



EGLWYS DDIWYGIEDIG UNEDIG  
SYNOD CENEDLAETHOL CYMRU  
THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH  
NATIONAL SYNOD OF WALES

## SYNOD MEETING

### SPRING 2023

Synod Office, Minster Road, Roath,  
Cardiff CF23 5AS

**Saturday 18 March 2023, 9 am – 12.30 pm**

**Held on Zoom**

**Attendance:** 46 people were present during the meeting

7 people from the North Wales Stepwise Group entered during the final agenda item.

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Revd Nick Sissons (St Paul's United, Penmaenmawr); Revd Paula Parish (Bridgend United Area); Revd Paul Robinson (Rhyl); Revd David Poulton (Hall Street, Llanelli), Jill Shelton (St Andrews), Des Kitto (St Andrews)

**Ecumenical apologies were noted from:**

Major Roger Batt (Salvation Army), Laura Wyn (Religious Society of Friends), Anna Jane Evans (Presbyterian Church of Wales)

#### **1. Opening Worship and Commemorations, including Commission of the Lay Preaching Advocate**

Opening Worship was led by Simon Walkling.

A commissioning service for the new Lay Preaching Advocate, Maggie Kirkbride, was held. Outgoing Lay Preaching Advocate, Stephen Best was thanked.

## 2. Introductions and Notices

### **The following ecumenical guests were welcomed:**

Revd Dr Noel Davies	Undeb yr Annibynwyr Cymraeg
Canon Aled Edwards	Cytun (last meeting)
Pach Beti-Wyn James	Undeb yr Annibynwyr Cymraeg (President)
Andrew Kleissner	South Wales Baptist Association
Revd Dr Ian Morris	Methodist Church, Synod Cymru

### **Ministers and Elders who have died since last Synod Meeting:**

Revd Pam Lewis	Retired NSM. Carmarthen Road, Swansea 1984-88; Llandeilo 1988-2001.
Revd Susan Roberts	Retired minister. Bwlchyffridd Congregational Church & Llanwnog 1976-85; Zion, Llanidloes & Glanhafren 1986-95; Wales Synod Training Officer 1995-96.
Kathleen Charles	Cwmbran
Mrs Vera Davies	St. John's Flint with Bagillt
Jean Evans	Uniting Church Sketty
Lionel Evans	Crundale Chapel
Mary Evans	Zions Hill
Mrs Audrey Joy Glyde	Stow Park
Mrs Chris Jones	Hope and Market Square Church
Leslie George Jones	St. John's Flint with Bagillt
Mrs Hetty Lewis, former Church Secretary	Bethany, Ystrad Mynach
Bill Mallon	Bethany Ystrad Mynych
Margaret McMinn	The United Church in Rhyl
John Phillips	Uniting Church Sketty
Delyth Rees	Uniting Church Sketty
Mrs Betty Roch	Tiers Cross
Kath Thomas	The United Church in Rhyl
Geoffrey Willmott	Stow Park
Jackie Yeomans	The United Church in Rhyl

### **Ministerial anniversaries:**

Alan Luther Willcocks	60 years
Keith Edmund Jones	55 years
Marc Emlyn Dummer	40 years
Peter Clive Noble	40 years
Arnold Seth Brown	30 years
John Hayton	25 years
Stella Catherine Hayton	20 years

**Appointments within the Synod:**

Maggie Kirkbride Lay Preaching Commissioner  
Julie Kirby Rural Advocate

**Ministers moving into the Synod before next Synod Meeting:**

Ruth Whitehead Moderator of South Western Synod to Landsker  
Pastorate

**Ministers moving within the Synod before next Synod Meeting:**

Simon Walkling Moderator to Swansea Pastorate

**Ministers moving into the Synod before the next Synod Meeting:**

Ruth Whitehead Moderator of South Western Synod to Landsker  
Pastorate  
Johnny O'Hanlon Ordinand to Rivertown, Shotton and North Wales  
Region

**Elders Ordained since last Synod Meeting:**

Ms. Alison Price (Treasurer) Bethany, Ystrad Mynach  
Pastor Mike Mortinmer Stow Park  
Mrs Christine Roberts Stow Park  
Miss Ruth Sims Bailey Street Uniting

**3. Minutes of the Autumn 2023 Synod Meeting at the Hotel Metropole, Llandrindod Wells**

The minutes of the meeting held at the Metropole Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, on Saturday 15 October 2022 were approved without amendment and signed as a true record.

**4. Stepwise Update**

Jason Askew gave a report on the Stepwise sessions noting positive feedback and growth.

**5. Lay Worship Ministry Update**

Stephen Best reported on the new guidance for Lay Worship Ministry. It highlights the different routes available to Lay people into Ministry.

**6. Whole People of God**

Jason Askew introduced the user friendly leaflets and work sheets soon to be to churches.

## **7. Reaching Net Zero by 2030**

Eileen Newington reported on commitments to meet Net Zero by 2030. Comments on the resolution were received.

Jo Harris felt the resolution didn't go far enough in encouraging churches to meet Net Zero before 2030.

Chris Atherton proposed the following addition:

"Synod Meeting requests that all Synod Boards and Committees direct their energies and resources available to them to achieve Net Zero targets that are set as a result of the Environmental Policy." This was unanimously agreed.

Resolution 1, including the addition, was passed with no objections:

### **Resolution 1**

**Synod Meeting notes the United Reformed Church Environmental Policy 2022 and supports the reduction of carbon emissions across the whole of church life, with the aim of reaching net zero emissions of greenhouse gases by 2030. Synod Meeting requests that all Synod Boards and Committees direct their energies and resources available to them to achieve Net Zero targets that are set as a result of the Environmental Policy. It commends the Environmental Policy to churches for their consideration and action ([Resolution 17b General Assembly 2022](#)). The United Reformed Church Synod of Wales Environmental Policy will be updated inline with the 2030 target.**

## **8. Mission and Development Fund**

Claire Boot introduced the resolution, noting that the increase would recognise the increased cost of green improvements and would inspire churches to be as environmentally conscious in their building works.

Chris Atherton stated that it would be a demonstration of support from the denomination which would be well received by external funding bodies.

The resolution was passed with one vote against.

### **Resolution 3**

**Synod Meeting resolves to include carbon emission reduction and Eco Church participation in the application criteria for Mission Development Fund grants, to increase the development grant to £10,000 and to increase the main grant to £40,000.**

## **9. Synod Ecumenical Strategy**

Martin Spain presented the Ecumenical Strategy for the Synod of Wales.

The need to recognise what takes place locally and empower churches to take the next step was noted.

## **10. Quest Spaces in Church**

Youth Representative, Nathaniel Stinton was welcomed, he reported on the resolution.

The resolution was passed with no objections:

### **Resolution 3:**

**In line with the More Able Church initiative, the National Synod of Wales Youth Representative, strongly encourages churches to introduce a quiet space for people to use when they feel overwhelmed. The National Synod of Wales Youth Representative also urges churches to make the space accessible to help people of all ages with engagement in worship.**

## **11. Hearing Children's Voices (0-12 years old)**

Judy Harris reported on ways of hearing childrens voices and engaging them on decision making.

Finding ways to improve communication with young people, taking their concerns and views seriously was stressed. Resources to help churches do this are available from Children and Youth Work or the Synod of Wales Children and Youth Development Officer (CYDO).

## **12. Reports to Synod**

### **Nominations for Moderator of General Assembly 2024 - 2025**

Martha McInnes – Nominated by Fiona Liddell

This nomination was put forward by majority consensus.

Martin Ashford – nominated by Fiona Liddell

The nomination was put forward by majority consensus.

### **Nominations report**

Pat Davies, Lyn Oelmann and Sheila Jones have been put forward as members of the Synod Trust. It was unanimously agreed that these names would be put forward.

**13. Closing Worship** – led by Revd Julia Bartholomew and the North Wales Stepwise team from Gladstones Library

**Summary of the chat conversation:**

Children and Youth Eco Church questionnaire and resources are available from:  
<http://urc.org.uk/your-church/family-friendly-church>  
<http://urc.org.uk/your-faith/children-young-people/urc-children>

**Conversations regarding eco-church, reaching Net Zero by 2030 and changes to the Mission and Development Fund**

- Solar panels are expensive, how do we get environmental value?
- How can we encourage our members to be greener at home and not just in church.
- How does increasing the MDF application help reaching Net Zero?
- Making simple changes and encouraging meaningful participation in measuring carbon footprints.
- The importance of our communities seeing that we are taking environmental concerns seriously and how from the perspective of mission is it helpful to show that we are taking action.
- Air source heat pumps can be expensive and noisy.
- Continuing to heat buildings whilst considering the daunting prospect of complying with a very small Net Zero time frame.
- Warmer Spaces is a clear link between a mission project and good/upgraded heating systems.
- Making sure that MDF criteria are not too onerous and that churches feel encouraged and supported in their applications.

**Conversations regarding Quiet Spaces**

- The difficulty in finding quiet spaces with some church architecture.
- Cytun provided a quiet space in their tent at the Royal Welsh Show last year.
- Providing activity bags that themselves aren't distracting.
- Having a low volume speaker so people in a quiet space could still feel like they're part of the service.
- The need to pastorally consider those using a quiet space.
- Some work places have quiet spaces, so churches should be able to accommodate this.