

## **Minutes of Synod Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

### **Constitution of the Synod Meeting and Opening Worship**

**1** Synod was invited to formally agree that Rev Clare Downing, Moderator of General Assembly, should Chair the meeting and this was passed unanimously.

**2** Rev Clare Downing expressed thanks to Rev Dr John Bradbury, General Secretary and Rev Elizabeth Gray-King who are sharing in supporting North Western Synod during the period of absence of our Moderator.

**3** Synod Meeting was formally constituted and Rev Dr Catherine Lewis-Smith was co-opted by Synod Meeting to be a voting member of Synod Meetings.

**4** Rev Dr John Bradbury led the Synod Meeting in worship.

**5** The Synod Clerk welcomed Rev John Gordon to ministry at Lancashire West, and Rev Ruth Watson to SCM role at Oasis MediaCity. Synod also remembered those ministers who have died since the last Synod Meeting:

Rev Noel Stancliff

Joyce Laidman

Rev Anthony Wilkinson

Mrs Ruth Clarke

Rev Anne Hunt

## **Executive Committee**

6 The Synod Clerk presented the Executive report from the Book of Reports, and the Resolutions within it were considered as follows:

**Resolution 1 : *Synod endorses and agrees the co-option of Derek Estill, Martin Whiffen, Lee Battle and Louise Gough to their respective Area Committees and renews the appointment of Kirsty Thorpe as Convenor of South Area Pastoral Committee***

7 Resolution 1 was carried with 0 votes against.

**Resolution 2 : *Synod appoints Mike Hart as Synod Treasurer for a further three-year term until March 2024; Rev Martyn Coe as Convenor of Ministries Committee for a further three-year term until March 2024; Rev Dr Lesley Husselbee as Candidate Secretary for a further three-year term until March 2024***

8 Resolution 2 was carried with 0 votes against.

9 The Synod Clerk requested permission to amend Resolution 3 so that “for 12 months until March 2022” was replaced with “until Autumn Synod 2021”. After Synod meeting received assurance that this review would take place as soon as Marion’s period of extended leave enabled it do so, the amended Resolution was moved

**Resolution 3 : *Synod extends Rev Dr Marion Tugwood’s term as Synod Pastoral Convenor until Autumn Synod 2021.***

10 Resolution 3 was passed with a large majority.

**Resolution 4 : *Synod appoints Fozia Aftab and Aftab Mughal jointly to the role of Intercultural and Racial Justice Advocate for the North Western Synod***

11 Resolution 4 was passed with 0 votes against

**Resolution 5 : *Synod approves the appointments of a Training and Learning Mentor, and a Property Officer for Lancashire and Cumbria***

12 Resolution 5 was passed with 0 votes against

13 The Synod Clerk also referred the Synod Meeting to the report from the Keld Project, within the Book of Reports, and moved Resolution 8

**Resolution 8 : *Synod thanks all involved for their work at the Keld Project and continues to encourage and support its ongoing mission.***

**14** Resolution 8 was passed with 0 votes against

## **Pastoral Committee**

**15** Rev Richard Bradley, Convenor of Central Area Pastoral Committee, presented the Synod Pastoral Report which had been written by the three (Central, South and Cumbria) Area Pastoral Convenors in the absence of Synod Pastoral Convenor.

**16** A question from the floor established that deployment figures needed to be the subject of a consultation with the churches Synod-wide.

## **Finance Report**

**17** Mike Hart, Synod Treasurer, presented the Finance Report.

**18** Synod Meeting accepted the reports with thanks.

## **Eco Report**

**19** The Synod Clerk expressed thanks to the Green Apostles who have worked very hard to achieve Eco Synod Status for North Western Synod. The Draft Environmental Policy will be put on the website, and will be brought back to Autumn Synod for approval.

**20** Daleen ten Cate presented the report on behalf of the Green Apostles, identifying Wilmslow, St Annes, Garstang, Chorlton Central, Revidge Fold and Clitheroe URCs as all having now achieved Silver Eco Status, and Bamford Chapel, Westbury Gardens, Trinity and Trinity Brownhill all achieved Bronze Eco Status.

**21** Synod was invited to encourage churches to attend workshops to help them to become Eco Churches and join an evergrowing list.

**22** Synod was reminded that COP26 is being hosted in the United Kingdom in November this year, and information will be circulated to all churches to mark Climate Sunday as we build up to this important event. The Synod Newsletter will make sure everyone is kept fully up to date.

**23** A question from the floor reminded Synod Meeting that Climate Sunday could be held on any Sunday between this meeting and COP26.

## **Renewed Beginnings**

**24** Rev Dr Kirsty Thorpe introduced a presentation focussed on the Renewed Beginnings conversations. Churches, along with many in society, are facing a number of decisions and challenges about the future as we head out of lockdowns. The URC, with all other denominations, is facing decisions about its future. There are, however, resources and experiences to call on to assist those conversations and discussions.

**25** Churches will want to ask “Where are we?” as they consider what has happened; and then “What is happening?” to their community and to their congregations; then ask “What is God asking of us and saying to us?” in the situations which surround churches. Those questions might assist and enable churches in deciding what they do, recognising that doing nothing is not an option. This use of the Pastoral Cycle will be offered to all our Synod churches, with the help and support of online resources, Ministers and Mission Mentors.

**26** Synod was able to watch a video from Westbury Gardens, Blackburn which, with the assistance of Lancashire Mission Mentor, Daleen ten Cate, has already worked through the Renewed Beginnings programme and talked about their experiences and reflections.

**27** Synod Meeting was invited to break into groups considering three questions: “How do you respond to what you have seen in the video, having heard about the Pastoral Cycle and Renewed Beginnings?”; “Is there anything you would like to try in your Church having watched the video?”; “What resources would help you to do that?”. Groups were asked to feedback to Kirsty Thorpe.

**28** Rev Kate Gray expressed her thanks and encouragement of the initiative; Rev Dr Rosalind Selby offered her support for Renewed Beginnings. Rev Daleen ten Cate reminded Synod of additional resources available within North Western Synod in enabling these conversations to take place. Rev Mike Walsh added his encouragement and experience of sharing with the wider community, and Mal Breeze offered the additional help and support of CRCWs within the Synod.

**29** Resolution 6 was moved:

**Resolution 6 : *Synod welcomes the work of ‘Renewed Beginnings’ and supports the steps being proposed to assist and uphold local churches in this way.***

**30** Resolution 6 was passed with 0 votes against.

**Macclesfield and Bollington URC Resolution**

**31** Resolution 7 presented on behalf of Macclesfield and Bollington URC by Rev Fleur Houston. A number of questions from the floor established that the concerns expressed by this Resolution were shared by many in the Synod, but that it was not clear whether the review proposed in the Resolution was the most appropriate way to respond to those concerns. After testing the mood of the meeting, using electronic voting, it was felt that this work might be effectively included in the work of the Renewed Beginnings initiative.

**32** Acknowledging that the sentiments expressed within the Resolution had been heard and recognised as important, by Synod, the Resolution was withdrawn. Rev Martyn Coe, as a co-chair of Synod Executive confirmed that the concerns expressed would be given proper weight within the ongoing discussions of Executive acting on behalf of the Synod.

**Resolution 7 : *Given the fact that the North Western Synod has suffered a decrease in membership of around 15% over two years, a greater decline than any other Synod, that a review be conducted as a matter of urgency to ascertain the reasons and enable Synod effectively to address the challenges.***

**33** This Resolution was withdrawn.

## **Closing Worship**

**34** Rev Clare Downing led closing worship, which included the induction of Rev Ruth Watson into her SCM at MediaCityUK Church, Salford.

**35** Synod Meeting was adjourned until the Autumn Synod Meeting in October 2021 (date to be confirmed)