66.
4. Rev'd Lindsey Cottam has moved to the Philippines as her husband has Taken up a post as Field Medical Advisor with the Overseas Missionary Fellowship. They will initially be there for four years but may renew until retiring age.
5. Mal Breeze has completed a first term of five years as CRCW in North Blackburn. He is taking a three-month sabbatical leave, following which he will serve a further term of five years. It has been agreed to extend this to September 2027.
6. Rev'd Janet Calderley has accepted the call to serve in the West Partnership. The Induction Service has been arranged for 15<sup>th</sup> March.

## **Missional Discipleship**

7. The current programme for the Lancashire Mission & Discipleship Mentor, Revd Daleen ten Cate, includes:  
continuing to deliver the Discipleship Cycle;  
following up activities related to the Bethany Project visit; events for refugees at Fairhaven and Clitheroe, and with DARE; supporting the setting up of a Dementia group at Poulton; supporting initiatives at Halton; supporting churches with their Eco Church Audit;  
Kingdom Outreach in Blackburn & Darwen: 160 families (500 adults and children) received a meal on Christmas Eve;  
Stepwise taster sessions in the East and West Partnerships;  
Youth Eco Day (with Christian Aid) held on 21 February.
8. A workshop for those seeking to conduct funerals was held at Burnley & Nelson URC on 15<sup>th</sup> February.
9. Many churches continue to develop outreach and arrange events around dementia awareness, ecological issues, mental health, youth groups, pastoral care, different styles of worship, and Fresh Expressions initiatives.

## **Missional Partnerships**

10. The North Partnership held its commissioning service on 9 November at Sefton Road URC, on the theme of Journeying. The calling of a second minister for the Partnership is currently with the Moderators Meeting.
11. 11 It is proposed to hold the commissioning service for the South Partnership on 4 April at Penwortham URC.
12. 12 It is proposed to hold the commissioning service for the East Partnership on Pentecost Sunday 31 May.

## **Church Life**

13. **Hest Bank:** After a very lengthy and sometimes difficult project, the church received the keys to the new church hall on 20<sup>th</sup> December. The official worship and social opening event took place on 7<sup>th</sup> February.

14. **Halton, Hest Bank and Bolton-le-Sands** are in conversations with Anton Muller about creating an ecumenical Churches Together group.
15. **Trinity Lancaster:** The refurbishment of the Bowerham site is moving ahead apace. The Church is looking to appoint an Administrator and a Children & Families Worker.
16. The series of Open Church and Pop-Up Café events at **Forton** continues to be popular and successful.
17. **Darwen Bolton Road:** The closing service was held on 20 October and was very well attended. Despite the sad occasion there was a happy and positive atmosphere.
18. **Barrow School:** All the school, pupils and Staff came to Clitheroe URC to celebrate Harvest and this was reported in Synod News. The Bethany children visited on 4 November. Three new governors have been appointed and one has retired so there are twelve Governors now with still one governor vacancy remaining. There are six classes operating now. The reception class is temporarily in an annex. When the building work is complete there will be seven classes, all in the school building. Building work is ongoing.
19. Pupils attended Christmas activities and worship at Clitheroe URC. A Christingle service was held at the school. The Moderator has been invited to visit the school and lead an Assembly.
20. **Great Harwood:** Refurbishment work began on 18 November and is due to last for six months. During this time the congregation is meeting for worship at Bank Mill House and other activities are either suspended or relocated.
21. **Chorley:** The building project is now at the fundraising stage. Andy Littlejohns, CRCW, is starting various projects e.g. a Repair Café. The composition of Andy's support group is being finalised.
22. We are always mindful of all those who give freely of their time and talents to lead and support the ministry and outreach of the fellowships across the Area. We pray also that we are guided well and supported fully as we meet the challenges and rewards of making discipleship and partnership a reality in the life of our churches and our communities.

## CENTRAL AREA PASTORAL COMMITTEE

Committee Convenor: Richard Bradley

### Committee Membership

1. Rev'd Richard Bradley (Acting-Convener & Ecumenical Officer)  
Mrs Wendy Smith (Secretary & Lay Preaching Commissioner)  
Rev'd Mike Aspinall (Property Officer)  
Mr Neil Carter (Finance Officer)  
Rev'd Darren Holland (Mission Mentor)  
Mrs Alison Dalton (CRCW)  
Mr Jed Garside  
Rev'd Ruth Wollaston  
Synod Officers *ex officio*.

### Missional Partnerships

#### Bolton and Salford

2. Since October 2019 - 5 steering group meetings have been held and held the partnership was commissioned on Sunday 12th January 2020 at Worsley Road URC with Revd. Dr. Adam Scott as preacher. It was a great celebration attended by well over 100 people from all the churches and beyond and was followed by an afternoon tea. Revd. Ruth Watson was commissioned at that service as the partnership minister. The occasion was greatly inspirational and there is now a very positive feeling amongst all those attending as they move forward as a partnership. In preparation, they have had meetings devoted to "What does worship look like in a Partnership?", "What does pastoral care look like in a Partnership?" led by Adam Scott and "How do we tell people what a partnership is and does?".

#### Bury, Rochdale and North Manchester

3. The Steering Group for the Missional Partnership continues to meet and discuss the mission of the Partnership. Recent meetings have been given to the exploitation of a call to a candidate from Westminster College. That resulted in a 'preach with view' weekend on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January. Daniel Harris attended two social events on the Saturday and led morning and afternoon worship in two churches on the Sunday. Church meetings were held, and a call was issued to Daniel who accepted the call. Daniel will be ordained and inducted in early July.



## **SOUTH AREA PASTORAL COMMITTEE**

Pastoral Convenor: Kirsty Thorpe

1. South Area Pastoral Committee meets six times a year and welcomes requests for help or news about their activities and concerns from local churches. Our next meetings in 2020 are on May 11<sup>th</sup>, July 6<sup>th</sup>, September 7<sup>th</sup>, and November 2<sup>nd</sup>.
2. We now have a potential new Property Officer. We are gradually discovering how the APC's work can best complement the roles of the Steering Groups for the three Missional Partnerships in South Area.
3. Rev'd Dave Fraser, South Area Mission and Discipleship Mentor, continues to run sessions covering matters such as pastoral care, worship, elders' roles, tools for faith sharing and discernment. He is helping to set up a Stepwise group which could begin after Easter.
4. In response to requests from those within Local Ecumenical Partnerships, Dave Fraser will hold a meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup> at Edgeley URC/Methodist Church to discuss how Missional Partnerships can work for joint congregations.
5. All three Missional Partnership Steering Groups now have different convenors, another welcome piece of progress.
6. Lee Battle, an ordinand at Northern College, has accepted a call to Manchester South Missional Partnership and will be ordained on July 4<sup>th</sup>.
7. The Rev'd Annette Haigh has received a call to a new ministry in Aire Valley pastorate, Yorkshire Synod, and will be leaving the East Cheshire and Derbyshire Border Missional Partnership in May.

## 8. Other news in brief:

- Chorlton Central have now completed work refurbishing their buildings.
- Hatherlow are exploring the idea of selling their church hall and investing in the church building to provide better facilities including toilets and a kitchen.
- Marple Bridge is exploring whether its site can be redeveloped for housing and offer a worship/community space as well.
- Decisions now need to be made about the future of the URC's practical and spiritual investment in Church of the Epiphany, Droylsden.
- Professor Christopher Whitehead, (Bramhall URC) will be commissioned as a nationally accredited Lay Preacher in September.
- Alison Haigh, (Heald Green URC), was commissioned in January as a synod recognised lay preacher.
- The Pilots company previously attached to Union Church, Stockport, continues to thrive and plans to seek synod financial support for its rental and other costs.
- In future, training for those presiding at the sacraments will take place within Missional Partnerships. Churches are being asked for their views as to whether permission to preside might, in future, cover more than one congregation.
- Groups to support those who preside at the sacraments, lay preachers, worship leaders and members of worship groups are to be set up by Dave Fraser linking with the three Missional Partnership Steering Groups in South Area.

### **Resolution 3**

**The Synod Meeting resolves to note the reports of Synod Pastoral Committee and the four Area Pastoral Committees.**

## **MINISTRIES COMMITTEE**

Convenor: Martyn Coe

1. Your committee has met once since the last meeting of Synod.
2. The committee received reports regarding candidates and students for ordained ministry.
3. We heard from the learning and development officer about training opportunities happening in the synod. As Tim stands down from this post we thank him for his work supporting ministers and more recently some lay training across the synod. The committee are working with the moderator to ensure that following Tim leaving support is offered especially for student and EM2 and EM3 grants.
4. We expect that a full review of the post will lead to a future appointment but a vacancy in a post is always a good time to ensure that any new appointment matches any emerging synod priorities.
5. On our radar is working with the mentors and others to make a better offering of training. We do not want to overburden folk but elders training and development has been identified by us, mentors and local church elders as being a useful area to look at. This will need to cover a wide aspect of the Elder's role from pastoral care to being trustees of the local church as a charity.
6. We continue to work with the national church and the wider synod team as Stepwise develops. This will be the key way for those seeking recognition as lay preachers and worship leaders to train. The national church has identified the need to end the practice of asking folk as they commence training whether they are seeking synod recognition or national accreditation. All will follow the same path with the option at any time of working towards national accreditation.
7. Those who are doing so much to answer God's call in the leading of churches and the offering of worship to God.

## **CANDIDATE REPORT**

Candidates Secretary: Lesley Husselbee

### **1. Candidates for Ministry**

- A. **People candidating for Ministry:** (Due to attend Synod Assessment on 27-28 March 2020)  
One person from NW Synod has been commended by the Synod to this Assessment Conference for Non-stipendiary ministry.
- B. **Others candidating for Ministry**  
One other person is considering candidating.

### **2. NW Synod Students in Training for Ministry**

#### **a. Northern College Manchester**

- i. **Walt Johnson NSM** (Wilbraham St Ninian's URC) Year 1
- ii. **Kate Hunt SM** (St Anne's URC) Year 2
- iii. **Jonathan Hill SM** (Chorlton Central Church) Year 3
- iv. **Katherine (Katy) Ollerenshaw CRCW**  
(Edgeley Community Church, Stockport) Year 3/4
- v. **Lee Battle SM** (Wilbraham St Ninian's URC) Year 4  
(called to the Manchester South Missional Partnership).
- vi. **Sarah Fitton SM (Bamford Chapel)** Year 4

#### **b. Westminster College, Cambridge\***

## **Resolution 4**

**The Synod Meeting resolves to note the reports of Ministries Committee and the Candidate Secretary.**

## **RESOURCES COMMITTEE AND TRUST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

### **Convener of Resources Committee and**

**Chair of Trust Management Committee:** Jean Mullineux

**Company Secretary** Adelle Hartwell

### **Membership and Responsibilities of Committees**

1. The Resources Committee and continues to act on behalf of the Synod on matters of property and finance.
2. The Trust Company is the Trustee of each of the buildings of local churches in the Synod including the Church, Church buildings and Manses. The Elders meeting of the local Church acts under delegated authority of the Trust.
3. The Elders meeting of each local church is the Trustees of the funds and assets of the local Church but not its buildings.
4. The Trust Company is the Trustee for all the Synod's assets.
5. The Trust Management Committee acts on behalf of the Trust Company.
6. The membership of the Synod Resources Committee and the Trust

Management Committee is the same and their meetings are held concurrently six times a year.

### **Finance Report for Synod March 2020 Mike Hart: Synod Treasurer**

7. The Trust Management Committee monitors the finance work undertaken by the Synod Treasurer and Synod staff. As Charity Trustees, the members of the Trust Management Committee carry the legal responsibility for the Synod's finances. However, the primary responsibility of the Trust and of the Committee is to carry out the policies of the Synod as approved at meetings of Synod. The following information is provided as a way of keeping members of Synod informed and as a way of being accountable to them.

## Annual Accounts

8. The accounts for 2019 show a similar picture to previous years of a significant deficit on operational expenditure offset by one-off income from property sales and growth in investment values. The analysis this year is complicated with changes arising from the introduction of the Synod Manse Scheme, with the move during the year to separate these costs into a designated fund. Further work is still in progress to address these prior to the accounts being submitted for Audit at the end of this month.
9. As the Manse Scheme is now in place, Synod Resources Committee have asked the Treasurer and Finance Officer to review budgets to submit a revised three to five-year budget plan for consideration in the summer.

## Mission & Ministry Fund

10. Concerns have been raised about a small number of churches, who on an annual basis either won't or can't pay their full Ministry and Mission assessment. The URC's Plan for Partnership states

*"The complementary commitment of local churches is to contribute to the costs of the whole Church's ministry according to the congregation's means. This payment is the first charge on the local church's income. The contributions of local churches will be paid into the Ministry and Mission Fund, from which the stipend of ministers and CRCWs, and other payments detailed in the Plan, will be drawn"*

11. Following the conclusion of a number of appeals from Churches against their assessment, the Synod will contribute £23,160 centrally to the Ministry & Mission fund to meet its commitment in line with policy agreed by the Synod Meeting in 2018 of £1.671m for 2020.
12. It is now six years since the methodology for the Ministry & Mission Fund assessment was last reviewed in this Synod. Although on the whole the current approach continues to work well, there are a number of areas which feature consistently in the queries and appeals received from local churches. These include the consistency

of the membership data drawn from the Church return, and the approach to adjustments made to church capital. The data collection form and guidance are being reviewed for this year to see if this can improve consistency and understanding prior to consideration of a more detailed review of the assessment methodology.

### **Grants arising from the Implementation of Synod Manse Scheme**

13. Synod Members will be pleased to know that the Trust Management Committee acting on its behalf agreed that sufficient surplus Manses had now been sold to enable the vesting of grants with local churches from the 1<sup>st</sup> March. This will provide 65 churches collectively with over £4.5m in additional funds.
14. The money will remain invested by Synod on behalf of the local churches and will accumulate interest to the benefit of the local church. As agreed by the Synod Meeting in 2018 any request to draw the money down must follow the long standing requirements for Area and Synod approval for any amount over £16,000 in a twelve-month period.
15. The grants have been made to churches to use for mission purposes and it is hoped that churches will be willing to share with both Synod and other local churches the outcomes from their use of these significant resources to further their work in their local community.

### **Church Mission Grant proposal**

16. A number of years ago the Synod Meeting agreed a policy that 50% of the net proceeds of the sale of redundant church buildings should be held in a fund to support Mission Grants for local churches. There is already an accumulated balance in the fund and the last 12 months have seen a significant number of such sales amounting to over £570,000, with three more buildings currently under offer.

17. Synod Resources and Synod Executive Committees have agreed a proposal, subject to agreement this Meeting to pay a small mission grant of £5,000 to all churches who are not receiving a grant arising from the implementation of the Synod Manse Scheme, and a similar amount to three churches who are to receive less than £10,000 from the Manse Scheme. This will be calculated as either £5,000 or the amount required to bring the total grant to the church to £10,000. The total amount that would be distributed through this grant would be £280,000 spread across 56 churches.
18. Churches would be asked to complete a simple evaluation form so that the use of this money can be captured and used to facilitate the sharing of good practice across churches in the Synod, through review by Area Pastoral Committees.

## **Resolution 5**

**The Synod Meeting resolves to support the provision of a Mission Grant of £5,000 as outlined above to churches not in receipt of a grant arising from the implementation of the Synod Manse Scheme and to those whose grant is less than £10,000.**

## **Staffing**

19. In January, Ryhana Mohammed joined us as our Finance Clerk. Ryhana is responsible for dealing with invoices and expense claims particularly payments for Manses and the administration of the Ministers' expenses claims.
20. I am grateful to Ryhana and to David Wyke for their contribution to the work of the Synod and for the improvements they are making to the effectiveness with which they are dealing with the vastly increased number of financial transactions compared to 12 months ago.



## URC North Western Synod

### Management Accounts for the 12 Months to 31st December 2011

#### Summary of Operating Income & Expenditure

	Actual £	Var to Budget £	Var to L/Y £
<b>Income:</b>			
Investment income/interest	144,524	36,802	23,682
Loan interest	694	(242)	(195)
Rental income	49,006	49,006	30,789
Donations & legacies	1,250	1,150	738
Grants received		(12,500)	
Synod stakes	98,460	460	
Participants' contributions to training courses		0	
Inter-Synod resource sharing		0	
Sundry income	19,324	14,324	18,790
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>313,258</b>	<b>89,000</b>	<b>73,804</b>
<b>Expenditure:</b>			
<b>Administration:</b>			
Salaries	183,393	1,542	(42,207)
Synod Office	58,544	(9,909)	(4,356)
Area Support	6,016	(1,916)	1,706
Travel and subsistence expenses	33,589	(25,019)	(7,005)
<b>Professional Charges:</b>			
Audit	7,674	(474)	342
Legal	22,763	(15,263)	(10,418)
Investment management fees	9,132	(2,006)	(718)
Other	18,505	(16,935)	(2,252)
Miscellaneous	3,609	641	866
Insurances	5,425	(439)	(1,987)
<b>Total Administration:</b>	<b>348,650</b>	<b>(69,778)</b>	<b>(66,029)</b>
<b>External Grants:</b>			
Resource Sharing Contributions		0	
University chaplaincy	9,375	15,625	15,625
Ecumenical Subscriptions	5,893	2,057	1,860
Welfare	4,789	(3,039)	1,086
Other	8,800	(6,300)	(5,000)
<b>Training:</b>			
General			
Ministers & CRCW	42,805	962	(6,540)
Elders & Members	247	24,753	655
Children & Young People	61,887	1,100	(1,874)
<b>Special Category Ministers:</b>			
Cumbria	14,244	(3,587)	7,928
Chorlton	7,021	3,853	2,289
Salford	2,058	3,103	2,741
Oldham	12,165	(3,313)	(2,672)
<b>Property:</b>			
Buildings	22,878	(19,478)	(7,410)
Graveyards	18,320	(12,070)	(5,071)
Manse fund	145,839	(115,733)	(97,210)
Mission	185,469	29,390	17,437
Sundry designated/restricted funds			
<b>Total Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>890,440</b>	<b>(152,455)</b>	<b>(142,185)</b>
<b>Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit):</b>	<b>(577,182)</b>	<b>(63,455)</b>	<b>(68,381)</b>

## URC North Western Synod

### Management Accounts for the 12 Months to 31st December 2019

#### Summary of Income & Expenditure

	Actual £	Budget £	Variance £	%
<b>Net Operating Surplus/(Deficit):</b>	<b>(577,182)</b>	<b>(513,727)</b>	<b>(63,455)</b>	<b>12.4%</b>
Receipts from closed churches	67,296		67,296	0.0%
Cash/investments transferred to manse fund	(74,747)		(74,747)	0.0%
Funds transferred from external trusts				0.0%
Property transferred from closed churches		225,000	(225,000)	(100.0%)
Less: Costs incurred for closed churches	(102,992)	(13,000)	(89,992)	692.2%
Less: Property grants to churches	(59,689)	(55,500)	(4,189)	7.5%
Less: Mission grants to churches	24,467	(50,000)	74,467	(148.9%)
Less: Contribution to M&M fund				0.0%
Less: Contribution to URC Ministers Pension fund	(43,653)		(43,653)	0.0%
Less: Contribution to Lay Pension Fund				0.0%
<b>Net Income/(Expenditure):</b>	<b>(766,500)</b>	<b>(407,227)</b>	<b>(359,273)</b>	<b>88.2%</b>
<b>Gains &amp; Losses on Investments:</b>				
Investments - realised				
Investments - unrealised	461,533		461,533	
Investments - from closed churches at valuation				
Disposal of fixed assets - realised	2,453,791		2,453,791	
Property revaluation - unrealised				
<b>Total Gains &amp; Losses on Investments</b>	<b>2,915,324</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,915,324</b>	
<b>Net Increase/(Decrease) in Funds</b>	<b>2,148,824</b>	<b>(407,227)</b>	<b>2,556,051</b>	
<b>Balance at 31st December 2018</b>	<b>7,911,066</b>	<b>7,911,066</b>		
<b>Balance at 31st December 2019</b>	<b>10,059,890</b>	<b>7,503,839</b>	<b>2,556,051</b>	

## **PROPERTY REPORT**

Convener: Mike Aspinall

### **Self –Assessment Questionnaires**

21. Thank you to churches who have submitted the SAQ's for 2020 so far, however, there are still many outstanding. Please could you urge Church Secretaries to return as soon as possible. These are to help the churches and elders fulfil their obligations as management trustees of their church. If you are having problems completing any part of the form, please contact me.

### **Quinquennial surveys**

22. The oversight of church buildings is important to ensure the fabric of the building is maintained. We have 20 churches requiring Quinquennial Surveys that are now outstanding. The organising of an Inspection cannot be ignored. Church Elders, as Managing Trustees of their church have an obligation to maintain the building. Failure to do so only allows problems to grow. For Listed Buildings in particular this can have serious legal implications, although for all church buildings there are also Charity Commission implications if the assets of the Trust (e.g. the building) is not adequately maintained.
23. I realise this may throw-up work which you feel will create further problems for you but it is far better to know of problems than to think they don't exist. An updated list of approved surveyors has been issued to respective Church Secretaries.
24. On receipt of the report please ensure you look carefully at the recommendation and action accordingly. If you feel you don't know how to respond, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

## **The Synod Policy Document**

25. Every Church Secretary should have a copy of this document. It is available online at <http://www.nwsynod.org.uk/resources/policy-documents>
26. Whilst in some areas it does require updating, a process that is being managed, it contains much useful information to assist churches.

## **LBAC**

27. If you are in a Listed Church and intend to undertake any work whatsoever you must seek approval from the LBAC. This applies whether the work affects the specific area of listing or not. Undertaking work without approval can lead to possible action from English Heritage and a fine.

## **General**

28. If you are considering any work within your church, regardless of the value please inform your Area Pastoral Committee (APC). Any work having a value over £16,000.00 in any 12month period must be approved by your APC and Synod Resources Committee, prior to the work commencing. If you are unsure as to what to do or what could be done with your premises to meet your current needs, please don't hesitate to contact me.
29. If you have any queries on matters relating to church properties, grounds and graveyards, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may not have all the answers immediately but I will endeavour to find an answer whatever the query.

[propertyconsultant@nwsynod.org.uk](mailto:propertyconsultant@nwsynod.org.uk)

## **Resolution 6**

**The Synod Meeting resolves to note the reports of Synod Resources Committee including the reports of the Synod Treasurer and Property Consultant.**

## **Synod Executive Committee**

**Secretary: Mike Hart: Interim Synod Clerk**

1. The members of the Executive Committee are the convenors, or sometimes other representatives of the various synod committees, together with the Moderator, Clerk Treasurer and the synod representative serving on the Assembly Mission Committee. The committee has met on two occasions since the last Synod Meeting. The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Synod Meeting during the period between meetings.

## **Work of Synod Committees**

2. At its two meetings since the last Synod Meeting the Executive Committee has received reports and updates from the various committees of the synod, and considered the various matters included in their reports to this meeting.
3. In particular, the Committee has noted the concerns of the South Area Pastoral Committee regarding the URC's future practical and spiritual investment in the Church of the Epiphany, Droylsden.

## **Northerly Synods**

4. The five Northerly Synods (Northern, Yorkshire, Mersey, North Western and Scotland) have been working together for some years to support each other by undertaking work as a group rather than have each synod doing things independently. This has led to sharing of training materials and staff, using common Human Resource support resulting in, for example, a new Staff Handbook being produced for the five synods, joint initiatives and events, a Listening and Reconciliation Team, cross-boundary use of ministerial resources, and agreement to form a Shared Ministerial Disciplinary Panel.
5. More recently 10 CRCW's, Missional Discipleship Mentors, Synod Staff and Officers met with colleagues from the other four Northerly Synods (Mersey, Yorkshire, Northern and Scotland) to reflect on what we are doing individually to support local churches in their mission

and to think about how by working together to share knowledge, expertise and resources we can provide more to support you in your work. The ambition in this shared work is summed up in a strap-line that one of the working groups shared:

“Freeing from Burdens, Freeing for Mission”

There are a number of key themes emerging for the initial stages of work together, these include:

Strengthening communications within and across Synods

The development of a resource bank of examples of different ways local churches are developing their mission activities.

Strengthening existing network groups and developing new ones in response to feedback at the gathering, including finance, children and young people.

Training and development particularly around lay leadership in local churches.

Exploring opportunities to undertake “administrative” tasks together responding to the likelihood of the requirement for Charity Commission registration from 2021.

6. Synod’s “enabling protocol” as a framework for greater co-operation and collaboration between the five Northerly Synods. All the Synod’s have now passed this resolution.
7. Developing this closer collaboration requires the dedication of some shared resources. The Synod Executive have considered and supported the part time secondment of Mel Campbell, Synod Clerk of Northern Synod, to co- ordinate and stimulate this collaboration across the Synods. The Committee also agreed to a financial contribution of £10,000 per annum for three years to support this work. In line with this Synod’s financial policy, this will enable the Synod of Scotland which is significantly less well-resourced to make a lower contribution. Subject to the agreement of each of the Northerly Synods, this secondment will begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, and Mel’s work in supporting the review of capacity, processes and structures in this Synod will form part of this shared role.

The last Synod Meeting confirmed this Synod’s support for the Northerly

## **Capacity, Processes and Structures**

8. As reported at the last synod meeting, the Synod Executive has commissioned a review of Synod capacity, process and structures. The aim of the review is to improve the advice, support and leadership available to ministers, churches and Missional Partnerships. As indicated above the Executive Committee has asked Mel Campbell, Synod Clerk Northern Synod to lead the review. An initial phase of work documenting current structures and processes is underway and will report to the next meeting of the Synod Executive Committee. Work to develop future structures and processes will involve opportunities for local churches and the Synod Meeting to contribute to development of new ways of working.

## **Synod Office**

9. In January, members of the Synod Meeting were circulated an update on the development of a new Synod Office. A copy of the update is attached separately. As the report indicates the current office at Patricroft URC has served the Synod well for over 30 years, but no longer meet current needs in terms of:
  - flexible and adequate meeting areas;
  - waiting and “touch-down” facilities for field staff and those attending meetings
  - spaces for confidential conversations
  - appropriate office space and facilities, and
  - accessibility
10. been identified as providing a good fit for the Synod’s needs and work continues to progress in respect of the purchase of this property. Acting on behalf of the Synod Meeting, the Executive Committee continues to play an active role in this development and ensuring that such a move will help Synod staff improve the support they are able to offer to local churches.

11. Work has been commissioned to redesign the Synod website to improve its relevance and accessibility for all users. It is expected that the new website will be launched in the next few months.

As the update indicated one particular property in the Salford area had

### **Office staffing**

12. There have been a number of changes in the Synod Staffing since the last Synod Meeting. Hazel Wall retired on the 31<sup>st</sup> January after many years' service as Moderators PA and Office Manager. Ryhana Mohammed joined the team in the Synod Office on the 1<sup>st</sup> January as Finance Clerk. Ryhana is the main point of contact for enquiries about the payment of expenses.

Rev'd Tim Mountain will leave the role of Learning and Development officer on the 31<sup>st</sup> March.

13. We give thanks for the contribution of Hazel and Tim to the life and work of the Synod. Consideration is being given to the best way to replace these roles given the changes in the requirements placed on Synods and the needs of local churches.

### **Appointments to Synod roles and Committees**

14. Since the last Synod Meeting acting on behalf of the Synod Meeting, the Committee has approved the following appointments

#### **Green Apostles**

Rev'd Daleen ten Cate, and Rev'd Rosalind Selby to work as Green Apostles alongside Rev'd Kate Gray.

#### **Synod Clerk**

Mike Hart on an interim basis until December 20<sup>th</sup> Synod Executive.

#### **South Area Pastoral Committee**

Allan Haigh Area Finance Officer October 19 to March 22

#### **Central Area Pastoral Committee**

Rev'd Richard Bradley Convenor October 19 to March 22

Rev'd Richard Bradley Ecumenical Officer October 19 to March 22



## **Renewals of terms of office**

15. The following members of Synod Committees current term of office ends at this Synod and the individuals have indicated their willingness to serve for a further term.

### **Central Area Pastoral Committee**

Jed Garside, Mike Aspinall, Ruth Wollaston,  
Pastoral Review Co-ordinator extended to December 20  
Area Property Officer extended to December 20  
Co-opted member extended to December 20

### **Cumbria Area Pastoral Committee**

Nick Andrews  
Rev'd Dave Harkison  
Ven. Vernon Ross  
Area Finance Officer March 20 to March 21  
Co-opted Member March 20 to March 23  
Ecumenical Partner March 20 to March 23

### **Lancashire Area Pastoral Committee**

Margery Pitcher Area Secretary extended to December 20  
Rev'd Michelle Jarmany Co-opted Member to December 20

## **General Assembly 2020**

16. The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church meets at the University of Aston in Birmingham from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> July this year.

The Synod is able to send up to 16 representatives including 2 aged 20 or under to Assembly.

The Synod Executive Committee has considered and accepted the following nominations from local Churches to act as the representatives of this Synod.

### **Ministers & CRCWs**

Brian Jolly (Synod Moderator)

Martin Whiffen (Chorley URC)

Martyn Coe (Cumbria Missional Partnership)

Alison Termie (Cheshire East & Derbyshire Border Missional Partnership)

Mal Breeze (CRCW, Blackburn)

Marion Tugwood (Greater Manchester South & Cheshire Missional Partnership)

Rosalind Selby (Northern College)

### **Lay Representatives**

Mike Hart (Synod Treasurer & Interim Synod Clerk)

Marilyn Piper (Hurst Nook URC)

Lawrence Moore (Worsley Road URC)

Peter Melvin (St Anne's URC)

Chris Lamb (Hambleton URC)

Denise Fitzpatrick (Bramhall URC)

Seoyoung Kim (St Peter's Chaplaincy)

### **Young Peoples representatives to follow**

## **Resolution 7**

**The Synod Meeting resolves to note the report of Synod Executive Committee.**