

**The United Reformed Church
National Synod of Wales**

Minutes of the eighty eighth meeting of the National Synod of Wales of the
United Reformed Church

Held on Saturday 15th October 2016 at Carno Community Centre

Attendance:

Attendance cards returned indicated: 72 people present.

Of these, 56 were voting members (30 church representatives, 14 active ministers, 2 CRCWs, 9 Synod Post Holders and 1 ecumenical guest) and 16 were non-voting attendees (3 retired ministers and 13 visitors).

Apologies for absence were received from:

Revd Richard Bellingham, Michelle Berry (Salisbury Park), Marion Bond (Llandudno), Revd Phil Challis, Revd Colin Foreman, Revd Stephen Gilbert, Revd Michael Hodgson, Revd Neil Kirkham, Revd Brian Matthews, Revd Leslie Noon, Lyn Oelmann (Synod Elder), Revd Shelagh Pollard, Revd Martin Spain, Verena Walder (Mumbers), Revd Phil Wall, Revd Hugh-John Wilson, Revd Denise Yeadon.

Apologies were noted from the following ecumenical guests:

Canon Aled Edwards	Cytûn
David Glyn Williams	Union of Welsh Independents
Denise Harris	Roman Catholic
Jennie Hurd	Synod Cymru, Methodist Church
Joao Paulo Ramos	Salvation Army

The Moderator welcomed people to Synod Meeting, which would be chaired by the Revd Adrian Bulley (Synod Clerk).

- 1. Opening Worship** was led by Paul Robinson and Simon Walkling. During the course of worship, Mrs Mollie Neate was inducted as a Synod Elder and the following Ministers and Elders who had died since the last Synod Meeting were remembered:

The Revd Keith Forecast	Old Colwyn
Peter Devaney	Salisbury Park, Wrexham
Eryl Evans	Barry Uniting
Geoff Griffiths	Beulah, Rhiwbina
Myfanwy Higgins	Rhyl

David James	St. David's, Aberystwyth
Shem Morgan	Tabernacle, Llanvaches
Doris Newns	Stow Park, Newport
Non Owen	St. John's with Bagillt, Flint
Stella Rex	Cwmbran

The Revd Leonard Phelps was recognised for having completed 50 years' service since Ordination, and the Revd Peter Nunn was likewise recognised for 15 years' service

2. Introductions and Notices

The following Ministers who had moved into the Synod since the last Synod Meeting were greeted:

The Revd Stephen Best	Tongwynlais and Cardiff area
The Revd David Yeo Poulton	Dee Estuary Pastorate

Since the last meeting of Synod, the Revd Chris Tolley had been granted retirement on grounds of ill health.

Two ministers are expected to retire before the next meeting of Synod:

The Revd Chris Coe	Rural Chaplain
The Revd Samantha Caton	Torfaen Pastorate

Acknowledgement was made of those who will be completing their service to the Synod as Interim Moderators:

The Revd Linda Elliott	Dee Estuary Pastorate
The Revd Brian Matthews	Alun Vale Pastorate
Mr Chris Byrne	Alun Vale Pastorate
The Revd Adrian Bulley	Valleys Pastorate

The following Elders have been Ordained since the last meeting of Synod:

Henry Edwards	Hanover, Llanover
Pamela Harrison	Rhos-on-Sea
Karen Hughes	Rhos-on-Sea
Kate Lane	Rhos-on-Sea
Roy Marchant	Pennorth
Christine Randall	Rhyl
Peter Sobers	City, Cardiff

Chiara Strazzulla

City Cardiff

The following ecumenical guests were welcomed:

Christine Shelley

Religious Society of Friends

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 27th February 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by Adrian Bulley as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Moderator of General Assembly, the Revd Kevin Watson

Unfortunately, Kevin Watson was unable to be present at Synod Meeting due to ill health.

6. Synod Purpose, Priorities and Strategy:**a) Synod Purpose****Resolution 1:**

Synod Meeting approves the Synod Purpose as a basis for its work

Approved by agreement.

b) Regional Pastoral Committees

Adrian Bulley emphasised that a good degree of flexibility is envisaged with the membership and functions of Regional Pastoral Committees. Judy Harris recommended that there should be a Safeguarding element to the functions and some concerns were expressed regarding maintaining national coherence.

Resolution 2:

Synod Meeting resolves to move towards

a) a Synod Pastoral Committee, and

b) Regional Pastoral Committees: accepting the changes to its structure and method of working.

Agreed by consensus.

c) **Transitional Ministry**

An update was presented by Adrian Bulley.

Adrian clarified that Transitional Ministry does not primarily involve leading of worship or pastoral care, but is about helping a congregation or group of congregations to transition from where they are now to wherever God is calling them to be in the future. Ecumenical conversations are an important aspect of each Transitional Minister's role. In response to a question, he also clarified that the roles of Transitional Minister and Interim Moderator are distinct from each other.

7. Finance and Property Board/Wales Trust:

a) **2015 Accounts**

Chris Atherton reported that for the third year running there has been a small surplus. The new accounting procedures allow for better forecasting and anticipation of needs.

Thanks were expressed by Stow Park for their recent Mission Development Fund grant.

Resolution 4:

Synod Meeting agrees to receive the accounts for 2015 as summarised in Appendix A.

Agreed unanimously.

b) **2017 Budgets**

In approving the budget, local churches were challenged to contribute the sum of £5 per member per annum so that the work of the Synod can continue and does not have to rely heavily on other synods.

Resolution 5:

Synod Meeting approves the Budget for the Synod General Fund for 2017 as set out in Appendix B.

Agreed unanimously.

Resolution 6:

Synod Meeting approves the Budget for the Synod Training Fund for 2017 as set out in Appendix B.

Agreed unanimously.

c) **Policy for Redundant Property**

Resolution 7:

Synod Meeting approves the Policy for Redundant Property as set out in Appendix C.

Agreed unanimously.

8. Yellow Bags – the journey so far

There had been excellent feed-back following the ‘Big Day Out’. Members present at Synod Meeting shared how the filling and receiving of the yellow bags had helped their churches, not least to develop a greater sense of connectedness. The next ‘Big Day Out’ is scheduled for 2019.

9. Feasts and Festivals

David Salsbury gave a presentation about ‘Feasts and Festivals’: a theme for celebration during 2017. For further information, resources are available on the Feasts and Festivals dedicated pages of the main URC website. More details are also available by e-mailing:

feastsandfestivals@urc.org.uk.

10. Shared Synod Panel

Resolution 3:

The National Synod of Wales, meeting in plenary session on the 15th October 2016 resolves as follows:

- 1. To join with South Western, Wessex and West Midlands synods (The Sharing Synods) in constituting a Shared Synod Panel in accordance with Paragraph B.2.2 of the Ministerial Disciplinary Process, which said Panel shall come into being when all the Sharing Synods have passed this enabling resolution and at a date to be agreed by the Sharing Synods (“the formation date”), at which date the Shared Synod Panel shall come into existence.**
- 2. In conjunction with the other Sharing Synods and no later than the formation date, to appoint persons onto the Shared Synod Panel in compliance with Paragraph B.2.2.1 and one person (who may be a Panel member)**

to act as Co-ordinator in compliance with Paragraph B.2.2.3.

- 3. To continue to maintain its separate Synod Panel until the formation date, following which it shall cease to exist.**

Carried unanimously.

11. Reports to Synod, that are not the subject of resolutions

A few observations were expressed relating to Reports that had been previously circulated:

The Synod eNewsletter was commended for being useful and informative (Synod Council Report item 3.3).

The Training and Development Officer (South) post had received no applications so there will now be a process of re-thinking. (item 6.1G of the Synod Elders' Report).

Chris Atherton reported that in Section 8.6 of the FPB & Trust Report, a further grant from the Daphne & Bethan Jones Memorial Fund of £750 was made to Penrhys to fund a holiday break.

There were no further questions/comments arising from the Reports to Synod.

12. General Assembly Resolutions

Resolution 8:

The National Synod of Wales does not object to the to the Assembly resolution concerning Appeal, Reference and Constitutional Review (2016:3).

Agreed unanimously.

Resolution 9:

The National Synod of Wales does not object to the Assembly resolution concerning URC Youth representation on Synods and General Assembly (2016:42).

Agreed unanimously.

13. Engaging with Mental Health Issues

Kirsty Mabbott and Helen Stenson (respectively) gave moving, personal accounts of coping with mental ill health and caring for a family member who has mental health issues.

Some discussion followed which highlighted: talking about mental health with individuals helps to relieve isolation; it is good for churches to be aware of the help that is available so they can signpost effectively and become part of the network of support. Churches are also encouraged to consider ways to become more welcoming towards those with mental health issues. It was suggested that Synod could sign the 'Time to Change Wales' pledge (a public declaration expressing willingness to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination).

14. Marking the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Aberfan Disaster

In addition to Jeanne Jones' written memories of the Aberfan tragedy in which 116 children and 28 adults died, Nanette Lewis-Head and Ivor Rees also shared moving accounts of their experiences of that day.

Closing worship was led by Nanette Lewis-Head.

The meeting closed, with the sharing of Grace, at 3.15pm.