



**Minutes of the Autumn Synod Meetings held,
virtually, on the 10th October and 14th November
2020**

Saturday 10th October 2020

Constitution of the Synod Meeting and opening worship.

- 1 Rev Brian Jolly, Moderator of the North Western Synod, welcomed members of the Synod Meeting. He constituted the meeting.
- 2 Worship was led by two new Ministers to the North Western Synod, Rev Daniel Harris and Rev Janet Calderley.
- 3 At the conclusion of worship, the following ministers were recognised who, since the Synod Meeting in October 2019:

- Rev Annette Haigh has moved to the Yorkshire Synod
- Rev Mark Bates has moved to Mersey Synod
- Rev Becca Gilbert has been welcomed into her role as Western Dales Pioneer Minister, Cumbria
- Rev Janet Calderley has been welcomed into ministry within the Lancashire West Missional Partnership
- Rev Daniel Harris has been welcomed and ordained into ministry within the Rochdale, Bury and North Manchester Missional Partnership
- Rev Lee Battle has been welcomed and ordained into ministry within the Manchester South Missional Partnership
- Rev Jacky Embrey has been welcomed into ministry within the Bolton and Salford Missional Partnership

The meeting also remembered the following ministers who had died since the Synod Meeting in October 2019:

- Rev Jack (John) Edward Thompson
- Rev Dr Stanley Russell
- Rev Donald Whitehead
- Rev Cecil Stuart Ross
- Rev Brian Hudson Bailey
- And Mrs Carole Sutcliffe

Good News Stories

- 4 Synod Meeting watched a presentation of the Youth Eco Day which had taken place at Elswick URC
- 5 Rev Ruth Watson introduced a presentation of the yoURChurch online project
- 6 Synod Meeting heard from Rev Martyn Coe who brought a presentation showing the redevelopment of Kendal URC, and introduced Rev Becca Gilbert the new Western Dales Pioneer Minister
- 7 Rev Dave Fraser brought news from the South Area of Synod of their activities at Marple Bridge, Altrincham, Wilmslow and many other churches within that area
- 8 The Synod meeting expressed its thanks for these presentations.
- 9 The Book of Reports was then introduced by the Moderator, and information about the online 'Q&A' sessions which were due to take place over the next four weeks was shared.

Synod Review Update

- 10 Mike Hart (Synod Treasurer) but speaking in his capacity as former Interim Synod Clerk, presented the written report regarding the Synod Review. He acknowledged the input which had been gratefully received from Mel Campbell
- 11 Whilst this was only the initial part of the work of the Synod Review, the need to focus on the needs and challenges facing local churches was central to this work

Pastoral Committee Report

- 12 Rev Dr Marion Tugwood, Convenor of the Synod Pastoral Committee, presented the written report within the Book of Reports. Thanks were expressed to all who serve on the various Pastoral committees within the Synod.

Finance Report

- 13 Mike Hart, in his role as Synod Treasurer, presented the written Finance report, focusing particularly on the need to offer support needed by local churches arising from the Covid crisis.
- 14 The Moderator reminded the meeting about the Q&A meetings over the next few weeks, and that the Synod meeting will reconvene, online, on the 14th November 2020 at 10am.
- 15 The Moderator then adjourned the meeting, closing this part of the Synod meeting with the Grace.

Six Q&A sessions took place on the 14th, 15th and 19th October, and 2nd, 4th and 6th November during which the Synod Review, Pastoral Committee and Finance Reports were all considered.

Saturday 14th November 2020

- 16 Rev Brian Jolly, the Moderator, welcomed members of the Synod to the second part of the Autumn Synod meeting, and constituted the meeting. He then led the meeting in opening worship.

Synod Review Report

- 17 A further presentation was given by Rev Dr Kirsty Thorpe and Mike Hart following the Q&A meetings, during which an amended Resolution 1 was presented.
- 18 Questions of clarification were considered, and Synod Meeting agreed to allow the amended Resolution to be put.
- 19 Synod Meeting then entered into debate on the amended Resolution 1 during which Rev Mike Walsh proposed a further amendment, which was seconded by Rev John Piper. The amended Resolution 1 was debated, and was then accepted by a majority vote of the Synod Meeting.
- 20 The amended Resolution 1 read:

Synod Meeting thanks those who have worked on the review of synod structures and produced the proposals contained in the book of reports and:

- warmly agrees to the principles for the new Synod structures as set out in section 2 of this report and,***
- supports the further development of the proposals as outlined in section 3, concerning membership and terms of reference for the new standing Committees;***
- supports a consultation with local churches and more widely across the Synod, focussed on the role of Missional Partnership Steering Groups within these new structures***

Synod meeting believes that decisions should be made as near to the local as possible, consistent with The Structure of the United Reformed Church. The Synod meeting resolves that

- A facilitation group be formed comprising one representative from each Missional Partnership Steering Group***
- The Revd Doctor Lesley Husselbee be invited to act as convenor***
- The facilitation group will propose its terms of reference and questions to ask the Missional Partnerships to the Synod Executive by the end of this month***
- The group will invite submissions from local churches and individuals***
- The group will consider submissions made so far, in writing or via Zoom***
- The group will form detailed draft proposals***
- The group will work with Synod Executive to shape proposals for consideration at the next Synod Meeting in March 2021***

The Synod meeting notes the target remains to complete these changes by Summer 2021.

- 21 The amended Resolution 1 was then moved, and was passed by the Synod meeting with 94% in favour and 6% against.
- 22 The Moderator thanked all involved in the preparation and presentation of the work of the Synod Review.

Finance Report

- 23 The Treasurer moved Resolution 2:
Synod Meeting notes the Trustees Annual Report and Accounts for 2019
- 24 Resolution 2 was carried with no votes against
- 25 The Moderator thanked the finance team, and especially the Treasurer and Finance Officer for their work on behalf of Synod.
- 26 The Treasurer moved Resolution 3:
Synod Meeting agrees
- ***to support the proposals above to make grants available to local churches in response to the impact of the closures of church buildings; and***
 - ***to note the Trusts commitment of £750,000 from accumulated reserves to support these grants and Synod led support programmes***
- 27 Resolution 3 was carried with no votes against
- 28 Resolution 4 was moved:
The Synod meeting notes the budget for 2021 agreed by the Trust Management Committee
- 29 Resolution 4 was carried with no votes against
- 30 The Moderator expressed thanks to all those working in committees and Synod for their work during the past year.

31 Closing worship was led by two Ministers new to North Western Synod, Rev Lee Battle and Rev Jacky Embrey

The meeting was closed by the Moderator,