

Minutes of the Synod Meeting on 25th March 2023 & Minutes of the Extraordinary Synod Meeting on 18th July 2023

Minutes of the Synod Meeting on 25th March 2023

- 1 Synod was invited formally to agree that Revd Dave Herbert, Moderator of Northern Synod, should chair this meeting. This was passed unanimously.
- 2 Revd Dave Herbert thanked the meeting for its invitation, and brought greetings from Northern Synod
- 3 Revd Ruth Watson welcomed all present, in person and via Zoom, to Oasis, Media City UK. Particular welcome to those from Lancashire and Cumbria who had gathered in Kendal URC as a 'hub' connected to the meeting at Oasis.
- 4 Synod Meeting noted that the launch of 'URC Children' in North Western Synod was being marked by a meeting of children at the Oasis building and would hear more of that at closing worship
- 5 Revd Kurauone Mutimwii, Minister in the Greater Manchester South and Cheshire Missional Partnership led opening worship, accompanied by his wife, Nancy. During Opening worship, Revd Dr Robert Hoch was inducted by Revd Dave Herbert into Ministry in the United Reformed Church under a Certificate of Eligibility from the Presbyterian Church (USA).
- 6 The minutes of the meetings of 15th October 2022 and 20th February 2023 were agreed as true records, subject to the correction to the spelling of a name.
- 7 There were two matters arising:
 - a. The Synod Clerk confirmed that following the Extraordinary Synod meeting on the 20th February 2023, Mersey Synod Meeting had taken place on the 11th March 2023. During that meeting, Mersey Synod had voted to affirm the request of Macclesfield & Bollington URC to join

Mersey from North Western. The Synod Clerk confirmed that a joint resolution from the two Synods would now be sent to General Assembly for the final discernment of change of Synod to be considered during the 2023 meeting at Swanwick.

b. The Synod Treasurer reported the steps which had been taken following Resolution 7 being passed at the Autumn 2022 Synod meeting

8 Under Pastoral News, Synod remembered two churches which have closed since the Autumn 2022 meeting:

Sale – with memories from former Church Secretary, Hilary Grierson

Halton – with memories from former Church Secretary David Normington

The meeting noted the joining of George Lane and Hatherlow URCs to form a single congregation. Although the churches are already worshipping together, the formal service marking their joining will take place at the end of April 2023.

9 The meeting remembered four ministers within North Western Synod who had died since the Autumn meeting:

Marjorie Ayton	27 th October 2022
Norman George	8 th November 2022
Arthur Baker	10 th November 2022
Joyce Yates	22 nd March 2023

A brief obituary was given for each, other than for Joyce Yates, who will be remembered at the Autumn Synod.

10 The meeting noted four ministers who have retired

Michelle Jarmany
Brian Jolly
Lis Mullen
Rosalind Selby

- 11 and noted one minister who had moved
Marion Tugwood
- 12 Synod welcomed two ministers who have joined the URC North Western Synod under Certificates of Eligibility:
Noel Irwin
Robert Hoch
- 13 and welcomed two ministers who had moved within the Synod:
Jonnie Hill, who had moved to the East Cheshire and Derbyshire Borders Missional Partnership
Kate Gray, who had joined the Partnership ministry team within the Manchester and Salford Urban Missional Partnership
- 14 The Clerk corrected an omission from the Autumn 2022 Synod meeting where the movement of two ministers had been omitted:
Catherine Lewis-Smith, to chaplaincy in Salford
Mike Aspinall to East Cheshire and Derbyshire Borders Missional Partnership
- 15 Revd Dave Herbert led the meeting in a short prayer for all those mentioned above
- 16 The Synod Clerk introduced the Book of Reports, and presented the paper on behalf of the Executive Committee. This included consideration of two resolutions:
Resolution 1 : Synod meeting agrees to delay discussion and agreement of the separation of Synod Trust and Synod Resources Committee until the Autumn 2023 Synod Meeting
- 17 Resolution 1 was passed with 0 votes against
- 18 ***Resolution 2 : Synod Meeting appoints Revd Alison Termie as Convenor of South Area Pastoral Committee until Spring 2025 Synod Meeting***

- 19 Resolution 2 was passed with 0 votes against
- 20 Revd John Gordon presented a resolution inviting Synod meeting to address the Illegal Migration Bill currently going through Parliament.
- 21 Synod meeting noted that JPIT and the General Secretary of the United Reformed Church had already made statements against elements of this Bill, but confirmed a wish to express concerns on behalf of North Western Synod
- 22 Discussion over the wording of the resolution led to a small group being delegated by the Synod Meeting to redraft the resolution and return to it later in the business.
- 23 Lawrence Heath-Moore presented a report on YoURChurch, and invited Synod meeting to consider Resolution 4

Resolution 4 : Synod meeting recommends to General Assembly that YoURChurch becomes a recognised Church

- 24 Resolution 4 was passed with 0 votes against
- 25 The Synod Clerk invited questions or comments on the reports covering Finance, Missional and Discipleship, Eco, Trust, Safeguarding and Nominations.
- 26 The Synod Clerk referred Synod Meeting to the Pastoral Committee report, and to appendix 5 which collates guidance from various sources on the roles and responsibilities of Elders.
- 27 Elizabeth Gray-King (Synod Pastor) and Rob Hoch (Training and Learning Mentor) led the meeting in considering the deployment of ordained ministry across the Synod. Synod Meeting was offered maps of the Synod, showing the location of churches and Partnership boundaries, and asked to think about the most effective deployment of ministry within those confines and recognising the limited number of ordained Ministers of Word and Sacraments available
- 28 It was hoped that this information and thoughts might be shared locally with churches, and highlighted the value,

importance and significance of the other ministries available to the Synod: CRCWs, Elders, lay leaders, members, local preachers and myriad others who enable the work of the churches to continue

29 Synod meeting took a break for lunch

30 Following the lunch break, the group delegated to work on the resolution challenging elements of the Illegal Migration Bill presented a resolution amended to read as follows:

Resolution 3 : North Western Synod expresses deep concern that His Majesty's Government is proposing to ban people seeking asylum from re-entering through any means the United Kingdom if they cross the Channel in small boats.

The North Western Synod strongly objects to the above proposal since it contravenes the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1953) of which the United Kingdom is a signatory.

North Western Synod invites General Assembly to write in the strongest possible terms to His Majesty's Government objecting to this proposal

31 Resolution 3 was passed with 0 votes against

32 Revd Dave Herbert presented the Bronze Eco Award to Daleen ten Cate, on behalf of the North Western Synod and congratulated her and all those who had worked extremely hard to ensure and enable this to happen. North Western is only the second Synod to have achieved Bronze status.

33 Andy Littlejohns, CRCW at Chorley URC, gave a short presentation to Synod Meeting on his work

34 The Synod Clerk presented the Communications Committee report and Synod Meeting watched the newly produced video promoting Missional Partnerships. It is intended that this video be made available to ministers looking at a possible call to ministry in the North Western Synod.

- 35** The Synod Clerk welcomed Revd Alison Termie as Convenor of South Area Pastoral Committee.
- 36** Synod Meeting was advised of the appointment of Revd Clare Downing as Transitional Synod Moderator. She will begin in post on 1st June 2023, and her induction will take place at Chorley United Reformed Church on Saturday 10th June 2023 at 3pm
- 37** The Synod Clerk welcomed Peter Smith, who has joined Synod staff as Finance Manager. The Synod Clerk also welcomed Claire Macintyre in her new position as Deputy Synod Clerk, and Kerry Later in her new position as Synod Office Manager and Personal Assistant to the Moderator
- 38** The Synod Clerk thanked Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe (in her absence) on behalf of Synod Meeting for her work in and for Synod, most recently as South Area Pastoral Committee Convenor, and wished her well in her forthcoming retirement.
- 39** Elizabeth Hall, (Convenor of Ministries and Learning) and Rob Hoch, (Training and Learning Mentor) expressed congratulations to ministers who have recently completed a sabbatical :
- Graham Tarn
Liz Kam
Ruth Wollaston
- 40** The Synod Clerk thanked everyone involved for their preparation for, presentations during, and attendance at, the Synod Meeting. Revd Dave Herbert was thanked for chairing the meeting. Synod Meeting expressed its thanks to all with applause.
- 41** Leo Roberts (CYDO) led Synod in Closing Worship, reminding the meeting of the children who had been together during the day, partying and celebrating.
- 42** Synod Meeting was adjourned until 7th October 2023 at Lancaster Royal Grammar School, Lancaster.

Minutes of the Extraordinary Synod Meeting on 18th July 2023

- 1 Revd Clare Downing, Moderator of North Western Synod welcoming everyone to this online extraordinary meeting.
- 2 The Moderator led the meeting in opening devotions and prayer.
- 3 The Synod Clerk presented the proposal from Executive Committee to re-start the Synod Children and Youth Work Committee.
- 4 There were no questions, and Synod Meeting moved to consider Resolution 1 as follows:
- 5 ***Resolution 1 : Synod agrees to the re-establishment of the Children and Youth Work Committee***
- 6 Resolution 1 was passed with 57 votes for and 0 votes against
- 7 Synod meeting viewed the video recorded by Elizabeth Gray-King and Elizabeth Hall (“Two new posts?”) introducing the proposal by Executive to consider two new Synod appointments – Ecumenical Mentor and Transitional Minister.
- 8 Revd Richard Bradley (Convenor of Mission and Discipleship Committee) presented the proposal for the creation of a new Synod post of Transitional Minister.
- 9 In response to questions, Richard clarified the difference between the role of Transitional Minister and Interim Moderator; Richard also clarified some of the possible opportunities for work across Synod by this new post holder.
- 10 The Transitional Minister will report to Synod Pastoral Committee, and have a Management Committee to provide personal support.
- 11 At the conclusion of questions, Synod meeting moved to consider Resolution 3:

- 12** *Resolution 3 : Synod Meeting agrees to the appointment of a Transitional Minister to be called to the North Western Synod, and to be deployed by Synod Pastoral Committee within its Missional Partnerships*
- 13** Resolution 3 was passed with 51 votes in favour and 6 votes against.
- 14** Elizabeth Hall (Convenor for Ministries and Learning) presented the proposal for the appointment of an Ecumenical Mentor.
- 15** In response to questions, Elizabeth confirmed that Synod Executive was aware of proposals going to General Assembly for denomination wide ecumenical appointments.
- 16** Discussion focused on the proposal of the post holder as a minister coming from Synod deployment figures, and Revd John Piper proposed an amendment to the resolution, replacing the word “appointment” with “employment”.
- 17** This amendment was passed with 48 for and 9 against
- 18** Further discussion established that this post can be accommodated within the Synod budget, and that it would relieve pressure on the existing Area Ecumenical Officers who combine that role with other responsibilities.
- 19** At the conclusion of questions, Synod meeting moved to consider Resolution 2, as amended:
- 20** *Resolution 2 : Synod meeting agrees to the employment of an Ecumenical Mentor to work alongside the Moderator, Ministers and churches within North Western Synod in developing and building ecumenical relationships.*
- 21** Resolution 2 was passed with 54 votes for and 3 against.
- 22** The business of the Extraordinary Meeting was concluded with thanks to Dan Morrell and the tech team who had facilitated the meeting, and to all those attending.
- 23** The meeting was closed with prayer.

