

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

Yr **Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig**
Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru

Cyfarfod Synod y Gwanwyn
Spring Synod Meeting

Saturday 6th March 2021

Yr Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru
The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales

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1. Meeting Arrangements

SESSION 1

09:00 – 09:30

Gathering in breakout rooms for conversation

SESSION 2

09:30 – 11:00

Opening Worship and Commemorations

Minutes of Autumn 2020 Synod Meeting (<https://bit.ly/2VnRH4e>)

Notices

Equipping Elders

Synod Sundays

Local church story: Christ Well, Swansea – ‘Being a food hub’

SESSION 3

11:15 – 12:45

2019 Accounts ([resolution 3](#))

Decisions with Financial Implications ([resolution 4](#))

Synod Environmental Policy ([resolution 2](#))

Signing of ‘[The Time Is Now](#)’ Declaration

Pattern of future Synod meetings ([resolution 1](#))

Breakout group discussion

Please come ready to show or describe something that has helped your church through lockdowns and restrictions, and to share what could be the next step to build on what has helped.

Local church story: Rivertown, Shotton – ‘Using Advent boxes’

Reports to Synod

Closing worship

2. Synod Officers' Meeting

FOR DECISION:

3.1 **Reflecting on the Experience of a Virtual Synod Meeting**

The meeting has spent a considerable amount of time evaluating the virtual Synod Meeting held in October 2020, using both the feedback received from groups on the day, and that submitted subsequently. The lessons learned will impact upon the programme for this meeting, which is also to be virtual.

One question that was raised by several respondents and about which Synod Meeting's input is requested, is the possibility of having one Synod Meeting in person and one Synod Meeting as a virtual meeting each year. [[resolution 1](#)]

FOR NOTING:

3.2 **General Assembly 2021**

The following will represent the National Synod of Wales at General Assembly 2021 (Friday 9th to Monday 12th July):

Minister/CRCW

Jason Askew *
Julia Bartholomew
Julie Kirby
Martha McInnes
Kathryn Price
Adella Pritchard *
Simon Walkling *
Phil Wall

Elder/Lay Person

Chris Atherton
Tia Breese †
Judy Harris
Korey Randall †
David Turner †
Ben Walkling †
Sandra Wallace *
Kate Wolsey

* Mission Council reps † ≤25

3.3 **Moderator of General Assembly 2022-2023**

No nominations were received by the deadline of 31st December 2020.

3.4 **Synod Structure Review**

As reported to Synod Meeting in October 2020, the Synod Officers' Meeting asked David Salsbury and Margery Davies to undertake a review of the Synod structure. The report of that review has now been received and considered. As a result, opinions are being sought from boards and committees in time for further consideration to be given in July 2021.

FOR INFORMATION:

3.5 Communications

The meeting continues to oversee communications in its broadest sense, including the eNewsletter, website and social media.

3.6 Nominations

The up to date (at the time of the compilation of these papers) report of Nominations is included at [Appendix A](#).

3.7 Synod Safeguarding Officer

This part-time post has been advertised with a closing date of 11th February.

Resolution 1: Pattern of Future Synod Meetings

Synod Meeting resolves to have a Synod Meeting each year in person and a Synod Meeting each year virtually from 1st January 2022, and to evaluate the arrangement after three years.


The United Reformed Church
National Synod of Wales
Yr Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig
Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru

EQUIPPING ELDERS:
**Jesus welcomes
people on the way**

**Developing welcoming
and inclusive churches**

**Helping elders reflect upon their
church's life and attitudes to disability**

Saturday 20th March 2021
09:30 – 12.30

E-mail meetingsupport.urcwales@urc.org.uk
to register and obtain the Zoom link

3. Synod Pastoral Committee

FOR NOTING:

3.1 **Synod Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (OEIR)**

An appointing group consisting of Simon Walkling, Adrian Bulley, Philip Brooks (URC Secretary for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations), Branwen Rees (East Wales Regional Minister) and Christine Roberts (Barry Uniting Church) met with the Revd Martin Spain on Thursday 7th January. Following a presentation by Martin and a time of conversation, and after careful consideration, the group invited Martin to accept the role of OEIR, which he has subsequently done.

With the support of the committee, an application was submitted to the Accreditation's Sub-committee for a Certificate of Limited Service, and that certificate has been granted.

Concurrence has now been given by the committee, and it is anticipated that Martin will commence in the role in June 2021.

3.2 **Equipping Elders: Jesus Welcomes People on the Way**

This event was scheduled to take place in June 2020 in Llandrindod Wells, but had to be postponed due to Covid-19 restrictions. It is now re-scheduled to take place online on Saturday 20th March with the twin aims of developing welcoming and inclusive churches and helping elders reflect upon their church's life and attitudes to disability. Please register to obtain the Zoom link. Further details [above](#).

FOR INFORMATION:

3.3 **Pastoral Supervision of Ministers and CRCWs**

The committee has approved proposals regarding training and appropriate relationships for supervisors, and will review both in December 2023, or when further guidance is received from URC Ministries.

3.4 **Deployment of Ministers**

The meeting has considered projections for minister numbers and has asked a small subgroup to consider the implications and bring recommendations to a future meeting.

3.5 **Active Ministers**

It was agreed that both Stephen Best and Brian Clarke remain on the roll of ministers whilst out of appointment, for a period of two years to 30th November 2022.

3.6 **Safer Sacred Space**

Update training has now been completed for all those eligible. Initial training will be arranged in 2021 for those who still need to complete it.

3.7 **Additional Ministry Funding Pilot Scheme**

The committee has extended by twelve months the terms of service of both Mathias Tchatchoua at Stow Park and Miara Rabearisoa in Mid-Wales

3.8 **Church Closure**

Notice has been received that the church at Cefn y Bedd, Cilmery closed effective 29th July 2020.

3.9 **Bridgend United Area**

A vacancy was declared, effective 1st December 2020, and Mrs Judith Stinton appointed as Interim Moderator.

3.10 **Reviews**

- a) Mrs Jill Shelton, Local Church Leader at Senghenydd. As it has not been possible to carry out an in person review due to restrictions and lockdown, the committee has extended this post by eighteen months.
- b) Mr Phil Rickards, Local Church Leader at Edwardsville. As it has not been possible to carry out an in person review due to restrictions and lockdown, the committee has extended this post by eighteen months.

3.11 **Synod Sundays**

It was agreed to offer online worship on behalf of the Synod on the fifth Sundays of each month for a trial period of two years. A small group was convened to make plans. The first of these resources – ‘Surprises, Solidarity and Salvation’ – was launched for Sunday 31st January and is available on the synod’s YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/3cEGKVL>.

4. Mission and Discipleship Board

FOR DECISION:

4.1 **Synod Environmental Policy**

At this meeting we hope that the draft Synod Environmental Policy ([Appendix B](#)), which was introduced at the Autumn 2020 Synod Meeting and commended to local churches for consideration, will be adopted. [[resolution 2](#)]

FOR NOTING:

4.2 **General Matters**

The 'A More Able Church' steering group now comes under the umbrella of the Mission and Discipleship Board and will continue their work of encouraging churches to have a more open attitude to disabilities (both visible and hidden) and how we can unlock the talents of everyone in our churches and not just the usual volunteers. This will be touched on in the 'Equipping Elders' online event planned for 20th March – see the [flier](#) on page 6.

Following the success of the Advent boxes, there are now Lent resources available entitled 'Walking Towards Easter Together' suitable for all ages to help reduce isolation and offer hope in challenging times. See <https://bit.ly/3rysrX6>.

4.3 **Climate Change and Environmental Matters**

The Synod environmental webinars "And God said, 'Take care of ...'" have continued and are growing in popularity. In December Cynan Llwyd from Christian Aid Wales led us in thinking about how we take care of each other – in our local communities and churches and the wider world with particular emphasis on Ethiopia which Christian Aid was hi-lighting throughout Advent.

The most recent webinar was held at the end of January and was led by Rosie James from Cardiff Council Parks Service who is also a member at Barry Uniting Church and is a landscape architect. She looks at policy and strategy for public spaces and tries to focus on our connection with the land. Claire Boot also introduced herself in her new role as Synod Property Officer.

It is not too late to watch the webinars: a video of each can be found on the synod's YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/3cEGKVL>.

The next webinar will be on the evening of Thursday 25th March and is entitled 'And God said ... Do not be silent' and will look at how we can engage with our politicians – see the [flier](#) on page 12.

With COP26 (UN Climate Change Conference) due to take place in Glasgow in November, churches are being invited to hold a Climate Sunday service anytime

between now and 5th September. At this service, congregations are encouraged to make a commitment to greater action to address climate change in their own places of worship and communities: <https://www.climatesunday.org/>

Individuals and churches are also being encouraged to sign The Time is Now Declaration: <https://thetimeisnow.uk/>

4.4 **Outward Looking Church**

One aspect that the Mission and Discipleship Board want to look at over the coming months is how to make our churches more outward looking. Some are very good at working with their local communities, identifying needs, then helping to meet them, but how can we encourage more to look beyond their walls? One easy way is to engage with the work of JPIT (Joint Public Issues Team) of which the URC is a part: <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/>.

FOR INFORMATION:

4.5 **Mission Committee**

The URC Mission Committee met via Zoom at the beginning of February and over two days covered a variety of topics including resolutions for General Assembly on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories; the continuing work of Fresh Expressions and Walking the Way; and the upcoming webinars from CWM and Global and Intercultural Ministries, details of which were in February's [Synod eNewsletter](#).

Resolution 2: Synod Environmental Policy

Synod Meeting adopts the Synod Environmental Policy as set out in [Appendix B](#).

5. Finance and Property Board/Trust Company

FOR DECISION:

5.1 **2019 Accounts**

The United Reformed Church (Wales) Trust Company Accounts were received by FPB and approved by Trust Company Directors, noting that all funds were operating within budget and a surplus had resulted for the sixth consecutive year. This is the first year of accounts audited by our new Auditors Azets (Baldwins as was on appointment as Auditors), the layout of these accounts is very different from our previous accounts, following the provisions for a charitable entity audit rather than a company audit with charitable purposes. A summary is included at [Appendix C](#) (page 25). The full accounts are available here: <https://bit.ly/2OE3f3g>. [[resolution 3](#)]

5.2 **Decisions with Financial Implications**

One of the things highlighted by the recent review of the synod structures was the question of budgets for boards and committees, and the cost implications of decisions taken outside of the Finance and Property Board/Trust (FPB&T) meetings. As an initial response it was agreed that a resolution would be brought to Synod Meeting asking that all matters with financial implications should be brought to the FPB&T prior to implementation, mirroring the system that General Assembly has in place. [[resolution 4](#)]

FOR NOTING:

5.3 **Appointment of Property Officer**

Following the retirement of Mrs Suzanne Cole on the 31st October 2020, the Trust is delighted to announce that Ms. Claire Boot has accepted the role of Property Officer for three days a week. Initially on secondment from her role of Meeting Support until the 31st December 2020 and appointed formally from 1st January 2021.

5.4 **Appointment of Meeting Support Officer**

Following the secondment and appointment of Ms. Claire Boot to the Property Officer role, the Trust has appointed Mrs Niccy Ling to the Meeting Support role with effect from 1st January 2021. Many of you will remember that Niccy worked for the Synod before in an administrative role.

5.5 **Secondment of Revd Adrian Bulley**

The Trust has agreed a request from the United Reformed Church that Revd Adrian Bulley be seconded for 50% of his working time as Assistant General

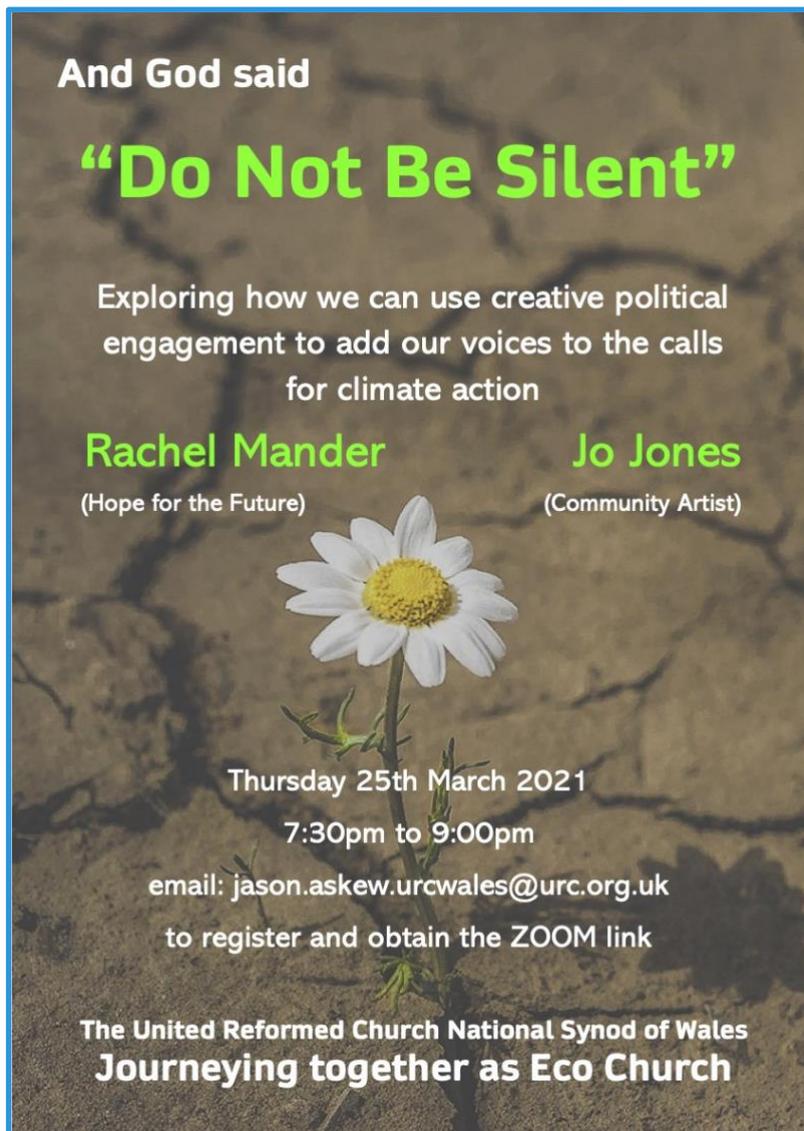
Secretary for seven months from 1st January 2021. Both the Synod and Trust are very pleased to be able to support the work of the general secretariat in this way.

Resolution 3: 2019 Accounts

Synod Meeting receives the accounts for 2019 as summarised in [Appendix C](#).

Resolution 4: Decisions with Financial Implications

Synod Meeting agrees that all resolutions and decisions by Synod boards and committees which have financial implications should henceforth be presented to the Finance and Property Board/Trust for approval prior to implementation.



And God said

“Do Not Be Silent”

Exploring how we can use creative political engagement to add our voices to the calls for climate action

Rachel Mander (Hope for the Future) **Jo Jones** (Community Artist)

Thursday 25th March 2021
7:30pm to 9:00pm
email: jason.askew.urcwales@urc.org.uk
to register and obtain the ZOOM link

The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales
Journeying together as Eco Church

Appendix A: Nominations Report

Synod Officers

Synod Moderator

Simon Walkling 2012 – 2024

Synod Clerk

Adrian Bulley 2015 –

Trust Company Secretary and Synod Treasurer

Chris Atherton 2006 –

Training and Development Officer

Jason Askew 2020 –

Children and Youth Development Officer (CYDO)

Judy Harris 2014 –

Safeguarding Officer

Judy Harris

Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Martin Spain (from 1 June 2021) 2021 –

Synod Office Staff

Moderator's PA, Office Manager and Cashier

Helen Stenson

Property Officer

Claire Boot

Finance Assistant

Gaynor Morgan

Meeting Support

Niccy Ling

Synod Boards and Committees

The Synod Moderator and Synod Clerk are ex-officio members of all Boards and Committees

Synod Pastoral Committee

Representatives of Regional Pastoral Committees:

North Wales	Paul Robinson or Keith Harrison
East Wales	Branwen Rees
Cardiff and Penarth	Martha McInnes
Valleys and Vale	Phil Wall
Swansea	Verena Walder (pro tem)
Pembrokeshire	Stella Hayton
Mid Wales	Miara Rabearisoa
Bridgend United Area	Teddy Kalongo
Brecon Beacons	Julie Kirby

Northern College (co-opted) Graham Adams

Ex officio

Training and Development Officer

Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Finance and Property Board

Convener	Ian Lloyd-Parry	2008 – 2022
Secretary	Property Officer	
Members:	Sheila Jones	2018 – 2023
	Lyn Oelmann	2018 – 2021
	Graham Powell	2018 – 2023
	Alison Tansom	2021 – 2023

Ex officio

Trust Company Secretary and Synod Treasurer

Office Manager and Cashier

Property Officer

Mission and Discipleship Board

Convener	Branwen Rees	2021 – 2023
Members:	Julia Bartholomew	2021 – 2023
	Judith Dolben	2018 – 2023
	Sarah Edwards	2018 – 2021
	Martin Spain	2021 – 2023

Ex officio

Training and Development Officer
Children and Youth Development Officer
Representative to URC Mission Committee
Green Advocate

Synod Office Management Group

Synod Clerk (Convener)
Office Manager (Secretary)
Trust Company Secretary and Synod Treasurer

Line Managers' Meeting

Synod Clerk (Convener)
Together with those in the Synod with line management responsibilities for officers and staff.

Wales District Council

Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (Convener)
Synod Clerk (Secretary)
Synod Moderator
Synod Treasurer
Together with others drawn together relevant to the location of the church being considered.

Safeguarding Reference Group

Safeguarding Officer (Convener)
Trust Secretary
Ann Bulley
Heather Salisbury

Other Appointments

To General Assembly Councils/Committees/Panels, etc.

Mission Council/ Assembly Executive	Synod Moderator Training and Development Officer Adella Pritchard Sandra Wallace	2021 – 2023 2019 – 2021
Nominations Committee	Synod Clerk	
Mission Committee	Branwen Rees	2018 – 2022
Listed Buildings Advisory Cttee	Property Officer	
Joint Panel (Disciplinary)	Martin Spain Linda Elliott	2010 – 2021 2014 – 2021

To other URC networks, etc.

Green Advocate	Eileen Newington	2020 – 2022
Rural Church Advocate	Ian Kirby	2018 – 2022
PLATO	Property Officer	
URC Youth Representative	<i>vacant</i>	
Pilots Officer	Children and Youth Development Officer	
Stepwise Co-ordinator	Training and Development Officer	

Synod Representatives to Joint Synod Panel (Ministerial Discipline)

Co-ordinator:	Synod Clerk
Members:	Pat Davies Allan Morgan Ian Lloyd Parry Judith Negus

URC (Wales) Trust Company Limited

Convener Ian Lloyd Parry

Company Secretary Chris Atherton

Assistant Secretary Property Officer

Trustees:

Trust Appointed:

Colin Grimes annual appointment

Ian Lloyd-Parry annual appointment

Synod Appointed:

Chris Byrne 2021 – 2023

Ian Kirby 2018 – 2023

Diane Moverley 2021 – 2023

Sandra Wallace 2017 – 2022

1 vacancy

Synod Panel for Interviewing Ministerial Candidates

Co-ordinator: Training and Development Officer

Members:

Julie Kirby

Kathryn Price

Christine Roberts

Jill Shelton

Ecumenical Appointments Made by Synod

Christian Aid	Ceri George	2019 – 2021
Commission of Covenanting Churches	Synod Moderator Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Pat Davies	2018 – 2023
Commission of Covenanting Churches – Faith and Order Group	Synod Clerk	
Cytûn Trustee	Synod Moderator	
Cytûn Racial Justice Network	Racial Justice Advocate	
Cytûn Laser Group	Synod Clerk	
URC/PCW Liaison Group	Synod Moderator Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Lynda Bull Mike Dugdale Wendy Tansill Mathias Tchatchoua	2020 – 2022 2017 – 2022 2021 – 2023 2020 – 2022
URC/Methodist Liaison Group	Synod Moderator Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations Noel Davies Colin Harrison Stella Hayton	2021 – 2023 2016 – 2021 2021 – 2023
Church in Wales Governing Body	Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	
Covenanted Baptists	Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations	

Appendix B: Draft Synod Environmental Policy

SUMMARY

1. **Purpose**

As the National Synod of Wales of the United Reformed Church we affirm with General Assembly that care for Creation, a just sharing of the world's resources, and protecting the environment are fundamental Gospel commitments and central to our discipleship.

2. **Introduction**

God calls us to be partners in God's ongoing creative, renewing and redeeming activity; commands us to act justly and in righteousness not only towards all humanity but to all Creation; and requires us to care for Creation so that future generations may enjoy it and benefit from it.

In March 2019 the National Synod of Wales adopted the document The National Synod of Wales and our part in God's Mission in which the Synod committed, "to promote, support and take intergenerational mission initiatives which sustain the environment".

We affirm the view expressed in the 2009 URC/Methodist report Hope in God's Future that 'it is now intellectually and morally irresponsible to fail to acknowledge and address the urgent need for radical cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in order to prevent intolerable damage to human populations and mass extinctions of many plant and animal species.'

3. **Shrinking our Carbon Footprint**

Churches are encouraged to work towards achieving Eco Church Bronze, Silver or Gold award status through A Rocha UK: The Eco Church free online survey and supporting resources are designed to equip churches to express their care for God's world. <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>

Churches are encouraged to follow the Synod in divesting from companies whose total turnover is more than 10% derived from the extraction and/or supply of fossil fuels: *Divest your church*, is a step-by-step guide to divesting from fossil fuels, switching to renewable energy, and reinvesting in clean alternatives. <https://brightnow.org.uk/>

Churches are encouraged to take steps to review and reduce their carbon footprint: Churches can get help in calculating, analysing, and considering off setting their carbon footprints through Climate Stewards. <https://www.climatestewards.org/>

The Synod aims to shrink its carbon footprint year on year, recording and reporting progress annually, and to reduce the total carbon footprint to net zero by 2040: Synod recognises that this is a demanding and collaborative endeavour and commits to providing assistance to churches, including information about practical measures and potential grants.

The Synod will aim to reduce car and air travel for meetings through the use of video conferencing, and where that is not possible to adopt the practice of carbon off-setting.

The Synod commits to a systematic audit of the Synod Office and of its activities, and encourages local churches to do likewise to ensure that their buildings and actions are environment friendly.

The Synod and its officers will support local churches in their response to the climate emergency, particularly working towards Eco Church awards, and will work towards achieving Eco Synod status.

4. **Some online resources which local churches may find helpful**

[Operation Noah](#)

[A Rocha](#)

[Greening Church Buildings](#)

[Green Christian](#)

[Season of Creation](#)

SYNOD ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy is based upon the United Reformed Church's (URC's) [Environmental Policy](#), outlining its stance towards the environment in which it operates, agreed by General Assembly in 2016.
- 1.2 It is the cornerstone of our intent, as a body of people committed to seeking God's justice and treasuring God's world, to care for Creation and to live lightly upon the Earth.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 As the Synod of Wales we affirm with General Assembly that care for Creation, a just sharing of the world's resources, and protecting the environment are fundamental Gospel commitments and central to our discipleship.
- 2.2 We believe that we are an integral part of God's Creation, that God calls us to be partners in God's ongoing creative, renewing and redeeming activity; commands us to act justly and in righteousness not only towards all humanity but to all Creation; and requires us to care for Creation so that future generations, whom God also loves, may enjoy it and benefit from it.
- 2.3 We affirm that Christian mission includes caring for God's Earth and all Creation. It includes acknowledging humankind's responsibility, sharing in putting right the relationships within God's Creation that have gone wrong, and working within the church and with partners outside the church to grow towards justice and good stewardship as envisaged in the biblical vision of the world as it is meant to be. (This section draws upon the Baptist Union of Great Britain statement '*A Vision for the Environment*', and the Methodist, Baptist and URC report *Hope in God's Future: Christian Discipleship in the Context of Climate Change* (Peterborough: Methodist Publishing, 2009) p.7.)
- 2.4 We acknowledge that human activity has contributed to the degradation of the Earth and that this is not the will of God. We believe that this degradation limits the attainment of the fullness of life that God wills for all Creation, and is a sin for which we should seek forgiveness. It also imposes most heavily upon the peoples of the developing countries of the world and is part of the intrinsic injustice to which we bear witness. As the Lambeth Declaration 2015 on Climate Change, to which the URC is a signatory, affirms, 'The demands of justice as well as of creation require the nations of the world urgently to limit the global rise in average temperatures. We have

a responsibility to act now, for ourselves, our neighbours and for future generations.’

- 2.5 We recognise the significance and hope of the December 2015 Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the imperatives of the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels.

3. Our Part in God’s Mission

- 3.1 The Environmental Policy of the URC, adopted by General Assembly in 2016, was founded upon the Vision 2020 statements, which declared that the URC ‘will be a church that has taken significant steps to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and renew the life of the earth’ (statement 10: The Integrity of Creation). Vision 2020 also states that ‘Our churches, reflecting faith in God the creator and sustainer of life in all its fullness, must discover the radical voice of care for the Earth that is supported by the way we live.’
- 3.2 This policy echoes Vision 2020’s affirmation that ‘The changing climate and its consequences for all life on planet Earth cannot be over emphasised as the most significant underlying issue of our time’ - and that it is vital that the Church ‘recognises the reality and fear present in environmental debates and lives hopefully in the present climate.’
- 3.3 In March 2019 the Synod of Wales adopted the document *The National Synod of Wales and our part in God’s Mission* in which the Synod committed, “to promote, support and take intergenerational mission initiatives which sustain the environment”.

4. ‘Hope in God’s Future’

- 4.1 We affirm the view expressed in the 2009 URC/Methodist report *Hope in God’s Future* that ‘it is now intellectually and morally irresponsible to fail to acknowledge and address the urgent need for radical cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in order to prevent intolerable damage to human populations and mass extinctions of many plant and animal species.’
- 4.2 We pledge to respond to the report’s call for repentance in the face of our own and humanity’s complicity in the sinful structures that are causing wanton damage to the Earth, to its creatures and to many poor communities.
- 4.3 We pledge to adopt practices and lifestyles consistent with reducing levels of greenhouse gas emissions as rapidly as practicable to net zero by 2050 and to eliminating the pollution of the air that people breathe.
- 4.4 We pledge to adopt practices and lifestyles consistent with protecting biodiversity in fresh and salt water, on land and in the air from pollution by

plastics, pesticides, other chemicals and from other harm such as over-exploitation.

4.5 We also commit to intercede for those most threatened by climate change.

5. Shrinking our carbon footprint

- 5.1 Reflecting the commitments contained in the vision 2020 statement, in *The National Synod of Wales and our part in God's Mission*, in the *Hope in God's Future* report, and in a resolution on climate change passed by General Assembly in 2007, the URC Synod of Wales affirms its pledges to shrink its carbon footprint and to strive to protect and restore the environment. The Synod will record and report progress annually, and will endeavour to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2040.
- 5.2 The Synod recognises that shrinking the total Synod carbon footprint calls for both conversion on the part of its individual members, transformation of its internal structures and co-operation between churches. Synod will endeavour to work ecumenically whenever possible and appropriate in the working out of this policy.
- 5.3 Synod will carry out a systematic audit of the Synod Office and the activities of Synod staff in order to establish strategies to reduce their carbon footprint.
- 5.4 Local churches in Wales will be encouraged to:
- a) work towards achieving Eco Church Bronze, Silver or Gold award status through A Rocha UK (see <https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>);
 - b) respond positively to the encouragement of the 19th October 2019 Synod Meeting and divest from companies whose total turnover is more than 10% derived from the extraction and/or supply of fossil fuels, including thermal coal, natural gas and oil (see <http://brightnow.org.uk/>);
 - c) carry out a systematic environmental audit of their buildings;
 - d) raise awareness, through prayer, preaching, Bible study, teaching, and discussion, of the need for confession, repentance, and forgiveness in relation to the causes of climate change, and of our calling, as God's redeemed people, to sustain and renew the life of the Earth;
 - e) celebrate 'Time for Creation' as encouraged by the World Council of Churches. Creation Time runs from 1 September until 4 October each year;
 - f) ensure that energy is used efficiently and that their buildings, including Manses, are environment friendly through the use of energy-saving technologies and by identifying and using renewable sources of energy as appropriate;

- g) help members of their congregation to make adjustments in the carbon emissions associated with their lifestyles by supporting them in a personal audit and in finding appropriate strategies;
- h) involve their children and young people in activities focusing on care for the environment;
- i) engage their local political representatives, urging them to support policies that take effective steps towards realising the commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2040;
- j) support campaigns and action around climate change issues promoted by Christian Aid and other organisations;
- k) ensure that church-owned land is used in ways that encourage an enjoyment of nature and both enhance biodiversity and protect the environment.

5.5 Synod of Wales Synod Officers will:

- a) support churches to gain Eco Church Award status;
- b) support the process of working towards Eco Synod Award status;
- c) assist in seeking appropriate support to ensure that church premises, including manses, are environment friendly through the use of energy-saving technologies and by identifying and using renewable sources of energy where appropriate;
- d) encourage churches to work in collaboration with, or initiate, local transition, or sustainability groups;
- e) encourage churches to receive training and support on issues of climate justice and environmental care;
- f) support the synod's Green Advocate in monitoring progress on carbon reduction in the synod.

5.6 The Synod of Wales will aim to:

- a) lower incrementally its carbon footprint by a significant amount each year;
- b) campaign at local and national level for policies that strengthen, and take steps towards realising, net zero carbon emissions by 2040;
- c) ensure that its buildings are environment friendly through the use of energy-saving technologies and by identifying and using renewable sources of energy as appropriate;
- d) reduce, where practicable, car and air travel for meetings through the use of video conferencing. With due regard for distances and costs involved, individual members will be encouraged to use transport with minimum impact; to cycle, use buses and trains, and car-share and use

energy-efficient vehicles where possible. Members will also be encouraged to adopt the practice of carbon off-setting with respect to essential travel by making payments that support sustainable projects (e.g., through [Climate Stewards](#));

- e) promote opportunities to develop an environmental theology;
- f) establish the habit of recording and celebrating environmental initiatives within local churches in the synod;
- g) ensure that environmental issues are integrated within the whole life of the synod;
- h) support URC Youth in developing a strategy responding to the challenge of climate change.

6. Resources

Eco-Church

ecochurch.arocha.org.uk

Operation Noah

operationnoah.org

Green Christian

greenchristian.org.uk

A Rocha

arocha.org/en/

Season of Creation

oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/climate-change/time-for-creation

Bright Now

<http://brightnow.org.uk/>

Greening Church Buildings

ecocongregationscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Greening-Church-Buildings.pdf

Appendix C: 2019 Accounts

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (WALES) TRUST COMPANY LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2019 £	Restricted funds 2019 £	Endowment funds 2019 £	Total 2019 £	Unrestricted funds 2018 £	Restricted funds 2018 £	Endowment funds 2018 £	Total 2018 £
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>									
Donations and legacies	3	368,685	8,994	-	377,679	345,295	35,799	-	381,094
Investments	4	109,883	6,482	4,438	120,803	109,007	6,416	4,352	119,775
Other income	5	185,921	1,600	-	187,521	108,307	766	-	109,073
Profit on sale of fixed assets		7,566	-	-	7,566	137,222	-	-	137,222
Total income and endowments		672,055	17,076	4,438	693,569	699,831	42,981	4,352	747,164
<u>Expenditure on:</u>									
Charitable activities	6	451,497	45,248	-	496,745	460,132	32,509	-	492,641
Other	10	-	-	166	166	-	-	2,907	2,907
Total resources expended		451,497	45,248	166	496,911	460,132	32,509	2,907	495,548
Net gains/(losses) on investments	11	460,157	12,689	20,504	493,350	(64,799)	(2,684)	(3,749)	(71,232)
Net movement in funds		680,715	(15,483)	24,776	690,008	180,703	5,218	(5,537)	180,384

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (WALES) TRUST COMPANY LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2019

Gross transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	5,803	(2,570)	(3,233)	-
Net movement in funds	680,715	(15,483)	24,776	690,008	180,703	5,218	(5,537)	180,384
Fund balances at 1 January 2019	<u>7,489,707</u>	<u>169,187</u>	<u>119,345</u>	<u>7,778,239</u>	<u>7,309,004</u>	<u>163,969</u>	<u>124,882</u>	<u>7,597,855</u>
Fund balances at 31 December 2019	<u>8,170,422</u>	<u>153,704</u>	<u>144,121</u>	<u>8,468,247</u>	<u>7,489,707</u>	<u>169,187</u>	<u>119,345</u>	<u>7,778,239</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (WALES) TRUST COMPANY LIMITED

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2019

	Notes	2019		2018	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	12		3,354,720		3,647,043
Investments	13		3,974,198		3,026,088
			<u>7,328,918</u>		<u>6,673,131</u>
Current assets					
Debtors falling due after one year	14	50,000		50,000	
Debtors falling due within one year	14	23,457		80,047	
Cash at bank and in hand		1,078,859		1,044,498	
			<u>1,152,316</u>		<u>1,174,545</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15	<u>(12,987)</u>		<u>(69,437)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>1,139,329</u>		<u>1,105,108</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>8,468,247</u>		<u>7,778,239</u>
Capital funds					
Endowment funds - general	16		144,121		119,345
Income funds					
Restricted funds	17		153,704		169,187
Unrestricted funds					
Designated funds	18	5,440,804		5,283,117	
General unrestricted funds		<u>2,729,618</u>		<u>2,206,590</u>	
			<u>8,170,422</u>		<u>7,489,707</u>
			<u>8,468,247</u>		<u>7,778,239</u>

Appendix D: Standing Orders for Virtual Meetings

Standing Orders for Virtual Meetings of General Assembly of the United Reformed Church

1. Records of Virtual Meetings

- 1.1 Any streaming and/or recording¹ of Virtual Meetings does not replace the formal minutes of the meeting and the decisions made. Formal minutes shall continue to be maintained and retained.

2. Operating Procedure

- 2.1 The Virtual Meeting will commence when the Moderator opens the meeting, within the requirements set out in the Rules of Procedure.
- 2.2 At the start of any meeting the Moderator shall make reasonable efforts to confirm that members can hear and be heard during the Virtual Meeting. The meeting will not start until the Moderator is satisfied that all is in order.
- 2.3 Where available video as well as audio should be normally used during Virtual Meetings. Where video is not available, or it is not safe for the attendee to use video, then audio only may be used.
- 2.4 The Virtual Meeting will finish when the Moderator formally closes the meeting.

3. Managing contributions from members during Virtual Meetings

- 3.1 All microphones should be set to mute at the start of the Virtual Meeting, apart from the Moderator and any (co)host(s). Microphones should only be unmuted when a participant is speaking.
- 3.2 The Moderator has absolute discretion to pause or adjourn the meeting at any time, and to remove any virtual attendees from the meeting if their conduct falls short of the expected standards in church.
- 3.3 In all but the smallest meetings, it is helpful if the Moderator is not also the host. The host may be a staff member(s) or volunteer(s) who are not a member of the meeting in the same way that such people may assist with stewarding a physical meeting.

4. Voting on items during the meeting

- 4.1 All decisions shall preferably be made by using any built in voting mechanism in the Virtual Meeting software, otherwise the Moderator will ask each individual member to raise their hand, either physically or using built in features, or to confirm verbally their agreement.
- 4.2 Voting shall normally use built in voting mechanisms, but where this causes a difficulty with more than one person joining a meeting from the same location in order for each person to have a vote then each person should log in on a separate device, or by telephone, or another piece of software used for voting. In a very small meeting, where the Moderator can see everyone on the screen at once, it may be possible to resolve this informally.
- 4.3 Voting on any motion whose effect is to alter, add to, modify or supersede the Basis, the Structure and any other form or expression of the polity and doctrinal formulations of the United Reformed Church, is governed by paragraph 3(1) and (2) of the Structure.

5. Attendance

- 5.1 All Virtual Meetings are required to meet any previously agreed quorum for meetings, where such a quorum has been specified.
 1. Meetings should not normally be recorded, in order to comply fully with both safeguarding and data privacy policies.

6. Interpretation of Standing Orders

- 6.1 Where the Moderator is required to interpret any Standing Orders in light of the requirements of a Virtual Meeting, they shall take advice from the Clerk before making a ruling. The Moderator's decision in all cases shall be final.

7. En bloc business

- 7.1 The Moderator, Clerk, and General Secretary shall together decide which items of business shall be taken en bloc. Placing business in the en bloc category does not imply anything about the importance of any item of business, merely that those planning the meeting think that it may be possible to agree the business without discussion. Any members wishing to have items removed from en bloc business should notify the Clerk by a stated time in advance of the meeting. If three or more members have so notified, then the business shall be added to the agenda of the meeting, otherwise en bloc business shall be voted upon without any discussion.

8. Business requiring discussion

- 8.1 It is not possible to use Consensus Decision-Making in its normal way during a Virtual Meeting, since Consensus Decision-Making relies upon the Moderator being able to sense the mood of the meeting and the members which requires senses not available in a Virtual Meeting. However, all meetings should still be conducted in the spirit and ethos of seeking consensus.
- 8.2 At any time during the debate, the Moderator may use the procedure indicated in Standing Order 4.1 to hold an Informal Straw Poll, which may be held purely to discern the mood of the meeting without making any decision. The Moderator may invite members to speak in the order they see fit. The Moderator may ask if anyone who has not yet contributed wishes to speak.
- 8.3 All decisions shall be made by vote, using the procedure set out in Standing Order 4.1. The Moderator, Clerk, and General Secretary shall together decide in advance which items of business require a simple majority, and which require a two thirds majority.² This Standing Order does not override any other provision for a specific majority set out elsewhere in the Standing Orders, particularly Standing Orders 10.12, 10.13 and 10.14.

9. Presentation of business

- 9.1 All reports of committees, together with the draft motions arising therefrom, shall be delivered to the General Secretary by a date to be determined, so that they may be circulated to members in time for consideration before the date of the Assembly meeting.
- 9.2 A Synod may deliver to the General Secretary not less than twelve weeks before the commencement of the meeting of the Assembly notice in writing of a motion for consideration at the Assembly. This notice shall include the names of those appointed to propose and second the motion at the Assembly.
- 9.3 A local church wishing to put forward a motion for consideration by the General Assembly shall submit the motion to its Synod for consideration and, if the Synod so decides, transmission to the Assembly, at such time as will enable the Synod to comply with Standing Order 9.2 above.
- 9.4 A member of the Assembly may deliver to the General Secretary not less than 21 days before the date of the meeting of the Assembly a notice in writing of a motion (which notice must include the name of a seconder) to be included in the Assembly agenda. If the subject matter of such a notice of motion appears to the General Secretary to be an infringement of the rights of a Synod through which the matter could properly have been raised, the General Secretary shall inform the member accordingly and bring the matter before the Business Committee which

2. For example, agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting might reasonably be taken on a simple majority, whereas a major strategic decision with significant financial implications requires a greater level of support than a one vote majority.

shall advise the Assembly as to the procedure to be followed.

- 9.5 Proposals for amendments to the Basis and Structure of the URC, which may be made by the Mission Council or a committee of the General Assembly or a Synod, shall be in the hands of the General Secretary not later than 12 weeks before the opening of the Assembly. The General Secretary, in addition to the normal advice to members of the Assembly, shall, as quickly as possible, inform all Synod Clerks of the proposed amendment.
- 9.6 It shall not be in order, whether in en bloc business or any other decision-making, to move a motion or amendment which:
 - 9.6.1 contravenes any part of the Basis of Union, or
 - 9.6.2 involves the Church in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committee, or
 - 9.6.3 pre-empts discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda, or
 - 9.6.4 amends or reverses a decision reached by the Assembly at its preceding two meetings unless the Moderator, Clerk and General Secretary together decide that changed circumstances or new evidence justify earlier reconsideration of the matter, or
 - 9.6.5 is not related to the report of a committee and has not been the subject of 21 days' notice under Standing Order 9.4, or
 - 9.6.6 simply reaffirms existing work.

The decision of the Moderator (in the case of 9.6.1, 9.6.2, 9.6.3, 9.6.5, and 9.6.6) and of the Moderator with the Clerk and the General Secretary (in the case of 9.6.4) on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.

10. The business

- 10.1 If notice has been given of two or more motions on the same subject, or two or more amendments to the same motion, these shall be taken in the order decided by the Moderator on the advice of the Clerk.
- 10.2 A report presented to the Assembly by a committee or Synod, under Standing Order 9.1, shall be received for debate, unless notice has been duly given under Standing Order 9.4 of a motion to refer back to that committee or Synod the whole or part of the report and its attached motion(s). Such a motion for reference back shall be debated and voted upon before the relevant report is itself debated. To carry such a motion two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. When a report has been received for debate, and before any motions consequent upon it are proposed, any member may speak to a matter arising from the report which is not the subject of a motion.
- 10.3 During the meeting of the Assembly and on the report of a committee, notice (including the names of proposer and seconder) shall be given to the Clerk of any new motions which arise from the material of the report, and of any amendments which affect the substance of motions already presented. During the course of the debate a new motion or amendment may be stated orally without supporting speech in order to ascertain whether a member is willing to second it.
- 10.4 No motion or amendment shall be spoken to by its proposer, debated, or put to the Assembly unless it is known that there is a seconder. The only exceptions to this are motions presented on behalf of a committee, of which printed notice has been given, and the procedural motions in Standing Orders 10.13, 10.14, and 10.15. The procedural motions in Standing Orders 10.13, 10.14, and 10.15 may be moved and spoken to without the proposer having first obtained and announced the consent of a seconder. They must, however, be seconded before being put to the vote, and precedence as between the procedural motions is determined by the fact that after one of them is before the Assembly no other motion can be moved until that one has been dealt with.
- 10.5 A seconder may second without speaking and, by declaring the intention of doing so, reserve the right of speaking until a later period in the debate.
- 10.6 An amendment shall be either to omit words or to insert words or to do both, but no amendment shall be in order which has the effect of introducing an irrelevant proposal or of

- negating the motion. The Moderator may rule that a proposed amendment should be treated as an alternative motion.
- 10.7 If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended shall take the place of the original motion and shall become the substantive motion upon which any further amendment may be moved. If an amendment is rejected, a further amendment with a different outcome may be moved.
- 10.8 An amendment which has been moved and seconded shall be disposed of before any further amendment may be moved, but notice may be given of intention to move a further amendment should the one before the Assembly be rejected.
- 10.9 The mover may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter the motion or amendment proposed.
- 10.10 A motion or amendment may be withdrawn by the proposer with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly. Any such consent shall be signified without discussion. It shall not be in order for any member to speak upon it after the proposer has asked permission to withdraw unless such permission shall have been refused.
- 10.11 Alternative (but not directly negative) motions may be moved and seconded in competition with a motion before the Assembly. It shall be for the Moderator, on the advice of the Clerk, to rule when motions shall be considered as alternatives under the Terms of this Standing Order.
- 10.11.1 When such draft alternative motions have been received by the General Secretary, the Moderators may ask the General Secretary to convene a meeting (physical or virtual) of the proposers, to ascertain if it may be possible to agree on a single draft motion to put before the Assembly, or to clarify the areas of disagreement.
- 10.11.2 If the Assembly has alternative motions before it, each proposer shall be given the opportunity to present their motion in an order decided by the Moderator.
- 10.11.3 After any amendments duly moved under Standing Orders 10.6, 10.7 and 10.8 have been dealt with and debate on the alternative motions has ended, the movers shall reply to the debate in reverse order to that in which they spoke initially. The first vote shall be a vote in favour of each of the motions, put in the order in which they were proposed, the result not being announced for one until it is announced for all. If any of them obtains a majority of those voting, it becomes the sole motion before the Assembly.
If none of them does so, the motion having the fewest votes is discarded. Should the lowest two be equal, the Moderator gives a casting vote.
The voting process is repeated until one motion achieves a majority of those voting.
- 10.11.4 Once a sole motion remains, further discussion is permissible and votes for and against that motion shall be taken in the normal way and in accordance with Standing Order 4.
- 10.12 In the course of the business any member may move that the question under consideration be not put. This motion takes precedence over every motion before the Assembly. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion or amendment under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule. Should the motion be carried, the business shall immediately end and the Assembly shall proceed to the next business.
- 10.13 In the course of any discussion, any member may move that the question be now put. This is sometimes described as "the closure motion". If the Moderator senses that there is a wish or need to close a debate, the Moderator may ask whether any member wishes so to move; the Moderator may not simply declare a debate closed. Provided that it appears to the Moderator that the motion is a fair use of this rule, the vote shall be taken upon it immediately it has been seconded. When an amendment is under discussion, this motion shall apply only to that amendment. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. The mover of the original motion or amendment, as the case may be, retains the right of reply before the vote is taken on the motion or amendment.

10.14 During the course of a debate on a motion any member may move that decision on this motion be deferred to the next Assembly. This rule does not apply to debates on amendments since the Assembly needs to decide the final form of a motion before it can responsibly vote on deferral. The motion then takes precedence over other business. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded and the proposer of the motion under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule or that deferral would have the effect of annulling the motion. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. At the discretion of the Moderator, the General Secretary may be instructed by a further motion, duly seconded, to refer the matter for consideration by other councils and/or by one or more committees of the Assembly. The General Secretary shall provide for the deferred motion to be presented again at the next Meeting of the General Assembly.

11. Timing of speeches and of other business

- 11.1 Save by prior agreement of the Business Committee, speeches made in the presentation of reports concerning past work of Assembly committees which are to be open to question, comment or discussion shall not exceed five minutes.
- 11.2 The Assembly may meet in parallel sessions or Breakout Rooms to consider the past work of Assembly committees for questions and comments. Any draft motions arising therefrom must be dealt with in a plenary session of the Assembly.
- 11.3 Save by the prior agreement of the Business Committee, speeches made in support of the motions from any Assembly committee, including the Mission Council, or from any Synod shall not in aggregate exceed 15 minutes, nor shall speeches in support of any particular committee or Synod motion exceed 5 minutes, (e.g. a committee with four motions may not exceed 15 minutes). The allowed an aggregate of five minutes, unless a longer period be recommended by the Business Committee or determined by the Moderator.
- 11.4 Each subsequent speaker in any debate shall be allowed 3 minutes unless the Moderator shall determine otherwise; it shall, in particular, be open to the Moderator to determine that all speeches in a debate or from a particular point in a debate shall be of not more than a different specified number of minutes.
- 11.5 When a speech is made on behalf of a committee, it shall be so stated. Otherwise a speaker shall begin by giving name and accreditation to the Assembly.
- 11.6 Secretaries of committees and members of staff who are not members of Assembly may speak on the report of a committee for which they have responsibility at the request of the Convenor concerned. They may speak on other reports with the consent of the Moderator.
- 11.7 In each debate, no one shall address the Assembly more than once without the permission of the Moderator, except that at the close of each debate the proposer of the motion or the amendment, as the case may be, shall have the right to reply, but must strictly confine the reply to answering previous speakers and must not introduce new matters. Such reply shall close the debate on the motion or the amendment.
- 11.8 The foregoing Standing Order (11.7) shall not prevent the asking or answering of a question which arises from the matter before the Assembly or from a speech made in the debate upon it.
- 11.9 An invited speaker, whether speaking to a draft motion or not, may address the Assembly for such period of time as may be agreed by the Business Committee.

12. Questions

- 12.1 A member may, if 2 days' notice in writing has been given to the General Secretary, ask the Moderator or the Convenor of any committee any question on any matter relating to the business of the Assembly to which no reference is made in any report before the Assembly.

- 12.2 A member may, when given opportunity by the Moderator, ask the presenter of any report before the Assembly a question seeking additional information or explanation relating to matters contained within the report.
- 12.3 Questions asked under Standing Orders 12.1 and 12.2 shall be put and answered without discussion.

13. Points of order, personal explanations, dissent

- 13.1 A member shall have the right to call attention to a point of order, and immediately on this being done any other member addressing the Assembly shall cease speaking until the Moderator has determined the question of order. The decision on any point of order rests entirely with the Moderator. Any member calling to order unnecessarily is liable to censure of the Assembly.
- 13.2 A member feeling that some material part of a former speech by such member at the same meeting has been misunderstood or is being grossly misinterpreted by a later speaker may request the Moderator's permission to make a personal explanation. If the Moderator so permits, a member so rising shall be entitled to be heard forthwith.
- 13.3 The right to record in the minutes a dissent from any decision of the Assembly shall only be granted to a member by the Moderator if the reason stated, either verbally at the time or later in writing, appears to the Moderator to fall within the provisions of paragraph 10 of the Basis of Union.
- 13.4 The decision of the Moderator on a point of order, or on the admissibility of a personal explanation, or on the right to have a dissent recorded, shall not be open to discussion.

14. Admission of the public and closed sessions

- 14.1 Only those who are members of the meeting, staff members in attendance, or invited guests may join a Virtual Meeting. However, a meeting in open session may be shown as a live stream.
- 14.2 A closed session is one in which the business is highly sensitive. Only members of Assembly, the Legal Adviser, and any technical staff required to enable Assembly to function may be present. Neither content nor process may be divulged to non-members, save specific information authorised by the Moderator in consultation with the Clerk and the Legal Adviser. No social media in any form may be used during a closed session, nor to report upon such closed session. Any live streaming must be switched off. Minutes will be taken, but these will be held *in retentis* by the Clerk, and shall not be made available to non-members.
- 14.3 A closed session may be called for at any time in any decision-making mode, and voted upon by the Assembly, requiring a simple majority. This motion takes precedence over every motion before the Assembly. As soon as the member has given reasons for proposing it and it has been seconded, and the proposer of the motion or amendment under consideration has been allowed opportunity to comment on the reasons put forward, the vote upon it shall be taken, unless it appears to the Moderator that an unfair use is being made of this rule. Should the motion be carried the business shall immediately pause while non-members leave the meeting.
- 14.4 If a matter is known to be highly sensitive in advance, then the Assembly Officers, consulting the Legal Adviser if necessary, may announce in advance that a certain piece of business will be conducted in a closed session giving their reasons.
- 14.5 Members of Assembly who leave during a closed session may not be re-admitted.

15. Communications during the course of debate

- 15.1 The primary responsibility of members is to attend to the business and participate in the decision making. Those present must refrain both from posting on social media sites during business sessions and from commenting upon partially completed business. It is the responsibility of the communications committee's staff to make official announcements. This restriction is only in place when in session; those attending are free to join in the online debates during breaks and after the close of business in respect of business

that the Assembly has completed. Everything written and shared on social media sites at any time is the sole responsibility of the author, and is subject to the same defamation laws as any other form of written communication.

16. Record of the Assembly

- 16.1 A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such a manner as the Business Committee may determine.
- 16.2 The draft minutes of each day's proceedings shall be made available in an appropriate form normally on the following day. They shall, after any necessary correction, be approved at the opening of a subsequent session. Concerning the minutes of the closing day of the Assembly the Clerk shall submit a motion approving their insertion in the full minutes of the Assembly after review and any necessary correction by the Officers of the Assembly. Before such a motion is voted upon, any member may ask to have read out the written minute on any particular item.
- 16.3 A signed copy of the minutes shall be preserved in the custody of the General Secretary as the official record of the Assembly's proceedings.
- 16.4 As soon as possible after the Assembly meeting ends, the substance of the minutes together with any other relevant papers shall be published as a "Record of Assembly" and a copy sent to every member of the Assembly, each Synod and Local Church.

17. Suspension and amendment of Standing Orders

- 17.1 In any case of urgency or upon proposal of a motion of which due notice has been given, any one or more of the Standing Orders may be suspended at any meeting, provided that three-fourths of the members of the Assembly present and voting shall so decide.
- 17.2 Motions to amend the Standing Orders shall be referred to the Clerk of the Assembly for report before being voted on by the Assembly (or, in case of urgency, by the Mission Council). The Clerk of the Assembly may from time to time suggest amendments.