

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

Yr **Eglwys Ddiwygiedig Unedig**
Synod Cenedlaethol Cymru

Cyfarfod Synod y Hydref
Autumn Synod Meeting

Saturday 14th October 2023
The Priory Centre, St Mary's Priory,
Abergavenny NP7 5ND

or

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82680003988?pwd=2AAeWJ1Rgos6Qd4NU6ODViq1Bea
bcE.1](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82680003988?pwd=2AAeWJ1Rgos6Qd4NU6ODViq1Bea
bcE.1)

Meeting ID: 826 8000 3988

Passcode: Synod12

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

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www.urcwales.org.uk

Contents

Section 1:	Notices.....	page 5
Section 2:	Agenda	page 7
Section 3:	Synod Support Team	page 8
Section 4:	Synod Pastoral Committee	page 13
Section 5:	Mission and Discipleship Board	page 15
Section 6:	Finance and Property Board/Trust Company.....	page 17
Appendix A:	Nominations Report	page 19
Appendix B:	Authorised Elders	page 25
Appendix C:	Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy.....	page 26
Appendix D:	Locally Recognized Worship Leaders	page 49
Appendix E:	2022 Accounts.....	page 50
Appendix F:	2024 Budget	page 51
Appendix G:	Moderator of General Assembly 2025-2026.....	page 53
Appendix H:	Standing Orders	page 56

Resolutions

Resolution 1: Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy

Synod Meeting approves and adopts the Synod Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy as set out in [Appendix C](#).

Resolution 2: 2022 Accounts

Synod Meeting receives the accounts for 2022 as summarised in [Appendix E](#).

Resolution 3: 2024 Budget

Synod Meeting approves the Synod General Fund Budget for 2024 as shown in [Appendix F](#).

1. Notices

1.1 Venue

The meeting will take place in The Priory Centre at St Mary's Priory, Abergavenny. Look out for the URC logo signs.

1.2 Food and Drink

A complimentary buffet lunch will be provided. If you have any special dietary requirements (other than vegetarian), please let Joel Sainsbury (joel.sainsbury.urcwailes@urc.org.uk) know before Monday 9th October. In addition, tea and coffee will be available on arrival and during the lunch break.

1.3 Directions:

By rail:

We encourage you to travel via public transport where possible and have timed the meeting to enable this from most parts of the synod.

Abergavenny railway station is on the main railway line between Newport and Hereford. From the station it is approximately 15 minutes on foot (0.6 miles) to the Priory Centre.

By road:

The Metropole Hotel is located on the A40 (the main road through Abergavenny).

1.4 Car Parking

Pay and Display parking is available in the Bus Station car park to the rear of the building.

1.5 Visitors

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in the Synod Meeting, although only members of Synod will be able to vote. All speakers are asked to identify themselves by name and local church.

1.6 On Arrival

- a) For Synod representatives: Please collect a label, to act as your name badge, and an expenses claim form. You may claim the cost of public transport, or car travel at variable rates depending on the number of people in the car. Please complete your expenses form with your bank details and leave it in the box before you leave: payment will be made electronically soon afterwards. If you would like the Synod to claim Gift Aid on all or part of your expenses claim, please complete the relevant

section of the form. Please exchange your completed attendance card for three voting cards, which should be returned at the end of the meeting.

If you require a printed copy of the meeting papers, please contact Megan Price at megan.price.urcwailes@urc.org.uk by Wednesday 12 October. Printed copies will only be available for those who have requested one on the day.

b) For visitors: Please collect a label, to act as your name badge.

1.7 **Quiet Space**

A Quiet Space will be available for anyone who feels overwhelmed or needs a moment of quiet during the day. This will be signposted at the venue or speak to a member of the Synod Support Team to find out more.

1.8 **Bookshop**

We will have a selection of items from the URC Bookshop for sale, including the 2024 URC Prayer Handbook and URC Diaries. We would appreciate payment by cheque if possible.

1.9 **Synod eNewsletter**

If you are not already subscribed to the synod's monthly eNewsletter – with news of people and places, information and requests, events, resources, etc. – you may do so by following this link: <https://bit.ly/2MGqveS>.

1.10 **Forthcoming Synod Meetings are as follows:**

Saturday 16th March 2024	a virtual meeting using Zoom
Saturday 12th October 2024	a hybrid meeting at The Priory Centre, Abergavenny and on Zoom

2. Agenda

It would be helpful to those involved if any questions on the reports that are not the subject of resolutions could be supplied in advance to the Synod Clerk (megan.price.urcwailes@urc.org.uk).

10:30 **Gathering and Refreshments**

11:00 **Opening Worship**

Recognition of new Locally Recognised Worship Leaders

Commemorations and Ministerial Anniversaries

Introductions and Notices

Minutes of Spring 2022 Synod Meeting ([2023 Spring-DRAFT-Minutes](#))

Matters Arising from the Minutes

Finance and Property Board/URC (Wales) Trust Company:

2022 Accounts ([resolution 2](#))

2024 Budget ([resolution 3](#))

Synod Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy ([resolution 1](#))

General Assembly and the Church Life Review

Actions and support for local churches

13:00 **Lunch** (see [Notices](#) 1.2)

14:00 **Children and Young People – events and resources**

Safeguarding and Good Practice 6

Eco Synod update

Reports to Synod

Closing Worship

15:30 **Finish**

3. Synod Support Team

FOR NOTING:

3.1 General Assembly 2024

General Assembly will take place at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire from Friday 12th to Monday 15th July 2024. The National Synod of Wales is able to send sixteen representatives, at least six of whom should be Ministers/CRCWs and at least six of whom should be lay representatives. All the costs of attending are covered, including travel, accommodation and meals.

A leaflet – ‘They’ve asked me to be a Member of General Assembly’ – which gives an overview of the role and obligations of being a member, as well as the work of the General Assembly itself, can be viewed and downloaded here:

<https://bit.ly/2lkaqHe>.

Expressions of interest are now invited from those who would be interested in being part of the synod’s cohort next year. Please contact the Synod Clerk (megan.price.urcwailes@urc.org.uk) before Wednesday 3 January 2024. The final decision about the synod’s representation at General Assembly will be made in January 2024, taking account of balance and when an individual last attended.

3.2 Moderator of General Assembly 2025-2026

Nominations are now sought from the churches in the Synod of candidates to serve from the close of General Assembly 2025 until the close of General Assembly 2026. Local churches are invited to consider whether they would like to nominate to Synod a person in either category – Minister/CRCW and Elder – or in one or other category. Full details and nomination forms are included at [Appendix G](#).

FOR INFORMATION:

3.3 Synod Membership

The Synod may co-opt up to twenty-four additional members, being people with a particular role or responsibility within the Synod. Those who are at present co-opted members of Synod for the duration of their respective appointments are as follows:

- Ian Lloyd-Parry (Convener of FPB)
- Megan Price (Synod Clerk)
- Judy Harris (CYDO)

- Maggie Kirkbride (Synod Lay Preaching Advocate)
- Revd Gethin Rhys (Cytûn National Assembly Policy Officer)
- Philip Rickards, Jill Shelton, Mathias Tchatchoua and Verena Walder (Local Church Leaders)

3.4 **Moderator Recruitment**

At the time of writing, interviews have taken place. It is hoped that an announcement can be made before Synod Meeting.

3.5 **Nominations**

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

3.6 **General Assembly 2023 Resolutions which have implications for local churches**

General Assembly met from Friday 30th June to Monday 3rd July through a hybrid arrangement of an in-person meeting at the Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire and by video conferencing.

The following resolutions which were passed have implications for local churches (and some for Synod) and should be considered at Elders Meetings.

For more information on any of these, you can find the full General Assembly papers on the URC website at: www.urb.org.uk/general-assembly-assembly-executive-assembly-committees/general-assembly/general-assembly-papers

Paper Z1: The Synod Moderators Report

urb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Z1-GA2023-Moderators-Report.pdf

Main points

- To consider how it feels to be part of the United Reformed Church in its sixth decade
- To help us think about looking ahead as well as looking back
- To be more comfortable with who and what we are, and think less about what we are not
- Providing the necessary space time and resources for pioneer work
- To enable people to see we already have all we need to be the people of God, recognising God's provision.

Questions for discussion in local churches

1. What does being comfortable in our own skin mean in our local context?
2. What can we let go of to keep us lean, lithe, and fleet of foot as activists and agents in God's economy?
3. What does it take for us to realise we already have all we need to be the people of God?

4. How can we carve out the space and time to consider new initiatives?

Paper C1: Communications Strategy

Resolution 14

General Assembly adopts the [Communications Strategy](#), and instructs the Communications Committee and Communications Team to:

- undertake a research project to build a communications profile of each local church and Synod
- to produce a series of easy-to-use, time saving toolkits to help churches to communicate more effectively
- to create a network of Communications Advocates in each Synod who can be an informal link between the Communications Team, resources available, and local churches and the Synods
- share the new Design and Digital Visual Identity Guide.

Resolution 16

General Assembly urges all churches without a website, or with a website that has been inactive for more than six months, to use [iChurch](#) to engage digitally with all those who are interested in attending worship or activities taking place in church buildings.

Resolution 17

General Assembly strongly encourages the United Reformed Church at all levels and in all teams to use the revised [Design and Digital Visual Identity](#) to ensure quality and consistency across the work of the denomination.

Resolution 18

General Assembly urges everyone connected to the Church to read [Reform](#), the magazine of the URC, either in print or digitally.

Paper I2: Poverty and inequality in the UK

urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/I2-GA2023-Mission-Report-on-poverty-edit.pdf

In 2012, General Assembly received a substantial report entitled ‘The social impact of poverty and inequality in the UK – a challenge to the Church, and adopted a resolution setting out various ways in which the Church would respond to that challenge and work to end inequality in our society.

Over the decade since, there have been many significant changes in the nature and extent of inequality in Britain. Poverty has become deeper and more entrenched. The impact of austerity policies on public services and changes to the benefits system have reduced the support available to people on low incomes.

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated financial inequalities and resulted in many poorer households building up debts. The cost of living crisis of the last 18 months means that many more people are affected by and aware of these issues. Levels of destitution, child poverty and poverty experienced by those in work, are all on the rise. We have witnessed the rapid growth in provision of food banks and now “warm spaces”, by churches and others, as the welfare system does not provide a sufficient social safety net. This report therefore seeks to provide an update to the 2012 report and offer an opportunity for General Assembly to reflect on these central gospel concerns in our current context and discuss the ways that the Church should respond.

Resolution 31 (amended and accepted)

in response to the gospel call to challenge poverty and structures that cause marginalisation, General Assembly:

- a) expresses its deep concern at the rising levels of poverty in the UK over the last 15 years, recognising that in a wealthy economy such as the UK, poverty is not inevitable but a result of political choices and systemic injustices
- b) calls upon political leaders to make a commitment to work towards the eradication of structural poverty in the UK, challenges the stigmatisation and discrimination shown towards those in poverty in the UK, and encourages churches and church members to raise these issues with candidates in the lead-up to the next General Election
- c) asks the Mission and Ministries Committees and the Synods to reflect on how the Church could better demonstrate its commitment to people experiencing poverty and marginalisation in allocating resources for ministry and mission, and bring proposals, if appropriate, to a future General Assembly.

Paper X3: Illegal Migration Bill

[urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/X3-NW-synod-Illegal-Migration-Bill-Resolution-edit.pdf](https://www.urchurch.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/X3-NW-synod-Illegal-Migration-Bill-Resolution-edit.pdf)

Resolution 73 (revised and accepted)

- A. General Assembly invites churches and members of the URC to write to their MPs and prospective Parliamentary candidates expressing their opposition to the Illegal Migration Bill (2023) and urging them to support the development of safe and legal routes for those seeking asylum
- B. General Assembly expresses deep concerns about the Illegal Migration Bill on the grounds that it potentially breaches the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1953) and undermines the UK’s long - standing commitment to the protection of human dignity.
- C. General Assembly affirms its support for the aim of the Convention in maintaining an internationally recognised legal standard of human dignity that reflects the nature of God, revealed in the Bible, and urges the UK government

to uphold it.

Paper E2: Affirming the human dignity of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people

[urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/E2-Equalities-Resolution-Support-of-Trans-people-Copy-edit.pdf](https://www.urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/E2-Equalities-Resolution-Support-of-Trans-people-Copy-edit.pdf)

Please note: this resolution was referred to mediation and passed in the amended version below with each section voted on separately.

In the light of increasing hostility toward trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming people there is a need to affirm their right to dignity and respect in the life of the church and in wider society. To this end, there is a responsibility for the church to learn more about their lived realities, to offer care and to speak Paper E2 United Reformed Church – General Assembly, July 2023 out against the threats of hatred and violence experienced by transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people.

Resolution 21a

General Assembly affirms the human dignity of transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people and asserts their right, within and beyond the URC, to live without threat of violence and hatred.

Resolution 21b

General Assembly commits to furthering the church's understanding of, and pastoral care for transgender, non-binary and gender non-conforming people in the church, both locally and across the denomination and requests the Equalities Committee to facilitate this.

Resolution 21c

General Assembly recognises the church's failure to challenge the assumptions and patterns of behaviour which lead to transphobia and acknowledges that church sometimes perpetuates these patterns.

Resolution 21d

General Assembly supports the right of all to receive affirming non-directive support and healthcare, and to express their sexuality, gender and identity without coercion or the fear thereof.

4. Synod Pastoral Committee

FOR DECISION:

4.1 **Synod Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy**

The Synod Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy, which can be found at [Appendix C](#), has been prepared by Revd Martin Spain, the Synod Ecumenical and Interfaith Officer, in consultation with Synod Boards and Groups, Regional Pastoral Committees, local churches and others. With the recommendation of Synod Pastoral Committee it now comes to Synod Meeting for approval. [Resolution 1]

FOR NOTING:

4.2 **Authorised Elders**

The list of Authorised Elders, approved by Synod Pastoral Committee, can be found at [Appendix B](#). All those listed have signified that they agree to abide by the 'Guidelines on Conduct and Behaviour for Authorised Elders'. All those listed have either provided a valid Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate, or completed a safeguarding self-declaration.

4.3 **Locally Recognised Worship Leaders**

A process for achieving Synod Recognition for Lay Worship Leaders has been approved by Synod Pastoral Committee. The guidance can be found at [Appendix D](#).

FOR INFORMATION:

4.4 **Church Closures**

New Street URC, Welshpool closed effective 1st August 2023.

4.5 **Ministerial changes**

Revd Ruth Whitehead was inducted to the Landsker Pastorate on Saturday 1 April 2023.

Revd Johnny O'Hanlon was ordained and inducted to Rivertown and the North Wales Region on Saturday 22 July 2023.

Revd Simon Walkling was inducted to Christ Well and the Swansea Region on Saturday 2 September 2023.

4.6 **Vacancies**

A vacancy had been declared in a newly reconfigured Valleys Pastorate, incorporating Hope and Market Square, Van Road, St David's Uniting and Bethany, Ystrad Mynach alongside some regional duties.

Resolution 1

Synod Meeting approves and adopts the Synod Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy as set out in [Appendix C](#).

5. Mission and Discipleship Board

Mission and Discipleship Board continues to meet on Zoom.

FOR NOTING:

5.1 **Mission Enabler**

The Synod is currently looking for a new Mission Enabler. The role of Mission Enabler; simply put is to help churches and individuals engage and respond to and bring the love and hope of the Good News of Jesus Christ within their church and in particular their wider communities. The main function is to enable others to be missional rather than to 'do the mission' for others. That is, to guide, inspire, equip, and facilitate people to confidently carry the Gospel into our everyday lives.

If you would like more information, please contact Julia Bartholomew or the Synod Office.

FOR INFORMATION:

5.2 **Children and Youth Events**

A number of events are planned for Synod Children and Youth including in the Swansea Region and Central/East Wales – look out for more information.

5.3 **Synod Stepwise**

As another Synod Stepwise group has come to an end, the plan is to run a Faith Filled Worship group starting in October, if you have already completed Faith Filled Life and would be interested in this next stream, please let Branwen Rees, Jason Askew, Judy Harris or Maggie Kirkbride know.

5.4 **Rural Affairs**

Julie Kirby offered an update on rural matters including chaplaincy at the Royal Welsh Show, but also how the introduction of the new 20mph limit will affect rural communities including bus routes.

5.5 **Mission Committee**

Mission Committee met for two days in June on Zoom and are due to meet in person just before our Synod meeting. As always, we covered much ground including:

Mission and evangelism following a presentation by Revd Dr Susan Durber on the World Council of Churches.

JPIT updated us on their work, this time concentrating on poverty and inequality: jpit.uk/issues/poverty-and-inequality

Updates were received on:

- the work being undertaken to get the URC to a place of Net Zero by 2030.
- Open Table Network opentable.lgbt
- the continuing work of the Legacies of Slavery Task Group urc.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/legacies-of-slavery

If anyone would like more information on the work of Mission Committee, contact Branwen Rees.

6. Finance and Property Board/Trust Company

FOR DECISION:

6.1 **2022 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. Technical changes to the layout out of Funds has continued for a fourth year resulting in more overall clarity as to where funds are held and their availability to be spent on different purposes. A summary is included at [Appendix E](#). The full accounts are available upon application to the Treasurer (chris.atherton.urcwailes@urc.org.uk). [Resolution 2]

6.2 **2024 Budget**

The Synod General Fund Budget is presented for approval by the Synod Meeting. This can be found at [Appendix F](#). In line with resolutions passed at previous Synod Meetings the budget is a balanced one and whilst the request to Inter Synod Resource Sharing (ISRS) is in line with level forecasted in 2022 after making allowances for the Cost-of-Living pressures, it does explore ideas that are emerging from the Church Life Review Process. Resource Sharing Task Group (RSTG) requested that recipient Synods explore how they might begin to think about this and our budget reflects our initial thoughts (these items are shown in black comments on the budget). [Resolution 3]

FOR NOTING:

6.3 **Ministry and Mission Fund**

Ministry and Mission Fund contributions in 2024 were agreed at £486 and £160 per member respectively for those with URC Ministry and those whose ministry is provided by other dominations. This is the first increase in the base level requested from our Churches since 2020 and year on year increases continue to be capped at 5%. FPB agreed that the Synod Receipt from the Ministry and Mission Fund should not be claimed again in 2024.

6.4 **Daphne & Bethan Fund**

Grants from the Daphne & Bethan Fund were made in March to Jo Harris for her trip to Palestine and Israel, and in May for the youth group at Dan y Graig, Risca, and to support a family attending the URC Holiday Forum.

6.5 **Synod Support Team staffing**

The appointment of Maggie Kirkbride as Administrative Officer was ratified in April.

6.6 Digital Worship grant

A Digital Worship grant was made to Christ Well URC in April.

6.7 Livingstone Trust Fund

A grant from the Livingstone Trust Fund was made in May to support members of Llanfair Uniting Church, Penrhys, in a trip to Madagascar.

6.8 Property sales

The sale of 1 Garden Suburb, Llanidloes, formerly the manse of Trinity Llanidloes, was completed in July.

Resolution 2

Synod Meeting receives the accounts for 2022 as summarised in [Appendix E](#).

Resolution 3

Synod Meeting approves the Synod General Fund Budget for 2024 as shown in [Appendix F](#).

Appendix A: Nominations Report

Synod Support Team

Synod Moderator

vacant

Synod Clerk

Megan Price

2022 –

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

Diana Taylor

2021 –

Deputy Safeguarding Officer

Judy Harris

Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Martin Spain

2021 –

Moderator's PA, Office Manager and Cashier

Joel Sainsbury

Property Officer and Assistant Company Secretary

Claire Boot

Finance Assistant

Gaynor Morgan

Administration Assistant

Maggie Kirkbride

Synod Office Chaplain

Stephen Best

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
East Wales	Branwen Rees
Cardiff and Penarth	Martha McInnes
Valleys and Vale	<i>vacant</i>
Swansea	Verena Walder
Pembrokeshire	Stella Hayton
Mid Wales	<i>vacant</i>
Bridgend United Area	Martin Spain
Brecon Beacons	Julie Kirby

Northern College (co-opted) Graham Adams

Ex officio

Training and Development Officer

Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

Lay Preaching Commissioner

In attendance: Synod Chaplain, representative of the Youth and Children Working Group

Finance and Property Board

Convener	Ian Lloyd-Parry	2008 – 2026
Secretary	Property Officer	
Members:	Sheila Jones	2018 – 2023
	Lyn Oelmann	2018 – 2024
	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 – 2026
Members:	Julia Bartholomew	2021 – 2023
	Judith Dolben	2018 – 2023
	Martin Spain	2021 – 2026

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

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)
 Deputy Safeguarding Officer
 Trust Secretary
 Pat Davies
 Lyn Evans
 Liz Jones
 Bethan Trott

Other Appointments

To General Assembly Councils/Committees/Panels, etc.

Nominations Committee	Synod Clerk	
Mission Committee	Branwen Rees	2018 – 2026
Assembly Commission for Discipline Panel	Martha McInnes	
Disciplinary Investigation Panel	Martin Spain	

To other URC networks, etc.

Green Advocate	Eileen Newington	
Rural Church Advocate	Julie Kirby	
Lay Preaching Advocate	Maggie Kirkbride	
PLATO	Property Officer	
URC Youth Representative	Nathanial Stinton	term ends 2023
Pilots Officer	Children and Youth Development Officer	
Stepwise Co-ordinator	Training and Development Officer	

URC (Wales) Trust Company Limited

Convener	Ian Lloyd Parry	
Company Secretary	Chris Atherton	
Assistant Secretary	Property Officer	
Trustees:	<u>Trust Appointed:</u>	
	Colin Grimes	annual appointment
	Ian Lloyd-Parry	annual appointment
	<u>Synod Appointed:</u>	
	Chris Byrne	2021 – 2024
	Ian Kirby	2018 – 2026
	Diane Moverley	2021 – 2024
	Sandra Wallace	2017 – 2026
	<i>1 vacancy</i>	

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 – 2024
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	Megan Price	
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: Authorised Elders

			Conduct & Behaviour	Safeguarding
North Wales				
St John's Buckley °	Chris Byrne	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Trefor Suddick	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
			✓	✓
Gloddaeth, Llandudno	David McKinlay	to 31/12/2025		
Horeb, Dyserth °	Trefor Suddick	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Mold, Tyddyn Street	Julie Davies	to 31/12/2026	✓	✓
Rhos-on-Sea	Keith Harrison	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Pete Fawcett	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Carolyn Ridding	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Mark Rodgers	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
United Church in Rhyl °	Tony Barkley	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Christine Randall	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Rivertown, Shotton	Chris Byrne	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	David Clarkson	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Linsey Ann Dentith	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Sheila Kavanagh	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
St John's Flint with Bagillt	Iris Williams	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Salisbury Park, Wrexham	Shirley Devaney	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Barbara Jones	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Tabernacle, Holywell	Jon Stanford	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Donna Jones	to 31/12/2026	✓	✓
East Wales				
Cwmbran	Diane Brain	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Lyn Oelmann	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Stow Park, Newport	Ron Prosser	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Mathias Tchatchoua *		✓	✓
Tabernacle, Llanvaches	Russell Davies	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Cardiff and Penarth				
Bethel, North Llanishen	Sue Welpton	to 31/12/2026	✓	✓

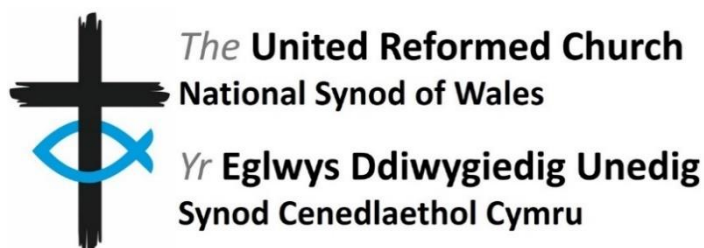
Bethesda, Tongwynlais °	Barbara Tomlin	to 31/12/2026	✓	✓
Beulah, Rhiwbina °	Richard Edwards	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Sarah Edwards	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Alun Jones	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Louise Morgan	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Derek Evans	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Canton, Cardiff	Chris Atherton	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Kenneth Woods	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
City, Cardiff °	Beth Charles	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Nici Lintern-Gittens	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Alison McQueen	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Liz Meek	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Bethan Trott	to 31/12/2026		
	Rhoda Henson	to 31/12/2026		
Parkminster, Cardiff °	Sylvia Abel	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Penarth, Elfed Avenue	Clive Curtis	to 31/12/2026	✓	✓
	Elizabeth Lowder	to 31/12/2026	✓	✓
St Andrew's, Cardiff	Christine Clarke	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Jill Shelton	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Valleys and Vale				
Bethesda'r Fro	Christine Clarke	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Clive Curtis	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Russell Davies	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Nigel Williams	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Edwardsville	Phil Rickards *		-	-
St. David's Uniting, Pontypridd	Iestyn Henson	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Alan Hills	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Michael Howells	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Margaret Morris	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Claire Hughes	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Senghenydd	Sandra Gough	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Jill Shelton *		-	-
	Carol Thomas	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Van Road, Caerphilly	Lewis Lewis-Head	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Rob Moverley	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Hope and Market Sq MT	Lyn Evans	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
	Lewis Lewis-Head	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓

Swansea

Christ Well, Manselton	Mary Jeffreys	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Elaine Jones	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Tabernacle, Mumbles	Phyllis T. Roberts	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Verena Walder *		-	-
Temple, Gowerton	Teresa Morgan	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Lindsay Walder	To 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Pembrokeshire				
Landsker Pastorate	Melanie Ablitt	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Maureen Canton	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Kate Wolsey	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
S Pembs Pastorate	Kate Wolsey	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Mid Wales				
Penuel, Llanwrthwl	Sally Tolson	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Tabernacle Rhayader	D Michael Bennett	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Dawn Jones	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
Bridgend				
Ogmore Vale	Heather Phillips	to 31/12/2024	✓	✓
Brecon Beacons				
Brecon Beacons Pastorate (Abergavenny URC Plough Church Brecon)	Judith Negus	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Margot Seabourne	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Liz Tadd	to 31/12/2025	✓	✓
	Russell Davies	to 31/12/2026	✓	✓
	(Maesyronnen only)			

- * indicates those included for the duration of their term of service as Local Church Leader, although no renewal is required.
- o these churches have resolved that any person who is authorised to preside at the sacraments in a United Reformed Church (or LEP involving the URC) within the Regional Pastoral Committee be also authorised to celebrate the sacraments in their own church.

Appendix C: Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy



Ecumenical and Inter-faith Strategy

DRAFT 11. 25/9/23

John 17: 20-23 (NIV UK)

Jesus prays for all believers.

²⁰ 'My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ *that all of them may be one*, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – ²³ I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Strategy Adopted	14/10/23
Review Date	

Contents

Preface	4
PART 1 - Ecumenism	5
Strategic Aim	5

Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy

Strategic Objectives.....	5
1 Advancing ecumenical activity within the National Synod of Wales.....	5
2 Developing the Synod's relationship with partners in Wales.....	6
3 Participating in the United Reformed Church's (UK) ecumenical activity.....	6
Introduction to Ecumenism.....	6
The Mission of the Church	7
1. Missional.....	8
2. Relational.....	8
3. Structural.....	8
Ongoing Ecumenical Projects	8
Local Ecumenical Partnerships.....	8
Ecumenical areas.....	9
The Covenanted Churches and Shared Ministry	9
Local Ecumenism.....	10
Implementation and Responsibilities	11
Local Church.....	11
Ministers and Elders.....	12
Councils of the Synod	12
Regional Pastoral Committee	13
Synod Pastoral Committee	13
Finance and Property Board	14
URC (Wales) Trust Company Limited	14
Mission and Discipleship Board	14
Synod Support Team.....	14
Officer for Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations	14
Synod Moderator.....	15
Synod Clerk	15
Trust Company Secretary/Synod Treasurer.....	16
Property Officer	16
Training and Development Officer.....	16
Children and Youth Development Officer	17
Safeguarding Officer	17
Synod Office Staff.....	17
Summary.....	18
PART 2 – Inter-faith Relations.....	19
Introduction to Inter-faith Relations.....	19
Strategic Aim	19
Strategic Objectives.....	19
1. Advancing inter-faith activity across the National Synod of Wales.....	19
2. Developing the Synod's relationship with inter-faith partners in Wales.....	20

Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy

3. Participating in the United Reformed Church's (UK) inter-faith activity.	20
a) The inter-faith fund.....	20
b) Israel and Palestine	20
c) Initiatives and events	20
Summary.....	20
Appendix A.....	21

Preface

Ecumenism and inter-faith relations have always been part of the life of the National Synod of Wales. The Synod reflects what occurs with the United Reformed Church UK and plays a prominent part in progressing these matters within Wales. We do many things very well but there is still room for improvement.

This Strategy is presented at a time of great change for the churches in Wales, not only churches that are part of the United Reformed Church. The way we ‘do’ ecumenism and the way we relate to other faiths in our context needs to be affirmed. Building on what is already good and offering direction on how to develop in other ways, the Strategy is a prayerful, pragmatic approach that ensures Ecumenism and Inter-faith Relations are prominent within the life of the Synod and Churches.

The Strategy is in two parts. PART 1 deals with Ecumenism and PART 2 deals with Inter-faith Relations. Both parts have strategic aims and objectives – what we will do, some suggestions of working together using established methods and an encouragement to progress with new initiatives – how we will do things, and implementation methods that show the responsibility of churches, councils and individuals – who will do it.

This document is large! But it contains the source information and material that can be referenced in the future. You only need to consider the part(s) that help you in your role within the Synod. It may be useful for you to look at the section that relates to Implementation and Responsibilities, as each part of the Synod contributes to the strategy. For example, there is a section on the role of the local church and another section relating to Ministers and Elders.

It is our hope that all involved will respond positively and embrace the approaches the Synod has laid out for Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations, and that we remember the prayer of Jesus, when he prayed that “all of us may be one”.

PART 1 - Ecumenism

Strategic Aim

The principle aim of this Strategy is for the United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales to intentionally embed into all our activities the missional ethos of ecumenism, so we are an ecumenical movement in Wales. Mission is the priority and ecumenical initiatives are some of the ways to achieve that Mission. The Synod's aspiration is that Wales will become an Ecumenical Nation, and the United Reformed Church will promote this ambition with its partners.

Strategic Objectives

The Strategic Objectives are defined as, but not restricted to:

1 Advancing ecumenical activity within the National Synod of Wales.

In the main, this is achieved through local ecumenical action, using the methods outlined in the Churches Together in England publication - *A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission*. The toolkit suggests three ways in which local mission can be achieved, through a Working Agreement, a Partnership Agreement or a Constitutional Agreement. The agreements are briefly explained below.

Working Agreement	Partnership Agreement	Constitutional Agreement
When a simple record is all that is needed for a cross-church activity. Provides a simple outline of the agreed local informal arrangements.	When the activity requires coordination of resources , ministry, and pastoral provision.	When a new body is being created. It <u>may</u> involve registration with the Charity Commission, has trustees, and sets up the governance structures of the new body.
Denominational approval not required.	Requires denominational approval according to the organisation of the churches involved.	Requires denominational approval according to the organisation of the churches involved.

(The full version is available from [the Churches Together in England website](#) or the Synod office)

The framework means local churches and the Synod can exploit opportunities to engage with other churches and organisations informally and through formal arrangements, for example, Local Ecumenical Partnerships or Shared Ministry. This should be the responsibility of the local Church, Regional Pastoral Committees and Councils of the Synod. *(Note: There may be some local ecumenical actions that don't need an agreement of any kind, for example: joint services, Week of Prayer events; Good Friday walks of witness; shared support for Food Banks or Street Pastors. This is to encourage Churches to engage in local ecumenism.)*

The Ecumenical Officer will offer specialist subject matter advice when required.

2 Developing the Synod's relationship with partners in Wales.

This is achieved through intentional engagement by the Synod with Cytûn, Commission of Covenanted Churches, Free Church Council of Wales, Christian Aid, local Councils of Churches, Ecumenical and Inter-faith Officers' Network, Inter-faith forum, Inter-faith council of Wales, as well as the Synod level cross denominational meetings with the denominations in Wales. In the main, this is the responsibility of the Councils of the Synod and any Synod Office Team member that represents the Synod on any committee, group or forum where ecumenism is on the agenda. The Ecumenical Officer will offer specialist subject matter advice when required.

3 Participating in the United Reformed Church's (UK) ecumenical activity.

The National Synod of Wales is but one of the Synods that make up the United Reformed Church of the United Kingdom. Some ecumenical initiatives are developed in collaboration with other UK churches and Christian organisations (for example the Methodist Church of Great Britain), and some come from the larger denominations and organisations in England (for example the Church of England and Christian Aid). The National Synod of Wales contributes to this form of ecumenism by participating fully in the UK Councils of the Church, including the General Assembly. In the main, this is achieved through elected or nominated representatives and through the Ecumenical Reference Group, which is a group of the National Ecumenical Officers from England, Scotland and Wales. The responsibility for promoting UK national ecumenical initiatives lies with the committee or board that has stewardship of the subject. Specialist advice will come from the UK national officers and/or convenors that manage national ecumenical projects.

Introduction to Ecumenism

The terms ecumenism and ecumenical come from the Greek οἰκουμένη (oikoumene) and is the concept and principle that Christians who belong to different Christian denominations should work together to develop closer relationships among their churches and promote Christian unity. Christians believe that Jesus was the ultimate example of reconciliation because his crucifixion and resurrection healed the broken relationship between God and humanity. We try to follow Jesus' example by working for reconciliation in the world. Ecumenism is a form of reconciliation that aims to bring the different denominations of Christianity together.

Ecumenism is a vision, a movement, a theology, and a mode of action. It represents the universality of the people of God and affects the way Christians think about their faith, the church, and the world. Ecumenism is a long process that draws Christians together, uniting their life and mission and bringing the Body of Christ and the human community closer to the fulfilment of God's purposes.

To be ecumenical is to work toward worldwide Christian unity or cooperation. The ecumenical movement seeks *unity in diversity*, that we may be the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church of Jesus Christ. This is what Jesus prayed for in John 17: *"I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one ... so the world may believe."*

The United Reformed Church is an ecumenical movement. It supports and encourages unity amongst the Christian traditions in the United Kingdom and has ecumenism rooted at the

heart of its very existence. At local, national, and international level, the contact and understanding between the wide variety of Christian traditions, representing the diversity of the body of Christ, lies at the heart of its mission.

The United Reformed Church's ecumenical mission requires that it plays a full part in

- Ecumenical Partnerships
- Ecumenical Organisations in the UK
- Interdenominational Dialogue
- European and Worldwide Councils of the Church

The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales reflects this approach to ecumenism and at Synod level, we are key stakeholders and participate with our Christian partners in

- Local Ecumenical Partnerships
- Cytûn
- the Free Church Council of Wales
- the Commission of Covenanted Churches
- Interdenominational Dialogue with National Denominations
- Christian Aid Committees
- Local Councils of Churches
- Wales national youth and children councils/forums

All Ecumenical activity relates to our Mission.

The Mission of the Church

The United Reformed Church defines Mission as “sharing God’s vision of justice and love for all people in the world around us, including our local neighbourhood.”

Churches Together in England (CTE) declares that “Mission (missio dei) is the total redeeming work of God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – in saving, healing, restoring and renewing the World. The Church is invited to join in this adventure. Simply put: mission begins and ends in God.”

This strategic aim is all about the Mission of the Churches and Synod of the United Reformed Church in Wales, through the theology of ecumenism. Ecumenical theology is focussing on God’s will for unity among Christians. This is an important concept. All ecumenical activity must serve to further Mission.

The toolkit (explained at [objective 1](#) above) helps to achieve local mission and the Synod’s approach to Ecumenism will be Missional, Relational and Structural. This technique feeds into *A Flexible Framework for Local Unity in Mission* and is an additional part of the toolkit that can be deployed to achieve the strategic aim. To be Missional, Relational and Structural follows the triune nature of the church. The church is a living organism, a particular kind of a very real body, where all members function together in a network where people learn, share experiences and serve communities and life. The church’s mission is God’s mission. God’s mission is attained both through our relationship to each other, and the way we develop our structural relationships as the church’s commitment to Missio Dei.

1. Missional

The missional church is a community of God's people that defines itself, and organizes its life around, its real purpose of being an agent of God's mission to the world. In other words, the church's true and authentic organizing principle is 'mission'. Mission is about sharing God's vision of justice and love for all people in the world around us, including our local community. What do we need to do to further our mission in our context? This is the first question to ask when considering the most appropriate way of engaging ecumenically.

2. Relational

From the time that Jesus called his first disciples, people have been in a relationship with God, through Christ and his Holy Spirit. In the same way, we are relational in the Church today. And having a relational connection to others means that the mission of the church is relational. One supports the other. The missional church will be relational. What do we need to do to ensure a firm commitment to relational approaches that underpin the mission? This is the second question to ask when considering the most appropriate ways of engaging ecumenically.

3. Structural

In this respect, structural does not mean the bricks and mortar that make up our church buildings. It means developing and maintaining a structure that equips and empowers every believer to be missional. Within Wales, churches have different structural ways of managing mission. Even those that are part of the same denomination have varying and, in some cases, contrasting structural methods and this is true of local United Reformed Churches. It is important that partners in an ecumenical arrangement are aware of the differing structural approaches and governance arrangements of each other. Any sharing agreement will be cognisant of how best to manage structural arrangements to further the mission of the partnership. What cohesive structural ways do we employ to ensure we have a common vision and understanding that makes mission achievable? This is the third question to ask when considering the most appropriate way of engaging ecumenically.

Ongoing Ecumenical Projects

The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales has in place a number of ecumenical initiatives that are already being used to further Mission.

Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Most structural ecumenical initiatives are managed through Local Ecumenical Partnerships. The United Reformed Church was established as an ecumenical church and has been, and still is, a prominent lead in setting up Local Ecumenical Partnerships. The term Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEP) describes the situation where more than one Christian denomination is working together under a formal agreement. As this is the main ecumenical focus of the United Reformed Church, this is a brief explanation of LEPs.

Across Great Britain, the URC is involved in around 400 LEPs; our most common partnerships are with the Methodist Church, the Baptists and the Church of England. The Methodist Church is our closest ecumenical partner with whom we share in approximately 300 LEPs, 100 of which also comprise one or more additional ecumenical partners.

There are 12 LEPs which include the Roman Catholic Church and a total of four united congregations, with the Moravian Church. We have eight LEPs with the Church of Scotland.

In Wales, LEPs exist with the Church in Wales, the Methodists, the Baptists, the Presbyterian Church of Wales and the Union of Welsh Independents. Of the 79 Churches in the National Synod of Wales 29 are involved with a LEP (37%). In terms of church polity, the United Reformed Church is very close to the Presbyterian Church of Wales and share the same understanding of ministry and the ministry of elders. We have 16 churches that are in a LEP with the Presbyterian Church of Wales.

LEP arrangements are necessarily individual to each setting and are established by means of formal documentation. This takes the form of a constitution or model governing document, and usually a sharing agreement, as well as deeds of trust that take note of the original financial assets contributed by each denomination. In the URC National Synod of Wales, support will be given to each LEP in this detailed work and the Synod will generally task the Ecumenical Officer to help guide the process and to co-ordinate the work required of other committees and boards. LEPs will need a Partnership Agreement or a Constitutional Agreement and there are model templates already in place that will be adapted to suit the local situation.

Ecumenical areas

In several parts of Great Britain there are defined Methodist-United Reformed Church ecumenical areas. This is an ecumenical model that encourages regions and circuits to formally come together.

In Wales, we have one such ecumenical area which is the Bridgend United Area, with churches in Bridgend, Porthcawl, Ogmore Vale, Brynna, Gilfach Goch, Cefn Cribwr and Tondur.

In January 2019, the two denominations issued a model constitution for ecumenical areas, which can be adapted to meet local needs. A copy is available from the Synod Office.

The Covenanted Churches and Shared Ministry

The National Synod of Wales of the United Reformed Church is part of the Covenanted Churches in Wales. In 1975, a group of churches agreed to work and pray that they may be brought into one visible Church to serve together in mission to the glory of God the Father. There are five churches/traditions that covenanted, namely:

- The Committee of the Covenanted Baptist Churches in Wales
- The Church in Wales
- The Methodist Church
- The Presbyterian Church of Wales
- The United Reformed Church

The Covenant declares:

Confessing our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and renewing our will to serve his mission in the world, our several churches have been brought into a new relationship with one another.

Together we give thanks for all we have in common.

Together we repent the sin of perpetuating our division.

Together we make known our understanding of the obedience to which we are called.

The Covenanted Churches work together through the Commission and over the years, there have been attempts at progress towards a fuller uniting church in Wales. It is fair to say that the attempts have not been as fruitful as hoped and prayed for, but there are a number of matters agreed upon that can be used in an ecumenical setting, for example, an agreed form of liturgy to celebrate Holy Communion and Baptism. This can be found on the [Cytûn website](#) or is available from the Synod Office.

The Commission has re-stated its ecumenical vision of Shared Ministry and the latest update, published in 2020, explains, “The Commission of the Covenanted Churches invites Churches within the Covenant in Wales to renew their commitment to sharing ministry”.

The policy is clear and states that, “those ordained ministers of Word and Sacraments who are fully recognized by their churches may share ministry across the other Covenanted Churches in a local ecumenical setting in accordance with current regulations.”

The Shared Ministry publication can be found on the [Cytûn website](#) or is available from the Synod Office. Shared Ministry can be achieved through a Working Agreement if it is a one off event such as a united Communion Service. Other forms of Shared Ministry are likely to need a Partnership Agreement or a Constitutional Agreement and the Councils of the Synod will be involved in supporting the local Church or Regional Pastoral Committee as necessary.

Local Ecumenism

Many ecumenical activities happen at local level. The following are examples:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Special united services | • Week of Prayer for Christian Unity |
| • Walks of Witness | • Christian Aid local appeals |
| • Gymanfa Ganu | • Remembrance Services |
| • Open the Book | • Pulpit swop |
| • Community engagement | • Eco Church |
| • Food banks | • Messy Church |
| • Street pastors | • Youth Club |
| • Back to Church Sunday | • Children and Youth |
| • Bible studies | • Toddler Groups |
| • Alpha course | • United Sunday School |
| • Bible society courses | • Mission Partnerships |
| • Volunteer community chaplains | • Pilots |
| • Sunday school projects | • Community Café |
| • Church holiday groups | • Stepwise |
| • Holiday clubs | • Memory choirs |
| • Retreat days | • Clothing banks |

Some of the ecumenical activities are managed and organised by the local church, for example United Services or Walks of Witness and others are organised by national

associations and made available for local adaptation, for example Week of Prayer for Christian Unity or the Chaplaincy Service at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society Showground. The next section defines some of the common approaches that can be taken to accomplish this strategy.

Implementation and Responsibilities

The established approaches provide clear examples and methods that demonstrate churches can work ecumenically to further a common mission and witness. Local Churches, Regional Pastoral Committees and the Boards and Councils of the United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales must consider all available processes to further our Strategic Ecumenical aim. Each constituent part of the United Reformed Church in Wales has an important role to play, and the next section looks at what can be done to stimulate and encourage ecumenism in Wales and to give some sense of who does what and how we achieve the Strategic Aim.

Local Church

Having regard to the description of [ecumenism](#) above, the local church is well placed to encourage greater cooperation and union among neighbouring churches. The Structures of the United Reformed Church explain that two of the functions of the local Church are:

- (i) to further the Church's mission in the locality;
- (ii) to develop local ecumenical relationships;

In the United Reformed Church, the Church Meeting is the deciding authority for matters affecting local mission and ecumenism. Ideas and initiatives may come from individuals or other local church councils, but it is the Church Meeting that agrees and authorises ecumenical activity. It is also a function of the Elders Meeting to foster in the congregation concern for ecumenical action. Structure 2(2)(i). Therefore it is proper that plans are shared and discussed with the Church Meeting and any decision is recorded in the minutes.

The Toolkit has a number of suggested approaches that can be adapted locally. These include having a lead church model, a formal ecumenical 'welcome' process and simple agreements to share buildings. In addition, there is a scale that helps the local church decide whether it needs a working, partnership or constitutional agreement. The Church Meeting should decide where the ecumenical project appears on the scale.

- a. If it is a cross church activity that makes few demands of the churches involved or has a specified timescale, or is simply joining together for worship, the church meeting should maintain a simple record of the arrangements as a [working agreement](#).
- b. If the activity requires a more co-ordinated approach involving numerous resources or the provision of ministry and makes several significant demands, impacting the life of the churches, or will be ongoing for a considerable period, with the option of long-term commitment, this would require a [partnership agreement](#) and is likely to need

support, guidance and possibly approval from one of the Councils of the Synod. The Church Meeting should involve Synod accordingly.

- c. If the activity goes beyond a partnership agreement and a whole new body is being created involving all the life and resources of the participating churches, this would be a [constitutional agreement](#) and the Church Meeting must involve Synod in its plans.

Whichever form of agreement is used, any project plan should follow the basic outline of [Missional, Relational and Structural](#). This will ensure that agreements are not reliant on the good will of individuals alone, but there is a common approach that ensures the ecumenical initiative would continue if the people involved in the matter change.

In all agreements, Safeguarding policies and procedures must be renewed and a decision made as to the risk assessment and training needed in accordance with Safeguarding Policy.

The Regional Pastoral Committee should be kept informed and be ready to offer advice and assistance and support the Church Meeting in coming to the right agreement. Further advice can be given by the appropriate Council of the Synod and the Officer for Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations. It is essential that the Local Church seeks advice when any ecumenical activity goes beyond a simple working agreement.

Ministers and Elders

Both Ministers of the Word and Sacraments and Elders in the United Reformed Church exercise a ministry that includes ecumenism in their role. The expected characteristics of ministers include:

- representing the Church in ecumenical, community and other settings
- meeting with other ecumenical/secular community leaders to discuss joint working or local issues

Elders also have expected characteristics and are called to share responsibility, with the Minister of the Word and Sacraments:

- for the spiritual oversight of the congregation.
- and are committed to play their part in the wider councils of the Church and in ecumenical relationships.

It is further expected that Ministers and Elders within the National Synod of Wales actively seek out ecumenical opportunities and engage with local ecumenical initiatives wherever possible. Such opportunities should be reported via the Regional / Synod Pastoral Committees as necessary.

Councils of the Synod

In addition to the local Church Meeting and Ministers and Elders, several Councils and Boards contribute to the mission and life of the Synod. These are:

- Regional Pastoral Committees

- Synod Pastoral Committee
- Finance and Property Board
- URC (Wales) Trust Company Limited
- Mission and Discipleship Board
- Synod Support Team
- Children and Youth Working Group
- Synod Leadership Group
- Safeguarding Reference Group
- Synod Panel for Interviewing Ministerial Candidates
- Wales District Council

All Councils and Boards of the United Reformed Church in Wales have a degree of responsibility in supporting ecumenism. It is accepted that some Councils and Boards will have more involvement with ecumenical projects than others, and these are listed below, but all Councils and Boards must be concerned about ecumenism and consider if an ecumenical response would be an appropriate way to manage any issues that come before them. It shall be a requirement that all Councils and Boards include ecumenism on any agenda. This is particularly important to those Councils and Boards that do not have the Ecumenical Officer as a member.

Whenever an ecumenical initiative is referred, or a request for assistance is made to a Council or Board, that Council or Board is responsible for ensuring the initiative contributes to the Strategic Aims and Objectives of the Synod and the appropriate agreement is in place, be it a [Working, Partnership or Constitutional Agreement](#). Further, Councils and Boards must cascade information to partner Councils and Boards as necessary to ensure the right support is given.

The following section explains the specific responsibilities of the Council or Board that is more likely to be involved with ecumenical matters.

Regional Pastoral Committee

- The main point of contact and support for local Churches
- Encourage local ecumenical initiatives
- Support the Missional ethos of the United Reformed Church
- Advise on the agreement(s) needed
- Include ecumenism on the meeting agenda

Synod Pastoral Committee

- Support the Regional Pastoral Committee
- Ensure the appropriate agreement is in place
- Give concurrence to cross denominational ecumenical initiatives
- Provide project management support as necessary
- Ensure engagement of other Councils or Boards as necessary
- Include ecumenism in any local ministry and mission review

- Include ecumenism on the meeting agenda

Finance and Property Board

- Include ecumenism on the meeting agenda
- Providing concurrence for projects and initiatives
- Allocating grants from Synod funding sources
- Reviewing and agreeing Synod and Trust policies
- Agreeing Constitutions

URC (Wales) Trust Company Limited

- Draft and agree Partnership Agreements
- Assist FPB in drawing up Constitutions
- Prepare Sharing Agreements (with supporting finance schedules)
- Formulate Deeds of Trust.

Mission and Discipleship Board

- Seek out ecumenical mission opportunities
- Explore cross denominational discipleship programmes
- Encourage ecumenical initiatives with children, young people and families work
- Explore ecumenical approaches to environmental matters
- Include ecumenism in any local ministry and mission review
- Include ecumenism on the meeting agenda

The approach that all Councils and Boards must take is to ensure that consideration is given to ecumenism and ecumenical initiatives in their area of business and responsibility. Any scheme of work that helps to achieve the aims and objectives of this strategy will need to be effectively managed and follow established project planning methods. In particular, project plans should follow the SMART model, and ensure that project objectives contribute to the strategic aim and objectives in this strategy. Linking separate project aims to the Ecumenical Strategy is key for ensuring a successful project.

The SMART model is included at [Appendix A](#).

Synod Support Team

In addition to the Councils and Boards of the Synod, the Synod Support Team must also engage in ecumenism to achieve the aims and objectives of this strategy. All officers are members of at least one Council or Board, but this section is making sure that all members of the Synod Support Team have regard for the ecumenical ethos of the Synod in their everyday work.

Officer for Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations

The strategic lead for Ecumenism is the Officer for Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations. The role is a General Assembly appointment, and the Officer has responsibilities within the Synod of Wales and plays a key part in the work of the Ecumenical Officers' Reference Group, that promotes ecumenism and approaches across Wales, Scotland and England.

The role profile for the Officer for Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations can be obtained from the Synod Office but the main activities are:

- Advancing ecumenical activity within the National Synod of Wales
- Developing the Synod's relationship with partners
- Work at Synod and Assembly level on behalf of the National Synod of Wales
- Undertake specific projects as directed by the Synod Pastoral Committee
- Practice episcopate in bringing the national to the local

Synod Moderator

The Synod Moderator's role description includes encouraging ecumenical commitment and endeavour across the Synod and being proactive in encouraging fruitful ecumenical activities and to ensure the United Reformed Church is represented at church leaders' meetings and ecumenical events. The Synod Moderator is also a key person in the formation of pastorates and the deployment and movement of ministers.

The Moderator will refer to ecumenical initiatives when leading worship and attending meetings and when future possibilities for ministry are being discussed.

The Moderator will welcome ecumenical guests at Synod Meetings.

Where ecumenical developments involve changes in pastorates, the EIRO and Moderator will consult with each other and work on implications for deployment strategy with the relevant Regional Pastoral Committee and the Synod Pastoral Committee.

Where the role and duties of a URC minister change with formal ecumenical agreements, the EIRO and Moderator will consult with each other and work with those involved.

Where a minister of another denomination may serve United Reformed Church congregations on a Certificate of Limited Service, the Moderator will work on the Synod and URC processes.

Where the Synod is to be represented at ecumenical meetings or events, the EIRO and Moderator will consult about the appropriate person. Where there are discussions about deploying ministers, the Moderator will usually be involved, and work on building relationships to promote ecumenism. The Moderator will normally attend church leaders' meetings and preside at inductions in LEPs or agree an appropriate deputy, which may be a Synod Support Team member or a member of the relevant RPC.

Synod Clerk

The Synod Clerk's role is to ensure the smooth and efficient running of the Synod facilitating a spirit of communication and cooperation across the work of the Synod. As convenor and/or member of many of the Councils of the Synod, the Synod Clerk will:

- Ensure that Ecumenism appears on the agenda for Synod Meeting, Synod Pastoral Committee, Synod Support Team Meeting, Synod Leadership Group

Ecumenical and Interfaith Strategy

- Contribute to discussions on Ecumenism and ensure it is considered in any policy discussions
- Actively look for opportunities to promote and foster ecumenical work in the Synod

The Synod Clerk currently represents the Synod on CYTÛN's Racial Justice Network.

Trust Company Secretary/Synod Treasurer

The Company Secretary for the United Reformed Church (Wales) Trust Company Limited and Synod Treasurer for the United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales are posts held by one individual. The two roles cover a range of practical and compliance issues from finance to governance.

Regarding ecumenism, the Trust Company Secretary/Synod Treasurer:

- Provides specific and specialist advice on all ecumenical matters that involve property and assets;
- Provides line management to the Property Officer
- Advises on the financial implications of ecumenical projects and considers sources of grants monies that may be needed;

Property Officer

The Property Officer supports congregations in managing property, including church buildings, land, graveyards and manses, held in trust on behalf of the Synod by the URC (Wales) Trust Co Ltd. The Property Officer liaises with congregations and the Finance and Property Board to request concurrence and implement decisions.

Regarding ecumenism, the Property Officer:

- supports Local Ecumenical Partnerships based in URC-held property in the management of buildings and land;
- provides guidance for the property aspects of sharing agreements and deeds of trust;
- liaises with Local Ecumenical Partnerships in seeking concurrence and/or Synod grant funding for property-related projects.

Training and Development Officer

The Training and Development Officer works with local churches, members, elders, and ministers to identify and develop training needs, and implements the Synod's strategy for training and development, including worship, ecology, discipleship, ministry, mission, continuing ministerial development, and other areas of church life.

Regarding ecumenism, the Training and Development Officer

- Works with the ecumenical instruments in Wales and through personal relationships with officers in other Churches, to develop ecumenical initiatives for the provision of training and development.

Children and Youth Development Officer

The Children and Youth Development Officer's role is to ensure that churches, their staff and those who act as leaders are encouraged, enabled and effective in their work with children and young people and to ensure this takes place in a safe environment.

Regarding ecumenism, the CYDO:

- Encourages and empowers young people to take an active part in youth based ecumenical activities;
- Seeks opportunities that allow young people that are part of any LEP to participate fully in local ecumenical projects;
- Ensures that any URC children or youth group has involvement in Synod ecumenical projects or initiatives;
- Acts as the conduit for information and communication from any Synod committee to the Children and Youth group;

Safeguarding Officer

The Safeguarding Officer works with congregations to make churches 'safer places', providing support, advice and training, and responding appropriately when safeguarding issues arise. Each church is encouraged to appoint a Safeguarding Coordinator. Where a congregation is URC and worships in a URC owned building, it is recommended that the church follows URC safeguarding policy (Good Practice 5). Where a church is a Local Ecumenical Partnership and worships in a building owned by a different denomination such as Presbyterian Church in Wales, Methodist or Baptist, it is recommended that the church follows the safeguarding policy associated with the relevant denomination.

Regarding ecumenism, the Synod Safeguarding Officer

- Works closely with colleagues in other denominations doing an equivalent role, especially Presbyterian Church in Wales, Methodists and Baptists. (These are the three denominations most often found in Local Ecumenical Partnerships).
- Attends the Wales Christian Safeguarding Forum, representing the URC.
- Shares information as appropriate with colleagues in other denominations.

Synod Office Staff

Office staff have direct and regular communication with churches and individuals across the Synod. As such, they are well placed to promote ecumenism and the ecumenical strategy. All staff will be mindful of the importance of ecumenical work when dealing with churches and ensure that processes in place with other denominations, (eg payments to the PCW for an ecumenical chaplaincy grant; payments to Cytun for ecumenical work; and payments to the UWI for the church marquee at the Pembrokeshire County Show) are observed in a timely manner.

Summary

The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales continues its ecumenical journey. There have been many successes over the years, evidenced by the number of Local Ecumenical Partnerships that are in the Synod, some of which were formed in the early 1980s forty years ago. There is much that goes on in our communities, where the local church is a leading light in sharing its mission. Ecumenism is one of the major theological and practical ways that help us towards visible unity in one faith. The more we advance this unity, the closer we get to what Jesus prayed for, namely that we “may be one...so the world may believe”.

Whilst acknowledging our sin of division within the Church of Jesus Christ, we continue on our ecumenical journey in hope. Hope that we show a visible unity to the world, hope that what we are doing is God’s plan – His mission, hope that our continuing efforts will bring peace and justice to the whole world. God’s plan is universal, we are part of something great. And all of us have something to offer.

PART 2 – Inter-faith Relations

Introduction to Inter-faith Relations

The word "inter-faith" describes an interaction between people of different religions or faith traditions. But it is more than that. It is about understanding our significant differences, but also recognizing our similarities, and working together for peace, justice and healing in our world.

Inter-faith cooperation is not about renouncing religions or combining all religions into one. In fact, many people find that their friendships with people in other traditions strengthen their understanding and respect for their own tradition.

Inter-faith friendships reach out across the stereotypes and misunderstandings that lead to religiously motivated violence. They reinforce the idea that, regardless of religion or belief tradition, every human deserves respect.

Inter-faith interactions live out the core values that are shared by all religions - values like compassion, respect, love, hope and peace, which are necessary for sustaining life in all communities.

In the UK today, we live in the conscious presence of religious diversity. Many congregations and members are located just a stone throw away from mosques, gurdwaras, Hindu temples, synagogues and viharas. In their local communities, some members of our churches will be in daily contact with colleagues and neighbours of different faiths, and many have friendships across faith traditions. This strategy is about developing those friendships and connections and empowering the local church to take the initiative in local matters of inter-faith.

Strategic Aim

The main aim of the inter-faith strategy for the United Reformed Church in Wales is to build positive relationships with people from all the faith groups in Wales. This is an important part of the mission of the United Reformed Church.

Strategic Objectives

The Strategic Objectives are defined as, but not restricted to:

1. Advancing inter-faith activity across the National Synod of Wales.

The local church is best placed to develop local initiatives that promote inter-faith activity. Such activities would include a faith response to local or national events that have an impact on the community, vigils, call to public prayer and inter-faith community projects such as food banks. Churches of the United Reformed Church are encouraged to engage with faith groups in their community. Advice can be sought from the Synod and the Officer for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations should be approached if the local church has any questions or queries.

2. Developing the Synod's relationship with inter-faith partners in Wales.

The inter-faith council of Wales is the body through which the Synod engages with faith partners. The inter-faith council is charged with building Trust and respect between people of all faiths throughout Wales. Members of the inter-faith council include: Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity (Church in Wales, Churches Together in Wales – Cytûn, Evangelical Alliance Wales, Free Church Council, Roman Catholic Church in Wales), Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism.

Further, the Faith Communities Forum (which is an organ of the Senedd) facilitates meetings at ministerial level with all the above faith groups. The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales is represented on these groups through the President/Moderator of the Free Church Council of Wales.

3. Participating in the United Reformed Church's (UK) inter-faith activity.

The Officer for Ecumenical and Inter-faith relations is a member of the inter-faith enabling group of the United Reformed Church (UK). Through this forum, the Synod has access to:

- a) **The inter-faith fund** – The promotion of contact, understanding and respect among Christians, Jews and members of other faith communities, in ways consonant with the beliefs and practices of the United Reformed Church.
- b) **Israel and Palestine** - the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)
- c) **Initiatives and events** – Holocaust Memorial Day, Inter-faith Week and policies that allow use of church buildings by other faith groups.

Further details of the above can be obtained from the Officer for Ecumenical and Inter-faith Relations or via the United Reformed Church website.

Summary

While inter-faith matters in the UK have made significant strides, challenges still exist. These include combating religious discrimination, countering religious extremism, and addressing interfaith tensions that occasionally arise. However, the Synod's commitment to interfaith dialogue and cooperation provides opportunities for overcoming these challenges and promoting a more inclusive society.

Overall, inter-faith matters in Wales reflect a commitment to fostering understanding, respect, and cooperation between diverse religious communities. Through dialogue, collaboration, and educational initiatives, Wales seeks to create a society that values and appreciates religious diversity, while addressing common challenges and working towards the common good. The United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales is committed to the work of the interfaith council.

The SMART approach to achieving the Ecumenical and Inter-faith Strategy

The SMART model was developed in the early 1980s (see Doran, G. T. (1981). "There's a S.M.A.R.T. way to write management's goals and objectives". *Management Review*. 70 (11): 35–36.) and has been developed and adjusted to suit the needs of the organisation using the model, to achieve its overall strategic aim.

The principle aim of the Ecumenical Strategy is for the United Reformed Church National Synod of Wales to intentionally embed into all our activities the missional ethos of ecumenism, so we are an ecumenical movement in Wales.

This is underpinned by three objectives:

- 1 Advancing ecumenical activity within the National Synod of Wales.
- 2 Developing the Synod's relationship with partners in Wales.
- 3 Participating in the United Reformed Church's (UK) ecumenical activity.

Any ecumenical project or initiative that makes a demand on Synod resources should contribute towards the strategic aim and objectives. Using the SMART model for all ecumenical projects and initiatives will help to achieve this.

S	SPECIFIC	Objective clearly states, so anyone reading it can understand, what will be done and who will do it.
M	MEASURABLE	Objective includes how the action will be measured. Measuring your objectives helps you determine if you are making progress. It keeps you on track and on schedule.
A	ACHIEVABLE	Objective is realistic given the realities faced in the Synod. Setting reasonable objectives helps set the project up for success.
R	RELEVANT	A relevant objective makes sense, that is, it fits the purpose of ecumenism, it fits the culture and structure of the Synod, and it addresses the aims and objectives of the Strategy.
T	TIME-BOUND	Every objective has a specific timeline for completion.

Appendix D: Locally Recognized Worship Leaders

Locally Recognized Worship Leader – Achieving Synod Recognition

The Synod document on Lay Worship Ministry explains the pathway, scope and aspirations for achieving Synod Recognition as a Lay Worship Leader (LRWL). Please ensure you have had a look at this, so you are aware of what you need to do.

You need to contact our Lay Preaching Advocate (LPA), through the Synod office, at the earliest opportunity. They will take an active involvement in and share your journey on behalf of the Synod. The LPA will also give you the application form which you complete and return at the earliest opportunity, ideally before you begin the Stepwise courses.

Following completion of the Stepwise courses and the related tasks you will then need to lead worship and have that service appraised. An objective appraiser will be arranged in consultation with the LPA. You will also be asked to self-appraise your worship service.

In readiness for your Synod Recognition Meeting, you will also need to either write an essay or prepare a presentation. We encourage creative approaches to this additional piece of work, and you should speak to and agree with the LPA what form this might take (poetry, music, art, craft, digital...)

At the appropriate time the LPA will fix a date for The Synod Recognition Meeting which will be attended by the LPA, the Training & Development Officer (TDO) and another Synod representative.

Procedure

This document shows how to achieve recognition as a Worship Leader in the National Synod of Wales. It is based a General Assembly agreed path which includes the following:

- The LPA ensures that all the steps have been completed. These include:
 - a portfolio
 - a final presentation
 - a DBS check
 - an assessed service and a self-appraisal of this service
- Following this a conversation between the candidate, TDO, LPA, and one other Synod representative will take place with the candidate presenting their portfolio, final presentation, and discussing their self-appraised service.
- The LPA brings the name of, and a short report on, the Worship Leader to the Synod Pastoral Committee for agreement and recognition.
- The LPA informs Ministries Office and receives the relevant paperwork.
- The LPA, with the Worship Leader, organises a commissioning service.
- In recognition of their commitment, development and service, the names of those who have completed LRWL, AALP, and Stepwise will be announced at Synod Meeting.

Please Note

- the final presentation must be based on one of the 'Extension Tasks' and may take the form of 1000 word essay, a piece of art or craft, a video, a PowerPoint Presentation or other medium. Please ask if you are not sure what would be acceptable.
- It would be helpful if a full order of service for the self-assessed service, along with the prayers and sermon detail, could be sent to the TDO/Lay Preaching Advocate

The service will be discussed with the candidate along with their own self-appraisal. The discussion will be encouraging and constructive.

Appendix E: 2022 Accounts

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH (WALES) TRUST COMPANY LIMITED

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

	Notes	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Endowment funds 2022 £	Total Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Endowment funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>								
Donations and legacies	3	275,523	12,334	-	287,857	265,541	3,842	269,383
Investments	4	115,148	6,557	4,713	126,418	111,599	4,563	121,352
Other income	5	607,557	3,396	-	610,953	602,014	962	602,976
Total income and endowments		998,228	22,287	4,713	1,025,228	979,154	9,994	993,711
<u>Expenditure on:</u>								
Charitable activities	6	505,818	48,662	-	554,480	852,026	17,787	869,813
Other	10	-	-	230	230	-	-	-
Total expenditure		505,818	48,662	230	554,710	852,026	17,787	869,813
Net gains/(losses) on investments	11	(521,117)	(16,443)	(20,785)	(558,345)	523,794	11,723	554,344
Net movement in funds		(28,707)	(42,818)	(16,302)	(87,827)	650,922	3,930	678,242
Net movement in funds		(28,707)	(42,818)	(16,302)	(87,827)	650,922	3,930	678,242
Fund balances at 1 January 2022		9,020,835	188,376	180,742	9,389,953	8,369,913	184,446	8,711,711
Fund balances at 31 December 2022		8,992,128	145,558	164,440	9,302,126	9,020,835	188,376	9,389,953

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

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

Appendix F: 2024 Budget

The United Reformed Church (Wales) Trust Company Limited		2022	2023	2024	
General Fund - Budget 2024		ISRS figure	ISRS figure	ISRS figure	
		236,500	250,000	320,000	Could survive on £287,500 if Church Life Review Items not given
	2022	2022	2023	2024	Explanatory Notes and Comments
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Budget	
			£	£	
Incoming resources					
Dividends and interest	81,572	115,000	115,500	120,750	2022 c. £115k Unrestricted investment income. Increase 5% per annum
Inter Synod Resource Sharing	173,500	173,887	179,000	202,000	£100k Base Figure. £84k Staffing.£18k Trans Mins.
Inter Synod Resource Sharing (CYDO)	60,000	60,127	61,000	64,000	Underwriting achieved through Buffer ISRS Fund - rolling 3yr. Model
Inter Synod Resource Sharing (Safeguarding)	3,000	2,986	10,000	21,500	50% of Safeguarding costs
Inter Synod Resource Sharing (Church Life Review Wish)				32,500	Regional Ministry, Training Events, Synod Priorities, Youth Events
Sales revenue & donations	400	1,760	400	400	Gift Aid not claimed 2018-22. Minister's Gathering Deposits
Property Sales Fees	2,500	19,125	10,000	10,000	3% Fee levied on gross sale proceeds received. Increase based on closure rate
Property Rental Income	-	10,937	-	-	No repayable grants made from MDF
MoM clawback	30,000	30,000	-	-	No 2023 clawback - 7.5% increase in Synod MoM - Church Pledges unchanged for 2023
Church contributions	3,315	865	1,500	1,000	£865 received in 2022! Target this for 2024
Other Grants	10,000	18,231	10,000	10,000	EO 50%, CME 100% refund, DDF Core Grant, Safeguarding
Solar Panel income	900	894	900	900	
Miscellaneous income - Redundant Chs	32,000	196,381	22,500	19,000	Redundant Ch £19,000 Cefn-y-Bedd (from 2023 balance). 2022 Talgarth used for Pen Pay
Miscellaneous income	11,750	9,758	12,500	12,500	2022 - Min Sum Sch Bal, Mods Fund Bal
CBF Grants	25,000	-	25,000	25,000	2023 Canton 2024 Rivertown 2025 City 2026 St Johns Tenby
Total Income	433,937	639,951	448,300	519,550	
Charitable expenditure					
Mission					
Mission grants/Digital Ministry/LEP Ministry				4,500	Possible LEP Minister Exps - mid 2024, Possible SCM Digital Ministry Exps - Aut 2024
Transitional/Regional Ministry Support	22,000	2,769	25,000	37,500	Church Life Review Wish List Item
Regional Events				13,000	Allow £1,000 per Region - commitment carried from Synod Day cancellation 2022
CBF grant due to churches	25,000	-	25,000	25,000	2023 Canton 2024 Rivertown 2025 City 2026 St Johns Tenby
Ecumenical & Interfaith Officer's Expenses	5,125	5,063	5,253	5,516	2023 estimate + 2.5%
Cytun/Free Church Federal Council	100	150	100	1,100	Witness Programme 2024 contribution
Chaplaincies	1,000		1,000	1,000	Cytun Rural Chaplaincy ended - 2024 Pay expenses direct to RWAS Chaplains
Training Events	-	2,080	7,500	10,000	Church Life Review Wish List Item
Synod Priorities	5,000	3,467	7,500	15,000	Church Life Review Wish List Item
CYDO	58,625	58,191	60,090	61,000	Post maintained via ISRS Funding.
Synod CYDO/ Youth costs	2,000	529	2,000	5,000	Wales Youth Committee established. Events Programme. Church Life Review Wish List
Training costs	8,100	12,457	8,100	8,100	To balance TDO Housing Costs/Expenses/Training Costs
Safeguarding		5,169	5,000	5,000	Events & Training
	126,950	89,874	146,543	191,716	
Property					
Property Insurance/ legal fees	500	1,757	500	1,672	Not shown block Manse Insurance Policy costs before
Graveyards and closed churches	-	2,551	10,000	2,420	2023 KC's opinions - Jerusalem Graveyard. Closed Graveyard Insurance shown for first time
Dona Lola cost (Other Trust Costs)	2,874	3,212	3,018	3,320	2022 Actual + 5%.
Quinquennial Inspections			17,500	-	2023 Inspection Cost
Trust legal fees	250	1,020	10,000	1,000	2023 KC's opinions - Housing Wales Bill.
	3,624	8,540	41,018	8,411	
Synod Related Costs					
Synod Day + Synod Meeting	22,150	3,307	3,308	3,473	2016 Budget held - new venue 2023. Synod Day 2022 cancelled
Boards and committees	4,000	894	4,100	2,000	
General Assembly	500	-	500	500	Bi-annual until 2021 then annual thereafter. Incidental Costs only
Synod - task groups	3,071	-	3,148	500	Notional Figure
Moderator Support	770	770	770	770	Actual Support Figure used
Trust Insurance	2,907	3,541	3,125	3,807	2022 Actual + 7.5%
Other Trust Expenses/Contingency	2,500	2,179	2,500	2,500	
Synod publications					Use Osborne Resource Fund for publications
	35,898	10,691	17,451	13,550	
Total Charitable Resources Expended	166,472	109,105	205,012	213,677	

The United Reformed Church (Wales) Trust Company Limited		2022	2023	2024	Explanatory Notes and Comments
General Fund - Budget 2024		ISRS figure	ISRS figure	ISRS figure	
		236,500	250,000	320,000	Could survive on £287,500 if Church Life Review items not given
	2022	2022	2023	2024	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Budget	
			£	£	
Personnel Costs					
Staff Salaries	133,834	131,424	155,069	160,620	8.00% pa COL 2024
Employer's NI Contributions	11,119	14,485	16,319	19,171	based on 12% Averaged Contribution
Employer's Pension Contributions	37,506	37,135	43,148	37,543	based on 23.5% Employer's Contribution - new Pension Scheme
Employees' Expenses	3,678	4,730	3,770	3,750	
Staff training	1,000	1,068	1,000	1,000	
	187,137	188,842	219,306	222,084	
Premises					
Heating, Light and Water	1,491	1,172	8,946	1,172	Current Figure
Cleaning	1,457	1,398	1,566	1,398	Current Figure
Ground Rent for church land	3,850	3,850	3,850	3,850	Current Figure
Building Maintenance	1,000	25	5,000	1,000	Synod Office Refurbishment carried into 2023
Depreciation on Office Building	6,394	6,074	6,074	6,730	Current Figure
	14,192	12,519	25,436	14,149	
Office Costs					
Printing, postage & stationery	1,805	2,052	1,895	2,280	Current Figures
Telephone	1,770	1,655	1,859	2,100	New Telephone System
Consumable Equipment	-	-	-	-	
Equipment Rental (photocopier)	2,205	2,014	2,315	2,000	Current Figure
Equipment Depreciation	575	2,755	518	2,755	Current Figure - reflects new capital equipment purchased
Computer Running Costs	5,513	2,247	5,788	2,359	Costs - Quickbooks, Zoom, IT Grants, Website (no Church House costs)
Sundry Expenses	1,000	1,055	1,000	1,000	
Bank charges	200	215	200	226	
	13,068	11,993	13,575	12,720	
Legal and Professional Fees					
Accountancy fees	5,630	5,630	6,750	6,750	Azets agreed Fee
Consultancy fees	3,000	-	3,000	3,000	Management Accounts Fee
Finance/Governance Support	43,680	43,680	43,680	50,960	Hourly rate change + £5 ph (Sept 2023)
	52,310	49,310	53,430	60,710	
Total Administration Expenditure	266,707	262,664	311,747	309,663	
Total Operating Expenditure	433,179	371,770	516,759	523,340	
Net (Deficit) for the year - being from brought forward unrestricted reserves	758	268,182	(68,459)	(3,790)	Post 2023 Budget Agreement Adjustments - originally £292 surplus

Green figures based upon Quickbooks entries

Appendix G: Nomination of Moderators of General Assembly 2023-2024

Every year local churches have the opportunity to nominate people for election as Moderator of General Assembly. We are now seeking nominations from the churches in the Synod of candidates to serve from the close of General Assembly 2025 until the close of General Assembly 2026.

In the coming months Elders' and Church Meetings are invited to consider whether they would like to nominate to Synod a person in each category (i.e. Minister/CRCW and Elder), or in one or other category. One nomination from each church in each category is sought, and only one nomination in each category will be accepted. Please note that nominees do not need to be from within the National Synod of Wales, and they should not be approached to give their permission before nomination.

Your nomination/s should be sent to the Synod Clerk (through the Synod Office or by e-mail to megan.price.urcwales@urc.org.uk) using the nomination forms on the following pages, and should include a 100 word (maximum) pen portrait of the nominee which will be presented to Synod Meeting. Nominations must be received by the Synod Clerk **by noon on Wednesday 3 January 2024.**

If the Synod has more than one nomination in either category, an election will take place at the Spring Synod Meeting. If only one nomination in each category is received, a simple vote will be taken. The result/s will then be communicated to the General Secretary.

This call for nominations is part of the privilege of being the United Reformed Church, and it is hoped that local churches will engage enthusiastically with the process over the coming months.

**LOCAL CHURCH NOMINATIONS FOR
MODERATORS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2025-2026**
for ballot at the Spring 2024 Synod Meeting

**NOMINATION FOR
A MINISTER or CHURCH RELATED COMMUNITY WORKER**

Name of Minister or CRCW:	
Nominee's Local Church: <i>(i.e. Church where nominee has membership)</i>	
Statement in support of your nomination (not exceeding 100 words):	
Name of Church submitting this nomination:	
Please indicate whether the nomination comes from Elders' Meeting or Church Meeting:	
Contact details of person submitting this nomination <i>(in case the Clerk needs to liaise before publication of Synod papers)</i>	

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS TO THE SYNOD CLERK:
NOON on Wednesday 3 January 2024**

Email: megan.price.urcwailes@urc.org.uk

United Reformed Church, Synod Office, Minster Road, Roath, Cardiff CF23 5AS
Telephone: 029 2019 5728

**LOCAL CHURCH NOMINATIONS FOR
MODERATORS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2025-2026**
for ballot at the Spring 2024 Synod Meeting

NOMINATION FOR AN ELDER

Name of Elder:	
Nominee's Local Church: <i>(i.e. Church where nominee has membership)</i>	
Statement in support of your nomination (not exceeding 100 words):	
Name of Church submitting this nomination:	
Please indicate whether the nomination comes from Elders' Meeting or Church Meeting:	
Contact details of person submitting this nomination <i>(in case the Clerk needs to liaise before publication of Synod papers)</i>	

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS TO THE SYNOD CLERK:

NOON on Wednesday 3 January 2024

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Appendix H: Standing Orders for Hybrid Meetings

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

1. The agenda of the Assembly

- 1.1 At its meetings the Assembly shall consider reports and draft motions prepared by its committees which include the Assembly Executive or by Synods, and motions and amendments of which due notice has been given submitted by individual members of the Assembly.

2. In-person, virtual, and hybrid meetings

- 2.1 A meeting may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid. The boundaries between these descriptions are not always clear. A generally in-person meeting may have a minority of members joining the meeting by virtual means. A virtual meeting may have some participants gathered together in one place. In any event, what is always strictly essential is that all participants, both in-person and virtual, can fully see and hear each other in all directions, and that the Moderator is totally confident that participants are able to see and hear each other effectively. The Moderator must also be content and comfortable that they can manage full and proper participation from all participants in the meeting.

3. Records of meetings

- 3.1 Any streaming and/or recording of meetings, including subtitles or captions, does not replace the formal minutes of the meeting and is not a record of the decisions made. Formal minutes shall continue to be maintained and retained.
- 3.2 Meetings should not normally be recorded, in order to comply fully with both safeguarding and data privacy policies.

4. Operating procedure

- 4.1 Meetings will commence when the Moderator opens the meeting, within the requirements set out in the Rules of Procedure.
- 4.2 At the start of any meeting the Moderator shall make reasonable efforts to confirm that any members attending virtually can see and hear, and be seen and heard. The meeting shall not start until the Moderator is so satisfied.
- 4.3 Where available, participants joining a meeting virtually should normally use video as well as audio. Where video is not available, or it is not safe for the attendee to use video, then audio only may be used.
- 4.4 The Meeting will finish when the Moderator formally closes the meeting.
- 4.5 All microphones should be set to mute at the start of the meeting, apart from the Moderator and any necessary technical staff. Microphones should only be unmuted when a participant is speaking.

4.6 The Moderator has absolute discretion to pause or adjourn the meeting at any time, and to remove any attendees from the meeting if their conduct falls short of the standards expected in church.

4.7 In all but the smallest meetings, it is helpful if the Moderator is not also the online 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 meetings.

4.8 In any event, no technical failure shall invalidate any decisions made.

5. Attendance

5.1 All meetings are required to meet any previously agreed quorum, where such a quorum has been specified.

6. Interpretation of Standing Orders

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

7. Presentation of business

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

7.3 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 7.2 above.

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

7.5 Proposals for amendments to the Basis and Structure of the URC, which may be made by the Assembly Executive 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.

7.6 It shall not be in order at any time to move a motion or amendment which:

7.6.1 contravenes any part of the Basis of Union, or

7.6.2 involves the Church in expenditure without prior consideration by the appropriate committee, or

7.6.3 pre-empts discussion of a matter to be considered later in the agenda, or

7.6.4 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

7.6.5 is not related to the report of a committee and has not been the subject of 21 days' notice under Standing Order 7.4, or

7.6.6 simply reaffirms existing work.

The decision of the Moderator (in the case of 7.6.1, 7.6.2, 7.6.3, 7.6.5, and 7.6.6) and of the Moderator with the Clerk and the General Secretary (in the case of 7.6.4) on the application of this Standing Order shall be final.

7.7 In advance of the meeting, the General Secretary shall, in consultation with the Moderator and Clerk, prepare a proposal for a Facilitation Group for that meeting, for appointment at the beginning of the meeting. Some or all of the members of the Facilitation Group may be called upon by the Moderator at any time to help the Assembly reach a mind upon a question. The Assembly may add or remove members of the Facilitation Group at any time. The Facilitation Group may consult with whoever they deem it appropriate. Draft revised wording of motions should be checked by the Clerk, and by the Legal Advisor where appropriate, before being proposed to the Assembly.

8. En bloc business

8.1 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 six 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.

9. Business requiring discussion

9.1 It is not possible to use full Consensus Decision-Making during many meetings, since Consensus Decision-Making relies upon the Moderator being able to sense the mood of the meeting, and the members also being able to sense that and trust the Moderator, which requires senses not always available in online meetings or meetings with online participants. However, all meetings should still be conducted in the spirit and ethos of seeking consensus.

9.2 To ensure that all meetings always operate to the same procedure, noting the blurred boundaries referred to in Standing Order 2, all meetings will use the information session and the discussion session from Consensus Decision-Making, and then take a vote for the actual decision-making.

9.3 All decisions shall be made by vote, using the procedure set out in Standing Order 10. 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, using the principle

that routine formal decisions such as agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting might reasonably be taken on a simple majority, whereas matters of policy require a greater level of support than a simple majority. This Standing Order does not override any other provision for a specific majority set out elsewhere in the Standing Orders, particularly procedural motions.

10. Information and discussion sessions

10.1 The first stage is the information session. During the information session, members of Assembly may ask questions only to seek clarification or further information.

10.2 Once the Moderator decides that the information session has ended, the Assembly moves into the discussion session, in which the substance of the matter may be discussed.

10.2.1 The methods used may include prayer, buzz groups, group discussions, speeches to the whole Assembly, time for thinking during a break, etc. The Moderator may invite Assembly to indicate opinions by the use of coloured cards at this stage or electronic equivalent, and shall ensure that the full ranges of voices are given opportunity to contribute.

10.2.2 Minor changes of wording may be agreed as the discussion proceeds. If a proposed change is, in the opinion of the Moderator upon the advice of the Clerk, a major change, then a proposer and seconder are required and it is an amendment.

10.3 When the Moderator senses that the Assembly may be ready to reach a decision, the Moderator shall state that Assembly is moving into the decision session.

11. Decision session

11.1 All decisions shall preferably be made by vote. Those participating virtually should normally use any built in voting mechanism in the software. In a very small meeting, where the Moderator can see everyone at once, it may be possible to resolve this informally.

11.2 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.

12. Business and procedural motions

12.1 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.

12.2 A report presented to the Assembly by a committee or Synod, under Standing Order 7.1, shall be received for debate, unless notice has been duly given under Standing Order 7.4 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.

12.3 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.

- 12.4 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 12.12, 12.13, and 12.14. The procedural motions in Standing Orders 12.12, 12.13, and 12.14 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.
- 12.5 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.
- 12.6 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 or as a further motion.
- 12.7 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.
- 12.8 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.
- 12.9 The mover may, with the concurrence of the seconder and the consent of the Assembly, alter the motion or amendment proposed.
- 12.10 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.
- 12.11 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.
 - 12.11.1 When such draft alternative motions have been received by the General Secretary, the Moderators may ask the General Secretary to convene a meeting (in-person 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.
 - 12.11.2 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.
 - 12.11.3 After any amendments duly moved under Standing Order 12 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.

12.11.4 Once a sole motion remains, further discussion is permissible and votes for and against that motion shall be taken in the normal way.

12.12 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. To carry this motion, two-thirds of the votes cast must be given in its favour. Should the motion be carried, the business shall immediately end and the Assembly shall proceed to the next business.

12.13 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.

12.14 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.

13. Timing of speeches and of other business

13.1 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.

- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 Save by the prior agreement of the Business Committee, speeches made in support of the motions from any Assembly committee, including the Assembly Executive, or from any Synod, shall not exceed five minutes per resolution, and in aggregate not exceed 15 minutes (e.g. a committee with four motions may not exceed 15 minutes), unless a longer period be recommended by the Business Committee or determined by the Moderator.
- 13.4 Each subsequent speaker in any debate shall be allowed five 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.
- 13.5 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.
- 13.6 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. Staff should not normally seek permission from the Moderator to speak outside their area of responsibility.
- 13.7 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.
- 13.8 The foregoing Standing Order (13.7) 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.
- 13.9 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.

14. Questions

- 14.1 A member may, if two 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.
- 14.2 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.
- 14.3 Questions asked under Standing Order 14 shall be put and answered without discussion.

15. Points of order, personal explanations, dissent

- 15.1 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.

- 15.2 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.
- 15.3 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.
- 15.4 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.

16. Admission of the public and closed sessions

- 16.1 Only those who are members of the meeting, staff members in attendance, or invited guests may join a meeting. However, a meeting in open session may allow guests or be shown as a live stream.
- 16.2 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.
- 16.3 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.
- 16.4 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.

- 16.5 Members of Assembly who leave during a closed session may not be re- admitted.

17. Communications during the course of debate

- 17.1 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.

18. Record of the Assembly

18.1 A record of attendance at the meetings of the Assembly shall be kept in such a manner as the Business Committee may determine.

18.2 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.

18.3 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.

18.4 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.

19. Suspension and amendment of Standing Orders

19.1 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.

19.2 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 Assembly Executive). The Clerk of the Assembly may from time to time suggest amendments.

Person responsible for editing document: Clerk of the General Assembly

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