



Minutes of the ninety-ninth meeting of the National Synod of Wales of the United Reformed Church held virtually on Saturday 6th March 2021

Attendance:

Seventy-three people were present during the meeting which was held virtually due to the Covid-19 virus, social distancing measures and lockdowns in Wales.

Apologies for absence were received from:

Revd Leslie Noon (Sketty Uniting, Swansea), Heather Phillips (Christchurch, Ogmere Vale), Revd Gethin Rhys (Cytûn), Revd Colin Richards (Horeb, Dyserth), Revd Peter Nunn (retired Minister), Revd Malcolm Shapland (retired Minister).

1. **Opening Worship** was led by the Moderator.

The worship included thanksgiving for lives given in service and the following elders who had died since the last Synod Meeting were remembered:

Barbara Ball	Canton Uniting, Cardiff
Mary Ellis	Horeb, Dyserth
John James	Sarnau, Llanymynech
Gerwyn Jones	Dan-y-Graig United Church, Risca
Pam Jones	Horeb, Dyserth
Marianne Morgan	Libanus, Brecon
Margaret Pugh	Horeb, Builth Wells
John Sampson	Tabernacle, Mumbles
Betty Terry	St John's with Bagillt, Flint

2. **Introductions and Notices**

The following ecumenical guests were welcomed:

Major George Baker	Salvation Army
Revd Dr Noel Davies	Undeb yr Annibynwyr Cymraeg
Canon Aled Edwards	Cytûn
Mr Peter Hussey	Religious Society of Friends

Revd Brian Matthews	Presbyterian Church of Wales
Mrs Janet Matthews	Baptist Union of Wales
Revd Ian Morris	Methodist Church, Synod Cymru
Revd Philip Poynor	Methodist Church, Wales District
Venerable Mary Stallard	Church in Wales
Revd Peter Idris Taylor	South Wales Baptist Association

Ecumenical apologies were noted from:

Mark Fairweather-Tall	South Wales Baptist Association
Peredur Owen Griffiths	Cytûn

The following appointments within the Synod was acknowledged:

Claire Boot	Synod Property Officer
Niccy Ling	Meeting Support
Martin Spain	from Landsker Pastorate to Synod Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations (with effect from 1st June 2021)

The following Minister had retired since the last Synod Meeting:

Peter Noble	from Llanfair, Penrhys on 31st December 2020
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The following Minister will retire before the next Synod Meeting:

Kathryn Price	from Alun Vale Pastorate on 31st July 2021
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The following ministers were recognised for having anniversaries since their Ordinations:

Ivor Rees	65 years
David Morgan	60 years
Leonard Phelps	55 years
Susan Roberts	45 years
Tom Arthur	40 years
Adrian Bulley	35 years
James Bolton	35 years
Brian Clarke	30 years
Shelagh Pollard	25 years

Ian Kirby	25 years
Peter Nunn	20 years
Judy Harris	20 years
Paul Robinson	10 years
Stephen Best	5 years

The Synod Clerk said that it is anticipated that a new version of the Synod Yearbook will be sent out in the coming week or so. For the first time, this will be distributed as a PDF. Please let Helen Stenson (helen.stenson.urcwailes@urc.org.uk) know if you have trouble with the electronic file or would prefer a printed or large print version.

As ever, the Synod Yearbook is produced for the private use of recipients and should be kept safe. It contains personal data and should never be shared beyond our churches. Please do not share the file, or the information it contains, in any format.

3. **Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the virtual meeting held on Saturday 17th October 2020 were approved without amendment and signed as a true record.

4. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

None.

5. **Equipping Elders**

This event, which was due to take place in June 2020, has been redesigned as a Zoom event and will take place on the morning of Saturday 20th March 2021. Simon Walkling spoke about how this event would look at supporting and developing elders as well as looking how to make churches welcoming and inclusive to all, in addition to what makes a suitable elder.

6. **Synod Sundays**

Phil Wall introduced this new initiative which is a way of enabling churches and individuals to connect in worship to feel part of the wider church. Different congregations or pastorates will provide recorded worship when there are five Sundays in the month, for use on the fifth Sunday. The first of these resources – ‘Surprises, Solidarity and Salvation’ – had been launched for Sunday 31st January and is available on the synod’s YouTube channel: <https://bit.ly/3cEGKVL>.

It was noted that if anyone required assistance or help regarding doing their own services, then they could contact either Jason Askew, Adrian Bulley, Judy Harris or Simon Walkling.

7. **Local Church Story: Being a Food Hub**

Adella Pritchard, working with Christ Well Swansea, spoke about the way in which the church had responded to the Covid-19 pandemic by becoming a food hub. Thanks were given to those who had supported the work.

8. **2019 Accounts**

Chris Atherton introduced the annual accounts for 2019 and responded to questions.

Resolution 3 was moved.

Resolution 3: 2019 Accounts

Synod Meeting receives the accounts for 2019 as summarised in Appendix C.

Resolution 3 was passed unanimously.

Chris Atherton introduced the resolution regarding decisions with financial implications.

Resolution 4 was moved.

Thanks were given to Chris Atherton for his work on the accounts.

Resolution 4: Decisions with Financial Implications

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

Resolution 4 was passed by consensus.

9. **Synod Environmental Policy**

The draft Synod Environmental Policy had been presented at the Autumn 2020 Synod Meeting with a request for churches to consider it ahead of a decision at this meeting.

Resolution 2 was moved.

Resolution 2: Synod Environmental Policy

Synod Meeting adopts the Synod Environment Policy as set out in Appendix B.

Resolution 2 was passed by consensus.

It was agreed that having adopted the Environmental Policy, the Synod would investigate joining Climate Cymru.

10. **The 'Time is Now' Declaration**

As an expression of the Synod's commitment, and as result of the

adoption of the Synod Environmental Policy, the Moderator signed the 'Time is Now' Declaration and encouraged local churches and individuals to consider doing so. See <https://thetimeisnow.uk/declaration>.

11. **Pattern of Future Synod Meetings**

Resolution 1 was moved.

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.

Resolution 1 was passed by consensus.

12. **Breakout Room Conversation**

People had been asked in advance to come ready to show or describe something that has helped their church through lockdowns and restrictions, and to share what could be the next step to build on what has helped. The meeting divided into breakout rooms for conversation.

13. **Local Church story: Using Advent boxes**

Ruth Foreman of Rivertown Church in Shotton spoke about the way in which the church had used the Advent box resources produced by the United Reformed Church.

It was asked if the feedback could be shared on the URC website.

14. **Reports to Synod**

There were no matters raised from the reports for this meeting.

15. **Closing Worship** was led by the Moderator, with a reading from Philippians 1:9-11, read by Judith Dolben.

The meeting closed at 12.50pm.

The next Synod Meeting will take place on **Saturday 16th October 2021** at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells.