



*The*  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**  
**Yorkshire**

## **Synod Papers for the Spring Meeting**

Saturday 13 March 2021 online





**Yorkshire Synod**  
Somerset House  
St Paul's Street  
Morley  
Leeds  
LS27 9EP

Synod Moderator  
Synod Clerk  
Treasurer  
Property Officer  
Trust Secretary

Rev. Jamie Kissack  
Tim Crossley  
Rev Simon Copley  
Jane Bunyan-Murray  
Alastair Forsyth

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**To All Members of Synod**

February 2020

Dear Member of Synod,

**Meeting of Synod to be hosted on the "Zoom" digital conferencing platform,  
on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

Enclosed (and attached if this is being sent digitally) are your invitation to and papers for the next meeting of the Yorkshire Synod which will be chaired by the Moderator, The Rev Jamie Kissack. The invitation to Synod is extended to anyone from our churches who wishes to attend so please pass on this to those who would be interested.

The past twelve months or so have seen huge changes in the way we have had to live our lives and in particular how we have had to "do church". Last March the sudden impact of the Covid-19 virus meant that the meeting that was to be held at Longcauseway was cancelled. Similarly the restrictions we found ourselves under in October 2020 meant that the Synod meeting that was to be held at St Andrew's, Skipton, was moved online. As we are currently experiencing a further Lockdown it has been decided that the spring 2021 meeting of Synod should also be held online, and I thank The Kings Way church in Ossett for offering to host the meeting had we been able to meet in body.

This means that this spring Synod will be taking place online using the "Zoom" digital conferencing platform. This is the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83434793837>. Also for this Synod there will be a preliminary session on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30pm where the Treasurer, Rev Simon Copley, will offer a short presentation on the Ministers' Pension Scheme which has a bearing on the future finances of the Synod. The link is the same as the main meeting. I know many of you will be comfortable with this, but if not we at Synod are here to help both before the meeting and on the day. We are blessed with the talents of Lawrence Moore and Dan Morrell who will be working behind the scenes to ensure that everything goes smoothly. If you need to contact them their details are here: Lawrence Moore; [Lawrence@walkingthewalk.org.uk](mailto:Lawrence@walkingthewalk.org.uk) 07813 842202 or Dan Morrell; [dmorrell96@gmail.com](mailto:dmorrell96@gmail.com) 07773 174909 and they are happy to assist in any way possible.

Like in October the paperwork that would normally be sent out to Synod representatives will change. Gone are the directions letter, the crèche form, the expenses form and the catering booking slip. However one thing that is staying the same is that Synod Representatives are receiving a coloured voting card to indicate their voting rights. They will need to identify themselves with the 'V' before their name on Zoom and if possible the place and name of the church being represented.

Similarly we are asking representatives to e-mail [office@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:office@urcyorkshire.org.uk) to indicate their intention to attend (or that they attended). This will be recorded as their attendance in lieu of an attendance slip, so please let us know if in the event you are not able to attend. For those who are the official church representative and you find it is not possible for you to attend for technical or other reasons, you can nominate an alternate. They will need to have access Zoom and also be a

member of the church in question. If this affects you can you please notify the office of this change as soon as possible?

Certain areas of the Synod membership this time are only receiving digital copies of the papers. If in the future you feel that you would also like only to receive digital papers please inform the office with the name of designated representative, the church represented and e-mail address.

As you will see from the accompanying agenda the format may look like we haven't changed much in the way we do things, but there are some subtle changes. The feedback from the October Synod taught us that regular breaks from your screens was good, that the opportunity to utilise break-out rooms was also good and that there was still a wish to partake in communal worship. This we have listened to and we have built this into the day.

We have two main presentations in the morning, firstly from Rev Zaidie Orr on Anti-Racism, Yorkshire Synod's response to that challenge and how it links into the URC's Legacies of Slavery project. Secondly, led by Alex Jowitt, our Synod Green Apostle, we will be challenged to look at how we as Christians can engage with the work of JPIT, how we can influence the forthcoming COP26 conference and how we can engage in more "green" activities.

During the Open House sessions in Break-out rooms we have changed the way we allocate people to rooms. The options are to either be allocated randomly into one of several rooms, each dedicated to a particular theme, or to opt into one of these rooms yourselves. The topics being discussed are based on what we will have heard, but there will be the opportunity to raise other issues which affect the Synod as a whole.

The way in which we will be conducting the business session of Synod is the same as we did in October. Synod recognises that business done online is a new experience for many of us so we intend to keep the amount of time devoted to purely business to a minimum. To enable this we have added an extra session on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30pm in which the Pensions' issues will be presented and during the main Saturday session we have allocated the majority of the resolutions we need to agree into an en-bloc category. In the Synod papers it will be made clear which resolutions this has been applied to, but if you wish to bring any of the resolutions out of en-block please contact either myself or the Moderator. The removal of resolution from en-bloc into the main Business session will require the support a minimum of three representatives as per the standing orders used by the URC at both Mission Council and General Assembly.

Our final session will be one of worship, led by the Leading Your Church into Growth team. LYCiG is a dynamic group which is there to work with churches identify their needs and strengths and I would like to extend the invitation to this act of worship not only to Synod representatives, but also to the membership of your own churches.

We would welcome any feedback after the event to see how you have fared with this online Synod. Suggestions on how we may improve in the future would be useful although I do hope and pray that we will be able to meet in body in October 2021.

Finally, please pray for those preparing for the meeting as well as the Moderator and others who will present reports and resolutions during the day. I look forward to seeing you on the 13<sup>th</sup> March.

*Tim Crossley*

Synod Clerk



## SPRING MEETING OF YORKSHIRE SYNOD

THURSDAY 11<sup>th</sup> and SATURDAY 13<sup>th</sup> March  
Via the “ZOOM” digital platform


Join Zoom Meetings (both Thursday at 6.30pm and  
Saturday from 9.30am)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83434793837>

### Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021

18.30 – 19.30	Treasurer's Pre-Synod Pensions Update
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### Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021

9.30	Admission into forum
10.15	<b>Synod Convenes</b> Opening prayers led by Rev Jamie Kissack 
10.20	<b>Welcome.</b> Led by the Clerk Including Apologies, Minutes of the Synod meeting held 10 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 on Zoom Online platform, Matters Arising, Agenda, Synod Notices, Date and Place of the next Meeting.
10.30	<b>Setting the Scene</b> Led by the Moderator
10.45	<b>Session One – Presentations</b> 1/ Anti-Racism & Yorkshire URC Response – Zaidie Orr et al including response to the “Privilege Walk” document distributed prior to Synod. 2/ Social Action – Alex Jowitt and Jon Steel comprising a; JPIT ECO b; COP26 response c; Green issues
11.45	<b>Break</b>

12.00	<b>Session Two – Open House</b> Comprising Break-out rooms in which we focus on what we have learnt in Lockdown since October 2020.
12.50	Notices and Grace offered by members of Kings Way Church, Ossett.
13.00	<b>Lunch</b> including JPIT video, It Just Works day video.
13.45	<b>Session Three – Website</b> Introducing the new Yorkshire Synod Website <a href="http://bit.ly/urcyorkshiresynod">http://bit.ly/urcyorkshiresynod</a>
14.15	<b>Session Four - Business</b> Including Finance and Pensions Committee Reports Adoption of Safeguarding policy & publication on website Delegates to General Assembly En-Bloc Business
15.00	<b>Closing Worship with Communion including presentation of Child Friendly Church award to Shiregreen URC</b> Challenge Synod to be soul winners – led by the Leading Your Church into Growth team.  <b>Thanks and departure</b>

# Resolutions, Yorkshire Synod Meeting, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## **Resolution No 1**

Synod receives the report of its Council.

## **Resolution No 2**

Synod receives the reports from its Committees and Groups as presented in the attached papers where appropriate.

- i. Ministries Committee
- ii. Pastoral Committee
- iii. Children and Young People's Committee
- iv. Safeguarding Committee
- v. Treasurer/Financial Resources Committee
- vi. Property
- vii. Listed Buildings Advisory Committee
- viii. Keld Management Group

## **Resolution No 3**

Synod approves the temporary suspension, with immediate effect, of all policies in respect of proceeds from sale of properties allocated to the Synod Mission Fund. This suspension to be reviewed at the October 2021 Synod.

## **Resolution No 4**

- a/ Synod confirms the 2021 Synod budget as set at the October 2020 Synod,  
or  
b/ Synod agrees that the Synod Levy, set for the 2021 Synod budget (approved at October 2020 Synod), be suspended for the current year,  
or  
c/ Synod agrees that the Synod Levy, set for the 2021 Synod budget (approved at October 2020 Synod), be paid by congregations on a voluntary basis.

## **Resolution No 5**

Synod appoints the following to represent the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church at the URC General Assembly to be held between 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020:

Rev Jamie Kissack, Rev Fran Kissack, Mrs Rosie Buxton, Rev Alex Clare-Young, Rev Jo Clare-Young, Rev Clare Davison,  
Mr Tim Crossley, Mrs Terri Raddings, Miss Lydia Raddings, Mr Alex Walker, Mr Jacob Lowe, Mr Mordecai Weynberg, Miss Megan Westgarth, Mr Aaron Wood.

## **Resolution No 6**

Synod approves the Synod Safeguarding Policy as reviewed and adopted by the Synod Safeguarding Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and published on the Synod website.

## **Resolution No 7**

*En-block Resolutions: The following resolutions are to be voted upon en-bloc. The removal of resolution from en-bloc into the main Business session will require the*

*support a minimum of three representatives as per the standing orders used by the URC at both Mission Council and General Assembly.*

**To request removal please contact the Clerk at [clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk) by 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.**

*Therefore until notification is made of such Resolution No*  
Synod resolves to accept Resolutions No 8 to No 12 inclusive.

#### **Resolution No 8**

Mr David Figures has stood down as Chairman of the Synod's Listed Building Advisory Committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mr David Figures for his many years of service to Synod in this role and wish him all the best for the future.

#### **Resolution No 9**

Prof Clyde Binfield has stood down as Secretary of the Synod's Listed Building Advisory Committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Prof Clyde Binfield for his many years of service to Synod in this role and wish him all the best for the future.

#### **Resolution No 10**

Mr Peter Saxton has stood down as a member of the Synod Property Committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mr Peter Saxton for his services to the Synod Property Committee.

#### **Resolution No 11**

Mr Simon Loveitt has stood down as a member of the Synod Ministries Committee after completing his second three year term. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mr Simon Loveitt for his services to the Synod Ministries Committee.

#### **Resolution No 12**

Mrs Pauline Mewis has stood down as Synod Pastoral Elder for the Aire Valley area and as a member of the Synod Pastoral Committee.  
Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mrs Pauline Mewis for her services as Synod Pastoral Elder and to Synod Pastoral Committee.

#### **Resolution No 13**

Rev Pauline Calderwood has stood down as the Link for Retired Ministers in the Harrogate Mission and Care Group. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Rev Pauline Calderwood for her services as Retired Ministers Link and to the Harrogate Mission and Care group.

#### **Resolution No 14**

Synod appoints Rev Helga Cornell to serve as Link for Retired Ministers in the Harrogate Mission and Care Group for a period of three years.

#### **Resolution No 15**

Synod records with sadness the closure of Greasbrough United Church on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021. Synod also offers thanksgiving for the life and witness of its members over the years since its foundation in 1815 and most recently its work as a united church within a Methodist/URC Local Ecumenical Partnership.

## The Yorkshire Synod in 2021

Any conversation about Synod strategy in 2021 is set against the background of pandemic, lockdown, our attempts to move things online, and the questions we know we will have about how we will continue to use online alternatives to in-person activity.

It is also against the background of asking deeper questions about our priorities in mission. Awful and catastrophic though the pandemic has been, we have recognized from the start that within the suffering and distress there are opportunities to re-think and re-imagine how the church might fulfil its calling to be the body of Christ. For all that we long to return to them, life without our buildings (or with only their outdoor spaces and street-facing facades) challenges us to think about how we engage with the people who never enter through our doors in normal times. The gospel of Jesus Christ should not be locked away inside our buildings!

### Synod Development

We have a rich offer of resources which support the development of discipleship, both individually and as church communities. These have been built up separately in recent years, but seen together present a coherent picture of a Synod life focused on resourcing the local church:

LYCiG

Lay Preaching development

Elders' Development

AI steering group, and the Inviting Forward process

Wilderness

Stepwise

IT Task Group – providing IT support but also facilitating other meetings and groups.

All of these activities have been taken online during lockdown to a greater or lesser extent, and have the potential to be continued online at least in part. In addition, we have used Zoom gatherings to provide a forum for office staff, church leaders, officers and conveners and Church Secretaries to gather for discussion and mutual support.

The Resource Centres for Learning (our 'Colleges') are also eager to offer services to the Synods and we have had constructive conversations with them as they review their role within the denomination, and continue to explore how they can be actively involved in resourcing the whole church and not just those involved in training for the ministries of Word and Sacraments, and Church Related Community Work. We have already taken up their offer and would hope to do more.

In moving Synod meeting online we have also tried to facilitate a Synod-wide conversation based on AI principles to share our priorities and concerns through the Synod Café, and the Synod Open House.

With so much good work going on, the challenge of the moment is to make sure that all this is co-ordinated and developed as part of a coherent Synod development strategy and I will be prioritizing this in the coming months.

### Life after Lockdown

Through our IT task group we took the lead in delivering the online 'Life after Lockdown' conference for the 5 Northern Synods in April 2020. One of the striking phrases that came out of that conference was that lockdown is a time for Reset, not Rest (Jubilee, not Sabbatical)! There was widespread acceptance that we need to learn, adapt, and take what has been good from our lockdown experience. This has always to be held in tension with the fact that our on-site Christian presence, worship and service is dear to all of us, and many will also want to return to our physical meeting places as soon as they safely can. This means that we are likely to be entering a hybrid world (on site and online), and that is going to be even more challenging.

One key area of reflection has been around inclusion. Some are *de facto* excluded from anything we do online. This can be for economic, social or cultural reasons (though the general experience is that, over time and with the right support, take-up of online offers does grow within any church community, and sometimes in surprising ways). On the other hand, online has provided access for people who were excluded from our physical meetings. The issues of inclusion and exclusion are going to get even more complicated as we enter a hybrid world, and care will need to be taken not to shut the door (virtual or physical!) on those who want to be part of our community of believers. We follow with interest the development of Churspacious as an online church community.

There are so many stories we could tell about what we have experienced and learnt during lockdown and through other restrictions. The IT task group is currently working on a proposal to have an event in 2021 showcasing what has worked, and giving space for discussion about what we have learnt during lockdown.

### The Synod as worshipping community

With the relaunch of the Synod website, prompted in large part by our increased dependence on it during lockdown, there is a challenge to think about how we offer an online space for the Synod which reflects our faith and worship. This is not to replace or detract from the excellent work that is going on in local churches, church groups and Mission and Care groups to sustain the worship life of the Synod during the pandemic. But as Synod we need to make sure we speak about Jesus, and show ourselves to be a worshipping community built around our love of, and obedience to him. Whilst at present this has to be about online engagement, my hope would be that this is part of a wider agenda to be in regular discussion with each other in the 'real' world about what our faith is, what it means to us, and how we live it out in active discipleship.

## The Synod in the World

Through the conversations we have had during lockdown we have identified the following areas of concern in the world beyond our denominational life:

- The environment, and the COP26 conference in November 2021
- Mental Health, and in particular its impact on children and young people
- Racial Justice, and our response to the denomination's decision to be an Anti-racist church.

These areas of concern, along with others that will emerge from our on-going discussions, will inform the agenda of our Synod meetings and the continuing discussion we hope to facilitate through other online forums.

As we discuss and act on these, and as we embrace the opportunities opened up to us to use virtual spaces to bring people with common interests together from across the Synod, my hope is that this works at many levels. Of course such conversations will be good in and of themselves to the extent that they will help to make a Christ-shaped impact on the world. Such engagement will also help us sustain the momentum of the life of the Synod as a living, active community of believers living out our faith. It will also help to combat the feeling of helplessness that prolonged lockdown could result in, with a benefit to our own mental health and the wellbeing of the communities of which we are a part.

## Synod support for Local Churches

Although much of the work of the Synod to support churches with the practical tasks of maintaining the physical infrastructure of the church has been 'on pause', some has continued. Credit needs to be given to the staff and officers of the Synod who have worked so hard in difficult circumstances to continue their support of the churches during lockdown. Messages of thanks from local churches for the efficient sharing of information and offers of support have been often received.

Synod structures are complicated. Decision for major development work involving buildings and finance are dealt with by different bodies and co-ordinating these decision has always been challenging. Part of this complexity comes from the way the URC is set up legally, and it is a necessary part of the safeguarding of the church's assets and charitable purposes as the Trust bodies, Synod committees, Synod meeting and Church meetings all play their respective parts. And this is before we consider Listed Buildings permissions!

After various recent conversations, I think there is work to be done to review how our systems work so that the complexity can be minimized, frustrations in the system can be reduced, and churches can be supported even more effectively.

## In Summary

Whilst so much of the initiatives above are, of necessity, about using the online capabilities we have discovered during lockdown I am acutely aware of those in the Synod whom this doesn't reach or include. There are many stories of people who have responded to the challenges of the lockdown not with computers and broadband connections, but with shoe leather, paper and pen and postage stamps. I pay tribute to those going door to door to deliver printed worship material, to have socially distanced pastoral conversations and to deliver practical support to those in need; or those who have used the telephone and postal service to keep in touch and sustain the life of the local church. As we tell the story of the church's mission during the pandemic in years to come these real world activities will be just as important, if not more so. As so often in the life of the church, it is never the case that 'one size fits all', and we move forward as the diverse people of God, each gifted in our own individual way by our God of grace.

Rev Jamie Kissack, February 2021

Synod Council has met twice since the 2020 October Synod meeting, in November 2020 and in February 2021. The basis of the work overseen by Synod Council has been to ensure that the plans put in place by Synod and its officers, to ensure that the churches of Synod are supported through the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been done to the best of Synod Council's ability and this oversight has meant that all churches and all aspects of Synod life have been cared for and have been listened to. Therefore throughout the autumn and winter of 2020-21 and hopefully into the spring of 2021 Synod Council can maintain the energy and resources it has already committed itself to.

The continuing challenges we have faced as a Synod and as a denomination are still being met with prayer and fortitude and again I would like to pay tribute to the staff in the Synod Office who are continuing to provide an excellent service despite working remotely from home. Currently the plan is that the office at Somerset House will not be formally open until at least 30<sup>th</sup> June, although if circumstances allow there may be a phased return. Regardless of where the staff find themselves working, I hope that the levels of service which have been attained will continue, both during the continuing absence from Somerset House and once we return there. In terms of where Synod committees meet the return to meeting in body will be welcomed. At the most recent Synod Council meeting the current situation was maintained, although it will be left to each committee to decide when it feels right for them to meet in person. I hope that this will be sooner than later, but those decisions will be taken after a great deal of prayer and may entail a hybrid system of some meetings online and some in a physical environment.

### **Flexible times - still**

Back in October I thanked both the churches at Longcauseway in Dewsbury and St Andrew's Skipton for being prepared to host the Synod meetings due to be held in 2020. This time I have to thank The Kings Way church in Ossett for being willing to host this spring's Synod meeting. As you will no doubt have noticed, we are again meeting digitally and I hope that come October I can call upon the services of a church willing to host the autumn Synod meeting. What that meeting will look like is yet to be decided, but the flexibility everyone has shown means that Synod meetings are not going to be the same as they were prior to 2020. In being flexible we can broaden the scope of our meetings; we can widen the franchise of those attending; we can extend the subject matter to which we draw our attention and just in the same way we can focus our prayers on what we are being called to do in Jesus' name.

This incredible embracing of technology in church life has meant that we have been able to engage more with churches in Synod, with their members and friends and in wider groups under both the Northerly Synod banner and that of the URC as a whole. The opportunities for accessible training and development has meant that there has been a broader uptake of courses for Elders and Lay preachers, Ministers and for those who are beginning to explore how God is calling them. This aspect of Synod will continue to be explored and once we are able to meet in body these courses and meetings will become integral to the way in which Synod works

As in the time between the two Synod meetings in 2020, Synod since October has continued working to support our churches of Synod through traditional and innovative ways. The traditional ways were on the cusp of returning but the renewed restrictions in November and from December have meant that the fresh ways we had discerned were the means by which our functions have been maintained. This means that the offer to churches to help them in using digital technology as a means of outreach still stands; in practical ways,

financial ways and in theological ways. Through the work of the I.T. Task Group several courses have been hosted and since December much of the work done by this group has been the rebuilding of the Synod Website which will be showcased during the day by Lawrence Moor and Dan Morrell. For those who want a feel for the site before it goes live it is available at [Yorkshire Synod \(onyx-sites.io\)](http://Yorkshire Synod (onyx-sites.io)).

This meeting of Synod is again being supported by this group; with Lawrence Moore and Dan Morrell at the helm I am confident that the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> March run as smoothly as that of 10<sup>th</sup> October last year. I hope you are able to thank them, as I do for the sterling work they are doing to keep us all connected in more ways than one.

Finally the Weekly Briefing, which began as a small regular news sheet aimed at helping churches navigate the changes brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, continues. My plan was to have gradually wind it down as the need for it diminished. However the demand for it to continue is still there and I do appreciate the kind words regarding its contents and frequency. As we move into another time of change in terms of the easing of restrictions I will be using it to help churches find the right path in order that they can be effective witnesses to the Gospel in their communities.

Moving onto the life of the Synod. On 31st October Rev Dr James Coleman, our Development Officer of many years, finally retired. He's not moving far – into Northern Synod, and we wish Judith and Jim a long and fruitful retirement.

Synod also met twice, online, since the October meeting. Firstly on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November for the induction into the Aire Valley pastorate of Trinity Keighley, Bingley and Idle of Rev's Annette Haigh. Although Annette had been working in the Synod prior to this date it was good to share in a formal service to mark the start of her work there. Secondly on Saturday November 14<sup>th</sup> November saw the induction of Rev'd Alison Micklem into West Park Harrogate on a 25% basis, combining her time with her existing pastorate at York St Columba's.

Finally, as I mention each time, there are always openings for people to help in the discerning the direction of the Synod. As I write this there are vacancies on most of our committees, in particular on the Financial Resources and Property Committees. That doesn't mean to say that there are not places elsewhere in Synod which need fresh faces. If you are moved to help, please contact the Clerk.

### **Synod Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

Rather than meeting at Thje King's Way Church, Ossett, Synod Council decided that this spring's meeting should again be held online using the "Zoom" digital platform. Thank you to the fellowship at Ossett for offering to host and I hope that I may be able to prevail on your hospitality in the future.

I would like to draw your attention to the enclosed Agenda paper which outlines the plan for the days and the Resolutions paper which lists the Resolutions on which a decisions are required. Conscious of the constraints of digital meetings Synod is again being split, this time over two days. Part of the Synod meeting this spring is the Treasurer's Pensions update, which is being held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30pm. It was felt useful to hold this update prior to the main meeting in order to inform Synod of the issues facing our denomination and to appraise it of Yorkshire Synod's response. All are welcome to attend – using the same Zoom link as the main meeting, and this invitation has also been sent out to church treasurers and secretaries as well. On Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March the main meeting will be held, with presentations, open house sessions and an introduction to the new website.

The presentations this time are being led by Rev's Zaidie Orr who will lead on the subject of Anti-Racism and the Yorkshire response to it. To help you get a deeper understanding of the

presentation I ask you to fill in the enclosed "Privilege Walk" document. We don't want you to broadcast your results, but it will give you a deeper insight into this important issue. Please also visit <https://urc.org.uk/our-work/legacies-of-slavery.html> to explore the URC's response to this issue.

The other presentation is being led by Alex Jowitt, the Synod's Green apostle. The subject of Social Action was high on people's agenda in the Autumn's Café event and in other events that have occurred in the past six months.

The business session will follow a similar format to the October 2020 meeting, with some of the resolutions being placed in a specific en bloc resolution. The scope of these resolutions in fact is quite limited and to allow for a period of discussion in relation to the Pensions issue and there will also be time to ask any questions of the various Synod Committee convenors. As there may be some voting taking place I have two requests: first can you please ensure that your Zoom applications are as up to date as possible and second if there are two voting members in any one household can you ensure you have two devices to enable both votes to register.

The resolutions in themselves are quite straight forward and if they require any background information it is given below.

Therefore I propose that that the following are brought to Synod:

**Resolution No 1**

Synod receives the report of its Council  
and

**Resolution No 2**

Synod receives the reports from its Committees and Groups as presented in the attached papers where appropriate.

- i. Ministries Committee
- ii. Pastoral Committee
- iii. Children and Young People's Committee
- iv. Safeguarding Committee
- v. Treasurer/Financial Resources Committee
- vi. Property
- vii. Listed Buildings Advisory Committee
- viii. Keld Management Group

The presentation by the Treasurer, Rev Simon Copley, is within the paper brought on behalf of the Financial Resources Committee as well as in the paper addressing the Pension Challenge. From this two resolutions have been brought.

**Resolution No 3**

Synod approves the temporary suspension, with immediate effect, of all policies in respect of proceeds from sale of properties allocated to the Synod Mission Fund. This suspension to be reviewed at the October 2021 Synod.

**Resolution No 4**

a/ Synod confirms the 2021 Synod budget as set at the October 2020 Synod,  
or

b/ Synod agrees that the Synod Levy, set for the 2021 Synod budget (approved at October 2020 Synod), be suspended for the current year,  
or

c/ Synod agrees that the Synod Levy, set for the 2021 Synod budget (approved at October 2020 Synod), be paid by congregations on a voluntary basis.

As General Assembly is now meeting annually it is at the spring meeting of Yorkshire Synod when those who have been approached to attend are agreed to by Synod. Last year (2020) sixteen people were willing to attend, but as the Assembly was altered to an online event the opportunity to represent the Synod in person was withdrawn. Therefore the Clerk has asked those who would have attended if they would like to represent Yorkshire again and of the original sixteen, fourteen have agreed.

Therefore **Resolution No 5**

Synod appoints the following to represent the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church at the URC General Assembly to be held between 9th July 2021 and 12th July 2020: Rev Jamie Kissack, Rev Fran Kissack, Mrs Rosie Buxton, Rev Alex Clare-Young, Rev Jo Clare-Young, Rev Clare Davison

Mr Tim Crossley, Mrs Terri Raddings, Miss Lydia Raddings, Mr Alex Walker, Mr Jacob Lowe, Mr Mordecai Weynberg, Miss Megan Westgarth, Mr Aaron Wood,

This means we have two vacancies and if anyone (ordained or lay) would like to attend then please contact the Clerk.

One of the duties we have in Synod is to ensure that our Safeguarding response is fully up to date and in order. As you see from the report the work being done by our Safeguarding adviser ensures this. In order to maintain this Synod is asked to approve the Safeguarding Policy document, within these papers in order that it is uploaded to the Synod website. A review is required annually at the spring Synod meeting.

Therefore **Resolution No 6**

Synod approves the Synod Safeguarding Policy as reviewed and adopted by the Synod Safeguarding Committee on 16th November 2020 and published on the Synod website.

The following En-Bloc resolution is designed to allow Synod to agree to **Resolutions No 8** through to **Resolution No 23** en bloc. These resolutions refer to changes in those who have served or who are to serve Synod in various ways. I have included those who were to be thanked and appointed at the March Synod as well as those names that are being brought to this Synod meeting. The fact that these resolutions are within en-bloc does not mean that they are any less important than resolutions No 1 to 6. In fact the importance of volunteers to the smooth running of Synod and the acknowledgement of the life of our churches is a vital part of the life of the Synod. If you know of someone who is willing to serve, or if you can serve yourself, please let the Clerk know at your earliest convenience.

Therefore

**Resolution No 7**

Synod resolves to accept Resolutions No 8 to No 15 inclusive.

Mr David Figures has stood down as Chairman of the Synod's Listed Building Advisory Committee. **Resolution No 8**

Prof Clyde Binfield has stood down as Secretary of the Synod's Listed Building Advisory Committee. **Resolution No 9**

Mr Peter Saxton has stood down as a member of the Synod Property Committee. **Resolution No 10**

Mr Simon Loveitt has stood down as a member of the Synod Ministries Committee after completing his second three year term. **Resolution No 11**

Mrs Pauline Mewis has stood down as Synod Pastoral Elder for the Aire Valley area and as a member of the Synod Pastoral Committee. **Resolution No 12**

Rev Pauline Calderwood has stood down as the Link for Retired Ministers in the Harrogate Mission and Care Group. **Resolution No 13**

Synod appoints Rev Helga Cornell to serve as Link for Retired Ministers in the Harrogate Mission and Care Group for a period of three years. **Resolution No 14**

Synod records with sadness the closure of Greasbrough United Church on 4th February 2021. Synod also offers thanksgiving for the life and witness of its members over the years since its foundation in 1815 and most recently its work as a united church within a Methodist/URC Local Ecumenical Partnership. **Resolution No 15**

In order to remove any of resolutions 8 to 15 from the en-bloc resolution no 4 or to submit a question pertaining to an item on the agenda please contact the Clerk at [clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk) by 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

## Treasurer's Report to Synod - March 2021

### **General Budget Situation, 2020**

Analysing the 2020 budget against actual income/spending shows our overall position improved by £148,349 - mainly due to lockdown and Covid, of course.

A more detailed account can be given once the 2021 accounts have been completed.

**Income** - Our loss of income was £63,607. Loss of investment income (and other interest) amounted to around £35k and £30k of lost income was due to the Synod levy being included in the budget but then suspended. This was offset by gains from property sales of £116,038 (so, overall, a net gain of £52,431 on income). We gained more in reality but around £256k of this was channelled to the Synod Mission Fund in accordance with Synod Policy. That fund is rather swollen at present with funds accumulating faster than they are being distributed. The available balance currently stands at £518,807

**Expenditure** - Non-spend amounted to £95,918 (£18,304 for core costs and £77,614 for development costs). The savings on core costs was due mainly to Office maintenance (£16k on actual maintenance and £14k spread across most functions) and we also saved £5k on Committees and Officers not travelling and meeting remotely. This was offset by spending £10k more on salaries (mainly the Property Officer doing 30 rather than 20 hours pw) and £8k more than envisaged on maintenance of additional properties (other than Somerset House). The non-spend on development costs were across the board mainly because of the suspension of face-to-face activities (Training/Development £16k, CYP activities £14k, Evangelism £6k, Safeguarding £4.5k, Big Day Out £4k, Special Ministry £4k).

£38k of the overall underspend was because we didn't set up the Huddersfield special ministry as originally envisaged, so this was a budget tweak rather than a Covid related non-spend. All this non-spend was offset by £12k given out in emergency funding so the "covid" effect overall was an under-spend of about £36.5k.

### **Current Issues**

The continuation of lockdown, possibly well into the Summer, means that we might experience a similar situation of non-spend in 2021 and our budget will have to be taken somewhat lightly! Investment Income continues to be depressed although the markets, though volatile recently because of political events, are predicted to recover very well in the second half of 2021, all things being equal. Some thought needs to be given as to how we support churches through, hopefully, the final stages of lockdown.

The challenge is to do this in a strategic way.

### **Pensions Consultation**

The Pensions consultation is still the great unknown factor as we look into the future. Synod responses have been at variance so rather favourable options (to Yorkshire Synod) outlined in tentative proposals in the summer will probably be shelved. A starting negotiation position has been proposed to each Synod in their stead:

This would involve us pledging

a) About 15% of the value of investments (about £110k pa for 10 years) PLUS

b) 50% of all proceeds from our property sales.

FRC feel that one or either of these options might be manageable but certainly not both as Yorkshire would certainly need a deal of b) to pay for a)!!

It should be stressed that this is a proposal from which to start negotiation. It is recognized that each Synod Trust is autonomous and cannot be overridden whatever happens.

Conversations are taking place with each Synod to try to arrive at a manifestly fair solution. Yorkshire reps will meet with Pension Fund Trustees on March 24<sup>th</sup> with FRC meeting to deliberate further on March 30<sup>th</sup>.

There is also a strong consensus to avoid putting any burden on local churches, particularly with the challenges of Covid in mind (although FRC are not against any local church, which can afford to, contributing towards the challenge).

The complexity of the process will probably mean that everything boils down to each Synod pledging something in the hope that this takes us close to our estimated overall target of £45 million over 10 years. This means that Yorkshire has room for manoeuvre to make a pledge that does not put our own core functions and development work at risk.

On a positive note, when asked for early-stage tentative estimates of contributions, in the summer, nine Synods were willing to put forward almost half of the £45 million, even with three of the better-endowed Synods not committing at that stage. And every Synod indicated that they were willing to contribute something. One legal issue concerns the strength of our “Covenant” arrangements. The upkeep of the Pension Schemes is dependent largely on goodwill at present, and this has never failed us. Unfortunately, the Pensions Regulator does not have as much faith in these arrangements and wants to see a more legally binding framework. This will mean passing resolutions (probably at October Synod) that commit us, legally, to giving certain amounts of money - a Covenant arrangement. Other Synods face the same dilemma, the catch being, that the estimate of the final amount the Denomination has to stump up is dependent on how strong this Covenant is! The stronger the Regulator considers our Covenant to be then the less the final amount will be. It’s a chicken and egg situation!

So we are still unclear about the exact position we will face but we hope that we will be much clearer by late Spring so we can plan for the next 10 years more intelligently.

### **Proposal to Synod**

The lack of clarity regarding the Pensions Consultation and the healthy state of the Synod Mission Fund are the two major reasons why FRC wishes to propose to Synod that we suspend, temporarily but with immediate effect, all Synod Mission policies regarding payments to the Synod Mission Fund from the proceeds of property sales.

This decision to be reviewed when the commitment arising from the Pensions crisis is clearer (probably by October) with FRC keeping this under continual review in the meantime also.

Under current policies, SMF receives 40% of proceeds from Churches closing, 50% of proceeds from Churches amalgamating and 25% of proceeds from any redundant Manse sales.

Such a measure will give us a good deal of flexibility in responding to the challenges that Synod is going to face in the very near future without curtailing our commitment to funding innovative mission projects.

### **Thoughts on Review of Synod Levy 2021**

In October, Synod approved the budget for 2021 which incorporated a Synod Levy (at a reduced rate of £7.50 per member). This was approved on the understanding that we reviewed this at the current Synod.

We approved the budget for two reasons, one a point of principle and the second, very practical. Firstly it was felt that we should not lose sight of any mutual relationship between local congregations and Synod (particularly as Synod is active in supporting local churches in many ways including financially through grants). Secondly, a timing issue; the need to approve the budget in time for the start of 2021, and bearing in mind the foregoing principle, the levy needed to be in the budget if we were, indeed, going to raise it during the year. We couldn’t introduce it later so it had to be there.

At the same time we were conscious that churches might continue to struggle despite our hopes that lockdown would ease early in 2021. Hence the need for a review. Apologies to Church Treasurers for any lack of clarity that this may have introduced into their budgeting.

2021 has proved to be a difficult year with lockdown continuing although the vaccine programme gives very real hope that the end is in sight. But despite congregations rising to the challenge in 2020, pressures have continued. For example, the number of congregations who have taken advantage of the Denomination’s offer of a holiday on MaM payments doubled in the first week of February alone, from four to eight. (I can update Synod on this figure on the day). I am certain that many congregations who, for very good reasons, have not taken advantage of this offer, are surviving by drawing on their reserves.

The other factor to bear in mind is that, as long as lockdown continues, Synod, while probably losing income on investments, should make some savings on underspending of budgets. Neither of these factors can be predicted with total accuracy but they do inform the question as to whether Synod budget can bear the loss from the continued suspension of the levy in the current year (This is set at £19,560).

Over the nine months of lockdown in 2020, loss of investment income (and other interest) amounted to around £35k and this was offset by a non-spend on budgets of around £49k - a net gain of £14k.

If we assume similar performances over, say six months of 2021 lockdown, scaling down the two figures by a third for the sake of simplicity, then we might see a net gain of around £9k to offset the loss from any suspension of the levy. My view, as Treasurer, is that Synod could absorb the “hit” from a suspension. If the lockdown continues for longer then the net gain to Synod will probably increase and the attendant risk to churches will also increase, reinforcing the argument for a suspension. There is also the probability that our investment income will recover more rapidly as an upsurge in markets is predicted as the economy begins to recover. None of these are predictable with complete confidence, however.

I think we have three options as a Synod (none of which can be brought by resolution prior to Synod as we have to have the debate first):

a - We continue with the budget as planned with the levy (collectible in late autumn) - this may help Synod more than necessary and will mean additional costs for churches as they recover

b - Synod suspends the levy for the current year

c - Synod asks for the levy on a voluntary basis - the advantage is that this helps both Synod and the congregations who are struggling most, while seeking, in a spirit of generosity, to keep the mutual relationship between Synod and congregations in view

***Simon Copley, Synod Treasurer***

## Subject - **URC Pensions Challenge**

Dear Treasurers, Church Secretaries, Ministers, CRCWs and Retired Ministers

You may be aware that the URC, as denomination, is facing a major challenge regarding our Pension schemes. This will have a significant impact on the finances of Synods in the next 10 years.

Up to now a Risk Management project group has been working very hard on the challenges but the time is fast approaching when the challenge will begin to impact Synods.

To that end, the time is right to share some background on the challenge more widely, so we would like to invite you to a pre-Synod Zoom Presentation on this subject.

This will be on **Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> March at 6.30-7.30 pm**

We will record the presentation for those who can't make it  
The zoom links and telephone numbers are below:

The presentation will cover:

- How did the challenge arise?
- What is the likely scale of the challenge?
- What are the legal implications?
- How is the URC, as a denomination, proposing to meet the challenge?
- What is the likely impact on Yorkshire Synod finances?

There will be an opportunity to ask questions and we are delighted that **Chris Evans**, who has been at the heart of the discussions from the beginning and has extensive knowledge of the issues, will be joining us.

I am happy to say that the challenge will not impact existing personal pensions and local church finances.

We look forward to sharing with you

***Simon Copley***

Treasurer, Yorkshire URC Synod

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83434793837>

Meeting ID: 834 3479 3837

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

+44 203 481 5240 United Kingdom

+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom

+44 131 460 1196 United Kingdom

+44 203 051 2874 United Kingdom

+44 203 481 5237 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 834 3479 3837

## Mission Committee Report, 4th-5th Feb 2021

We started with a presentation from Simeon Mitchell, 'Signs of the Times: who matters? what matters? what do we hold on to?', looking at the start of the pandemic of everyone matters, to how it has come down to privilege, and what we see coming out of the pandemic in terms of **mental health** issues, emotions felt by so many of loss and grief, and how churches can engage and respond.

Then a presentation on the illegal Israeli settlements following the URC visit to the region in 2019, and the national commitment in Resolution 37 of General Assembly 2016 for us all to respond with informed prayer, grace and solidarity. Mission Committee worked on a number of resolutions to bring to General Assembly 2021.

Next, there was a valuable discussion on Education and Learning, thinking about the current Resource Centres for Learning, and how it can all be further integrated across the denomination. That led into looking at the future of Walking the Way, and how all in our Churches are encouraged to engage with it - an ongoing exploration with a view to producing a detailed document for the future.

The final part of the meeting focused in part on **racial justice**, noting Racial Justice Sunday falling on Valentine's Day; the Black History Monthly initiative, every third Thursday of the month, 7.30-8.30pm on Zoom; and the resolution passed by Mission Council in Nov 2020 that we move to actively being an anti-racist Church.

Other things noted were:

- retirement of the National Rural Officer, a half-time post with the Methodists, which they are increasing to full-time, which the West Midlands Synod, who were part-funding, cannot match, and a call to pray for farmers in the UK in the cold weather with lambing season beginning
- a joint resource is being worked on for the URC's 50th Anniversary; 1st October 2022 is booked at Westminster Central Hall for a celebration
- Stepwise is now fully operational
- a milestone of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons ratified by 50 UN member states, sadly not the UK
- two thirds of MPs nationally have been contacted by over 900 people about the JPIT Reset the Debt campaign
- making 2021 a year for **climate action**, with resources being produced for Climate Sunday on 5th Sept; and encouraging more uptake of Eco-Church

I have highlighted the areas of concern in the world our Synod has identified in our Moderator's report, Feb 21.

Rev Clare S Davison

The coronavirus situation continues to mean we have not been able to physically meet and communicate. However we have had many opportunities to meet on zoom and discern God's will without all the travel which normally takes place. I still look forward to the time when we can meet as a committee in person and when we can visit churches but meanwhile these are the areas we looked at on 12<sup>th</sup> January.

At our January meeting we welcomed Dr Lesley Coote to the committee. She is helping to develop our Synod Stepwise programme and we look forward to hearing more about the progress of Stepwise through this year. If you want Lesley to speak to your church or a group please contact her.

**Vocations & Candidating** - After discussing arranging a synod enquiry day for all forms of ministry we agreed that realistically this needs to be 2022 for a large face to face meeting. When we have a date for the diary we will share this with all churches. Meanwhile if you have anyone thinking about candidating please encourage them to get in touch. There has been one enquiry about candidating for ministry recently and a first assessed service has taken place in February.

**Student in training** -We are delighted that Adam Woodhouse has been called to Lancashire East Missional partnership after he finishes at Westminster college this year. Please keep Adam in your prayers as he finishes his Ipswich placement and moves to Lancashire in July / August 2021.

**Elders Development** - The Elders Development Training Day that was to be 28<sup>th</sup> March 2020 led by Simeon Mitchell has been rearranged for 17<sup>th</sup> April 2021 on zoom.

Church Secretary zoom meetings are continuing since starting in September 2020 and are well attended and well received.

The Elders Development Group have been updating Elders resources which were last developed in 2014. It is intended that the new resources will be launched at Assembly this year. We thank this group for their work on this representing Yorkshire Synod.

**Worship Development** - Since the lay preachers zoom sessions in September 2020 a lay preachers planning group has formed of Kath Lonsdale, Jill Fletcher and Rod Morrison. The synod lay preachers list was updated between August and November. In response to requests some lay preachers preaching preparation sessions have happened in January and February.

For all worship leaders interested, a morning exploring the lectionary readings for Lent with the theme of Covenant with 2 Westminster college lecturers happened on 6<sup>th</sup> February.

The next session planned is on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March for anyone interested.

10am – 11.30am repeated at 7.30pm – 9pm

Jesus in Jerusalem: confrontation, conflict & crucifixion

Preparing worship Palm Sunday to Easter Day.

Relating Easter to contemporary issues and led by Lawrence Moore

Please register your interest with the office

### **Sabbaticals**

Revd Jason McCullagh, Revd Alison Micklem and Revd Matt Stone are rearranging their sabbaticals which were due 2020 for this or next year depending on Covid restrictions.

### **Reviews - Church Related Community Workers, Special Category Ministers & Synod posts**

Stainland and Holywell Green: End of 4<sup>th</sup> year, Review due January 2024

Leeds Mission and Ministry Enabler: End of 4<sup>th</sup> year, Review due July 2021

Saltaire SCM: Ends December 2021

Leeds University Chaplaincy and 18-25: Midterm Review will be completed March 2021

Peter's House: Review on hold due to Peter's House being closed due to the Covid situation

Churspacious: 25% temporary post

Huddersfield CRCW: Review due September 2021 present term ends June 2023

Synod Evangelist: End of 4<sup>th</sup> year, Review due September 2022

**Retired Ministers, Spouses, Widows and Widowers day** - A joint Ministries and Pastoral venture has been arranged for 17<sup>th</sup> June - Covid dependant - 11am -2.30pm with lunch at Headingley St Columba. Revd Dr Rosalind Selby, Principal of Northern College, will speak on "How Green is my Bible?" in the morning and Revd Jamie Kissack, the Moderator, will lead the afternoon session. If there is enthusiasm for this we plan for it to be an annual get together. An invitation will be sent out after Easter.

We thank Simon Loveitt for his 6 years on the committee. We need someone with a Church Related Community Work perspective to replace Simon. If you feel called to this we would be pleased to hear from you.

Yours in Christ's service

*Kath*

## Property Committee Report – Synod, March 2021

I began my last report to Synod with these words - this has been a year of **challenge** and **change** for the Synod Property Committee. From where I sit now in the middle of February 2021 I think those words still apply but in very different circumstances.

At the beginning of March 2020 our new Property Officer – Jane Bunyan-Murray – began work. Within a couple of weeks she had had to pick up her belongings and settle to working at home. The list of changes hidden in that sentence are huge. This was a new job for Jane but also a new role within the Synod structures. Working from home with only phone and Zoom contact was not the ideal start for a new job and the ‘normal’ day-to-day support when based in the office was absent. Only a few weeks previously Alastair Forsyth had begun his work as Trust Secretary which, in Property Committee terms relates to the Trust involvement in purchase, sale and leasing of property. We are grateful to both Jane and Alastair for the way they have kept their areas of work on track during these difficult times.

So the word challenge was certainly at the forefront of all our minds. Despite that, in routine terms, the Property Committee met five times between March 2020 and March 2021 – we did not meet formally in March 2020 but ensured that matters which needed dealing with were handled electronically and minuted at our May meeting. All our meetings were conducted via Zoom, a facility which we have come to rely on, been grateful for and which will continue in future to be a facility which will enable us to meet more economically both in terms of time, money and the environment.

Through the months since March 2020 a huge amount of the Property Officer’s time has been taken up in reading, understanding and disseminating Government Guidelines ensuring that our buildings are Covid secure whether for our own use or for use by tenants many of whom rely on using our buildings to continue to run their business and earn their living. There has been the need for much individual support for churches as they have worked through the everchanging guidelines and requirements. We know that churches have been grateful for the support they have received.

Looking back through the year at the more usual activity for the Property Officer and Committee it is noticeable that the names of churches repeatedly feature in each set of minutes with only small amounts of progress on plans made before March 2020. A few churches were able to move forward with the installation of new boilers, replacement windows or roof repairs but more ambitious plans for refurbishment have largely stalled until people are able to move around more freely. Wigton Moor, Westfield, Wyke and West Park Harrogate are amongst those who have had to deal with delays with all the attendant frustration. The one exception to that trend was at Idle where the long awaited new church building was completed though of course the hoped for opening service of celebration must wait for changes to Covid regulations.

Currently there are a number of churches with embryo plans for work either out of necessity and/or with an eye on mission opportunities. We are always grateful when such plans come to us early in their formulation in order that we can ensure that all the right permissions have been granted and the proposals have been scrutinised by the technically knowledgeable

members of the committee who offer advice and guidance based on their specialist knowledge and experience.

The committee has continued to receive applications for V&O property grants. There was a decision early in the year to give careful thought to the use of the grant funding in the light of the possible reduction in the income of all churches as a result of the pandemic. However, we have been able to take a cautious approach and grants have been allocated to:

- The Manor Project in Sheffield
- The Michael Church in Sheffield
- Heath, Halifax
- Holmewood, Bradford
- Herringthorpe, Rotherham
- Wigton Moor, Leeds
- St Columba's, York

Whilst it is sometimes difficult to identify where buildings end and mission begins it is true to say that cold buildings and leaking roofs are clearly not conducive to mission in any form.

Finally, there are some thank you's due:

To members of the committee for their commitment to the work.

To Jim Sharp for his many years as a member of the committee, for his input to discussions and his willingness to support churches as they planned for building projects large and small.

To Peter Saxton who has had to retire from the committee due to ill health but in the short time he was a member who shared his expertise generously.

To Kevin Watson who in his busy schedule brought his knowledge of the churches throughout the Synod into our discussions and deliberations.

And to David Figures and Clyde Binfield on their retirement recognising the knowledge and expertise they have provided as we have dealt with listed buildings in the synod.

Val Morrison – Property Committee Convener – 18/2/2021

## Listed Buildings report to the March Synod 2021

I am placing on record my retirement from the role of Chairman of the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee of the Yorkshire Synod after 25 years and also that of Professor Clyde Binfield as Secretary.

It has been a privilege to serve the Synod in this position and it has given us the opportunity to visit and appreciate the wonderful range of historic church and chapel buildings of our Synod and witness the very varied circumstances in which they operate. I think of the little Georgian gem of a country chapel at West Melton, built in 1799; the prominent seaside location of St Andrew's, Scarborough, built for Sir Titus Salt's worship when on holiday from Saltaire (itself our only Grade 1 listed church); the rugged presence of Denholme, high above the town, now the only church for its community. I think too, with regret, of those we no longer have: Zion, Wakefield, and Upper Chapel, Heckmondwike, both now flats, Providence Place, Cleckheaton, now in commercial use; and especially Hopton, Mirfield, impressive in its setting, graveyard, building, interior, and historical associations, a full expression of Yorkshire Congregationalism and, we felt, with considerable potential for mission.

Each of our 31 listed churches is unique and has been officially recorded as being of architectural and historical significance. The challenge for each church is how to balance its historic aspect with its vision of modern mission. These are not mutually exclusive and with careful thought and expert advice the two can be made to work together to advantage.

Heritage is the object of much public interest and is currently big business. The historic church building is a particular asset because the history can be used as a platform for mission. Moreover, many historic churches are in prime positions in their respective communities, for example: Swanland; Christ Church, Ilkley; Long Causeway, Dewsbury.

The Listed Buildings Advisory Committee can help by providing an outside perception of the situation, which may be one which the church itself has not considered. By using its historic features in a careful and creative way a church can often make a far bigger impact on the public understanding of 'church' than by seeking to destroy what it regards as an impediment to modern mission. This particularly applies in the case of removing the pews!

Another aspect of the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee is its role in advising on maintenance and repairs to listed buildings. Churches on the list occupy buildings ranging in date from the seventeenth century to the twentieth and the use of appropriate techniques and materials is crucial to their future survival.

We have been very fortunate in having been supported by a committee of dedicated members, each an expert in their own field: church history, architecture, town planning, structural engineering, who have given many years of voluntary service to the Synod. It is our hope that new arrangements can be made to continue this valuable contribution to the life and mission of the United Reformed Church.

David Figures & Clyde Binfield. February 2021.

## Yorkshire Synod Safeguarding Committee Report – February 2021

This the first report made since Mrs Ailsa Johnson took up the role of convenor of the Synod Safeguarding Committee.

Since the last report there has been no reduction in the work that the Synod has provided, to support all our churches throughout the current situation and lockdown procedures. In fact, demand is rising as our churches become more aware of their safeguarding responsibilities. This should be seen as a positive effect, as more knowledge means more awareness on how to deal with any safeguarding issues.

Matt Knowles, alongside the committee has ensured that provisions for contact for all churches has been maintained whilst providing greater amounts of safeguarding training available via Zoom for all churches and church members.

**Safeguarding Policy.** This review has been completed with the policy submitted and accepted by the committee. A copy is enclosed with the Synod papers. It is due to be uploaded to the Synod website, but for this to happen it does need Synod to formally adopt it (Resolution 6).

**Annual church safeguarding returns.** All documents should have now been returned to Somerset House. These returns have been stored on the Synods database and will be reviewed by the safeguarding advisor with reports submitted in April 2021. A further update will be submitted for the next meeting to reflect this. Churches that have not provided returns, or incomplete returns will be contacted by Matt to ensure that we get as full a picture of safeguarding from all of churches in order to identify issues and work together to resolve any that have been identified. This will also allow Matt to identify where training may be required and assist those within the churches to obtain this vital safeguarding input.

**Safeguarding Training.** As per information sent out from Somerset House, we are in the middle of currently providing basic safeguarding training for those within our churches who need initial or refresher inputs. This initial session lasts two hours and is currently provided by Matt using Zoom. There has been a positive take up from the Synod, with 200+ people already having attended this training. The next two-hour intermediate session is due to begin in March/ April 2021. Notice of this will be released from Somerset House when the dates are confirmed. Currently all training is provided on-line. As soon as restrictions allow, this will be reviewed and some face to face training will begin to allow those who cannot attend the online training to get the necessary input.

In relation to the previous report Matt has obtained his AET (Award in Education and Training) which ensures that the Synod has an accredited safeguarding professional providing the training to a recognised national standard.

### **Casework**

All aspects of Synod casework are up to date and no further update is required in this area.

Matt Knowles

**Yorkshire Synod**

**Safeguarding Policy:**

**Children & Adults**

November 2020

## 1. Aim and purpose of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to promote and highlight safeguarding, prevent abuse, provide support to the survivors of abuse and protect all vulnerable people (both children and adults) at Synod level, and in local churches within the Synod. This ensures that we have clear procedures for taking appropriate action following the raising of safeguarding concerns involving children or adults within our Synod, or those who attend our activities and events. It also ensures that there is an understanding within the Synod and its local churches of safeguarding issues and to seek assurance that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place within its local churches.

The policy should be interpreted in the light of and alongside the most recent United Reformed Church Safeguarding Guidance Policy, Good Practice 5, which is available on the national URC website and via links on the Synod website.

## 2. Definitions

Yorkshire Synod is the regional administrative grouping of United Reformed Churches across Yorkshire. There are 94 churches in this grouping. A small team of staff support the functioning and ministry of these churches.

URC (Yorkshire Province) Trust Ltd is a Charitable Trust and accountable synod body. It oversees financial governance and probity of the Synod, employs Synod staff and ensures that the Synod is complying with Charity Law and carrying out its responsibilities appropriately and in the public interest. An important aspect of these responsibilities is safeguarding. The Charities Commission describes how 'safeguarding is a matter that goes to the heart of being a charity; it's about treating people with respect, protecting the vulnerable and doing the right thing'

Children and young people includes anyone aged under 18 years who is therefore vulnerable due to their age. With certain disabilities, it may include young people up to the age of 25.

The Children Act 2004 (section 11) places a duty on a range of organisations to have in place arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Details of the arrangements required are set out in Chapter 2 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children- A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children (HM Government 2015)* and includes the need to report serious safeguarding situations to statutory authorities. Chapter 2 makes specific reference to the need for faith organisations to have procedures.

Adults at risk includes any adult of any age, who may be vulnerable due to a permanent or temporary illness or disability, or who has been made vulnerable by their circumstances which include domestic abuse and discrimination. Statutory guidance (the Care Act 2014) describes adults at risk who need safeguarding as those who:

- Have needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- Are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect: and
- As a result of those care and support needs are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect.

The main types of abuse that may be experienced by children or adults at risk are set out in Appendix 1.

## 3. Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to both Yorkshire Synod and to URC (Yorkshire Province) Trust Ltd. Where the term 'Yorkshire Synod' is used within this policy it refers also to the Synod Trust.

It is therefore relevant to Synod trustees, paid Synod staff, volunteers and those who supervise them. It is also helpful as guidance to local churches within the Synod, as it clarifies the relationship between churches and the Synod relating to safeguarding, as well as the responsibility that the Synod has to both support and monitor the safeguarding practice within local churches.

#### **4. Introduction**

Safeguarding everyone is a primary responsibility within the Yorkshire Synod. The Synod has three key responsibilities in this respect.

1. To safeguarding those most vulnerable within our society including children, young people and adults at risk within the sphere of the Synod's own activities and events.
2. To provide support and assistance to those who are survivors of abuse.
3. Assure ourselves that all local churches within the Synod have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place and are aware of their roles and responsibilities relating to all aspects of safeguarding.

We acknowledge and agree that children, young people and adults have a right to live in a way that does not cause them harm or impede their human rights. We therefore acknowledge their right to protection from abuse regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or beliefs. We consider that, in accordance with legislation, the welfare of children is paramount. We will follow legislation, statutory guidance and recognised good practice at all times. We believe that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable and inconsistent with a Christian way of living.

##### ***Within the Synod we will:***

- Seek to establish a knowledgeable and caring environment in which there is an informed vigilance about the signs and dangers of abuse.
- Appoint a Safeguarding Advisor for the Synod, whilst recognising that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Ensure that a named person in the office can act as a verifier to carry out DBS checks and that all those requiring DBS checks in the Synod, are up to date with this process.
- Organise all activities in such a way as to promote a safe environment for all whilst minimising the risk of harm to both children and adults.
- Follow a comprehensive and detailed safer recruitment process for the selection and appointment of all people who may work with children or adults in need of protection, whether voluntary or paid, lay or ordained.
- Follow current URC Safeguarding Good Practice Guidance (GP5), including assessing risk and managing known offenders involved in Synod activities whilst working effectively with other agencies, including social services and the police on safeguarding matters.
- Respond appropriately and correctly to any safeguarding concerns relating to our staff, whether volunteers or paid, lay or ordained, including making referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer, if appropriate.

##### ***Within local churches we will:***

- Encourage and establish good practice in safeguarding, in line with the URC Safeguarding Good Practice Guidelines (GP5).

- Seek assurance that local churches have adequate safeguarding arrangements in place, including a safeguarding co-ordinator and an up to date safeguarding policy.
- Support churches in protecting people from the risks associated with known offenders within their congregations, including carrying out risk assessments and establishing Covenants of Care.
- Provide comprehensive and up to date safeguarding resources and training to all those who attend our churches including specific training for those who work with children and adults and develop leadership within local churches in relation to safeguarding.
- Provide specialist support with safeguarding investigations in churches, including liaison with the police and social services, whilst maintaining confidentiality of any investigations to those directly involved.

## **5. Duty of care and confidentiality**

We have a duty of care to beneficiaries of the Synod, both to adults and children. We will maintain confidentiality except in circumstances where to do so would place the individual or another individual at risk of harm.

Where an issue or concern that has been investigated occurs in a LEP the Synod Safeguarding Advisor will ensure that relevant information is shared with the designated safeguarding persons in all relevant LEP denominations. Where an individual who poses risk in one of our churches, may also be attending other churches of different denominations, we will share information appropriately with relevant district safeguarding officers from other denominations.

## **6. Promoting and monitoring safeguarding in local churches**

General Assembly Resolution of 1997 states that:

‘General Assembly resolves to ensure that the aims of the document ‘Good Practice’ are implemented and monitored in the life of local churches in the United Reformed Church through the Provincial Synods and District Councils overseen by the Assembly Youth and Children’s Work Committee.’

Yorkshire Synod will encourage and assist all local churches to adopt and implement the URC Safeguarding Good Practice Guidelines (GP5). A vital aspect of this is the requirement for every church in the Yorkshire Synod to have a safeguarding policy and an identified church safeguarding co-ordinator, and where possible this will be an Elder. In churches with very small congregations, this role could be undertaken by one person on behalf of more than one church. It is suggested that this is limited to no more than five churches. The Synod Safeguarding Advisor will provide advice to churches in meeting these requirements. It is also suggested that the Minister at the church does not hold the role of safeguarding officer unless there is no other option available within the church.

Churches actively working with children or adults should implement these requirements to safeguard the vulnerable, reassure parents / carers & partner organisations, and protect leaders from false allegations. Churches not currently working with children or adults at risk should still be prepared with a policy and a co-ordinator, so that they are ready as and when children or adults at risk get involved in the church. Churches should recognise that their congregations are very likely to include some number of adults at risk at all times.

Maintaining a safeguarding ethos at all times brings churches in line with the expectations and directions of the Charities Commission whilst demonstrating an understanding of their duty of care and providing a commitment to implement the General Assembly resolution 2 1997.

The Yorkshire Synod will undertake an annual audit of compliance with the URC Safeguarding Good Practice Guidelines through an annual safeguarding return. This will be co-ordinated by the Synod Safeguarding Advisor and the information derived from the returns will be reported annually to the Synod Executive, identifying where there is non-compliance and therefore potential safeguarding risk. Ultimately this will be reported back to the Synod Trust and potentially to the Charities Commission.

## 7. Training opportunities

Yorkshire Synod will offer and publicise safeguarding training opportunities to those in local churches who work with children or adults, encouraging them to undertake safeguarding training every 3 years.

There are fundamentally three types of safeguarding courses available

1. **Basic Training** - This training should be undertaken every three years by everyone who attends our churches in any capacity but especially those who work with children and adults at risk in local churches. This training provides a basic awareness of safeguarding including different types of abuse as well as being able to recognise, respond, record and report any safeguarding concerns. It also covers how to keep local churches as safe as possible including basic knowledge of health and safety around our buildings and meetings.
2. **Intermediate Training** – This training also should be undertaken every three years by those who hold a specific role within our churches including trustees and those who may come into contact with children and adults at risk. This training gives the opportunity to go into greater depth relating to some safeguarding issues and is generally directed to those who hold a leadership role within the church at all levels, specifically church safeguarding officers, Ministers and leaders of groups within the church setting. It gives a deeper understanding on how to manage safeguarding risks, safer recruitment and manage offenders within a church setting as well as other issues appropriate to the roles.
3. **Advanced Training** – Aimed at specific areas of safeguarding for leadership roles within the Synod and local churches. Advanced training seeks to allow participants to understand more complex and nuanced safeguarding ideas and to take an active role in directing others in the church whilst promoting effective practices in and beyond their Church. It also demonstrates how to work effectively alongside statutory authorities and other denominations / agencies within the safeguarding arena.

All local authorities across the Yorkshire Synod provide online basic safeguarding training. Although this is not specific to issues that may arise in a church setting, it can be accessed if an urgent need exists when a URC course is not available locally.

## 8. Preventing abuse and harm in Synod events and activities

All activities will be organised in accordance with URC Safeguarding Good Practice Guidelines (GP5) so as promote a safe environment and healthy relationships whilst minimising opportunities for harm and misunderstanding or false accusation. For each event, a risk assessment will be carried out, appropriate consent forms will be used for activities with children and young people, appropriate records will be kept, and adequate insurance will be in place.

DBS checks will be carried out on individuals working for the Synod in regulated activities, or those such as the Synod Safeguarding Advisor, whose role gives them access to vulnerable individuals and confidential information about them.

All paid staff and volunteers who work with children and young people will agree to work within a code of conduct (see appendix 3) and understand that there may be action taken if this code is not followed, possibly involving suspension or termination of working/volunteering with us.

## **9. Safer recruitment**

We are fully committed to safer recruitment and appointment of all paid staff and volunteers that we engage, including those who work within projects for local churches. We will ensure that these procedures are followed, which include:

- Asking applicants to complete an application form
- Providing workers with role/job descriptions and person specifications
- Completion of Self Declaration forms
- Obtaining Disclosure and Barring checks where legally entitled to do so
- Taking up two references (not family) and
- Interviewing candidates

Training in safeguarding will be provided and volunteers and paid staff will be given support and supervision in their role.

## **10. Responding to concerns of abuse at Synod events and activities.**

### ***What to do if a worker recognises indicators of possible abuse***

If indicators of possible abuse give cause for concern, then the worker should

- Respond correctly by informing the person responsible for safeguarding at the event as soon as possible. This is often the leader in charge of an event. Sometimes this may not be possible so responsibility to report the abuse may fall to that person. Within 24 hours the Synod Safeguarding Advisor must be informed directly. Do not discuss with anybody else. However, if there is immediate concern over a safeguarding issue then the emergency services must be contacted straight away. DO NOT wait 24 hours to report in this instance.

Make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and sign and date this record and pass this onto the person responsible for safeguarding at the event, who will liaise with the Synod Safeguarding personnel to decide what action needs to be taken. Any such records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet at the Synod Office.

- If at any point the Synod Safeguarding Advisor is implicated in the allegation, refer to the Synod Moderator.

### ***What to do if there is a disclosure or allegation of abuse***

If a child or an adult makes a disclosure that they are being abused and / or an allegation of abuse against someone, it is important that the person being told:

- Stays calm and listens carefully.

- Reassures them that they have done the right thing in telling you.
- Does not investigate or ask leading questions.
- Does not promise to keep secret what they have been told.
- Explains that they will need to tell someone else (in the case of a child).
- Inform the person responsible for safeguarding at the event as soon as possible. This is often the leader in charge of an event. Within 24 hours the Synod Safeguarding Advisor must be informed directly. Do not discuss with anybody else.

Make a written record of the allegation, disclosure or incident and sign and date this record and pass this onto the person responsible for safeguarding at the event, who will liaise with the Synod Safeguarding personnel to decide what action needs to be taken. Any such records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet at the Synod Office.

- If any point the Synod Safeguarding Advisor is implicated in the allegation, refer to the Synod Moderator.

### ***Procedure in the event of a concern***

If there is an immediate threat of harm the Police should be contacted.

Where it is judged that there is no immediate threat of harm the following will occur:

- The concern will be discussed with the Synod Safeguarding Advisor and a decision made as to whether the concern warrants a referral to statutory agencies.
- A confidential record will be made of the observations and / or conversation and the surrounding circumstances. This record will be kept securely in a locked filing cabinet at the Synod Office. A copy will be passed to statutory agencies if a referral is made.
- The person about whom the allegation has been made must not be informed by anyone in the Synod if it is judged that to do so would place a child or adult at increased risk of further abuse.

## **11. Sources of advice, guidance, and support**

### ***Synod Safeguarding Advisor:***

Matt Knowles

Contact phone number: 07761 525592

Email address: [matt.safeguarding@urcyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:matt.safeguarding@urcyorkshire.org.uk)

### ***United Reformed Church Safeguarding Officer:***

Ioannis Athanasiou

Contact phone number: 0207 520 2729

Email address: [safeguarding@urc.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@urc.org.uk)

### ***Churches Child Protection Advisory Service 24-hour helpline:***

Tel 0845 120 4550 (n.b. out of office hours this should only be used for urgent advice which cannot wait until the following day)

## **12. Statutory referrals and notifications**

In accordance with the law, a referral will be made to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if the church withdraws permission for an individual to engage in work with children OR would have done so had that individual not resigned, retired, been made redundant or been transferred to a position which does not involve work with children. Such referrals would be made because the employer believes that the individual has engaged in relevant conduct or satisfied the harm test or committed an offence that would lead to automatic inclusion on a barred list.

As a registered charity the Synod would be required to notify the Charities Commission of any safeguarding concerns.

## **13. Review**

This policy should be reviewed by Synod safeguarding Committee annually, amending and updating it as required. It should also be approved annually by the Synod's March meeting.

Date of most recent review: October 2020. Date of next review: October 2021

Signed: .....(on behalf of Synod)

## **Appendix1**

### **What is abuse and neglect - Children.**

These definitions are taken from *Working Together 2013*

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting, by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

#### **Physical abuse**

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### **Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development.

It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.

It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

#### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

#### **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

### **What is abuse? Adults in need of protection**

The following definitions of abuse are laid down in *'No Secrets: Guidance on developing and implementing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect vulnerable adults (adults at risk) from abuse (Department of Health 2000):*

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. In giving substance to that statement, however, consideration needs to be given to several factors:

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

#### **Physical Abuse**

This is the infliction of pain or physical injury, which is either caused deliberately, or through lack of care.

#### **Sexual Abuse**

This is the involvement in sexual activities to which the person has not consented or does not truly comprehend and so cannot give informed consent, or where the other party is in a position of trust, power or authority and uses this to override or overcome lack of consent.

#### **Psychological or Emotional Abuse**

These are acts or behaviour, which cause mental distress or anguish or negates the wishes of the vulnerable adult. It is also behaviour that has a harmful effect on the adult at risk's emotional health and development or any other form of mental cruelty.

#### **Financial or Material Abuse**

This is the inappropriate use, misappropriation, embezzlement or theft of money, property or possessions

#### **Neglect, or Act of Omission**

This is the repeated deprivation of assistance that the adult at risk's needs for important activities of daily living, including the failure to intervene in behaviour which is dangerous to the adult at risk or to others. A vulnerable person may be suffering from neglect when their general well being or development is impaired

### **Discriminatory Abuse**

This is the inappropriate treatment of an adult at risk because of their age, gender, race, religion, cultural background, sexuality, disability etc. Discriminatory abuse exists when values, beliefs or culture result in a misuse of power that denies opportunity to some groups or individuals. Discriminatory abuse links to all other forms of abuse.

### **Organisational Abuse**

This is the mistreatment or abuse of an adult at risk by a regime or individuals within an institution (e.g. hospital or care home) or in the community. It can be through repeated acts of poor or inadequate care and neglect or poor professional practice.

**Domestic violence** – including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse; so called 'honour' based violence.

**Self-neglect** – this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

**Modern slavery** – encompasses slavery, human trafficking, and forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

## Appendix 2.

### Code of Conduct for working with children or young people

We should all be aware that behaviour in a worker's personal life (including online) may impact upon their work with children and young people. Therefore, all workers agree not to behave in a manner which would lead any reasonable person to question their suitability to work with children or act as a role model within the United Reformed Church.

More specifically, all workers agree to the following code of conduct:

- Do treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Don't abuse the power and responsibility of your role. Don't belittle, scapegoat, put down, or ridicule a young person (even in 'fun') and don't use language or behaviour with sexual connotations (e.g. flirting or innuendo).
- Do act inclusively, seeking to make all people feel welcome and valued.
- Don't exclude other children or workers from conversations and activities unless there is a good reason.
- Do treat people with equal care and concern.
- Don't show favouritism (e.g. in selection for activities, in giving rewards, etc.) or encourage excessive attention from a particular child (e.g. gifts).
- Do encourage everyone to follow any behaviour agreement or ground rules and apply sanctions consistently.
- Don't threaten or use sanctions which have not been agreed or make empty threats.
- Do refer to a more senior worker if a child does not respond to your instructions despite encouragement and warning of possible consequences.
- Don't feel you have to deal with every problem on your own.
- Do seek to diffuse aggressive or threatening behaviour without the use of physical contact.
- Don't use physical restraint except as a last resort to prevent injury. This should be the use of minimum force.
- Do relate to children in public. If a child wants to talk one-to-one about an issue, tell another worker and find somewhere quieter, but still public, to talk.
- Don't spend time alone with children out of the sight of other people and without the knowledge of someone in leadership.
- Do make sure that any electronic communication is done with parental consent, and in a way which is transparent, accountable and noted / recorded and adheres to safeguarding policies.
- Don't keep communication with children secret, while still respecting appropriate confidences.
- Do allow the designated photographer to take and share photos of event activities, in line with parental consent and URC good practice guidelines.
- Don't take photos and video of young people at the event if you are not the designated photographer.
- Do use physical contact wisely - it should be:
  - in public
  - appropriate to the situation and to the age, gender and culture of the child.
  - in response to the needs of the child, not the adult.
  - respectful of the child's privacy, feelings and dignity.

- Don't use physical contact which could be misconstrued as aggressive (e.g. rough games) or sexual.
- Do respect children's privacy.
- Don't assume that children should tell you anything you ask just because you are a worker.
- Do respect the right of children to wash, change and use the toilet in private.
- Don't walk in unnecessarily or unannounced/
- Do listen to children and do tell the safeguarding officer if you have any concerns about a child's welfare.
- Don't promise to keep something secret if it is about a child at risk of harm, but only tell those who need to know.
- Do respect and promote the rights of children to make their own decisions and choices.
- Don't work in ways that put your needs and interests before those of the children you work with.
- Do respect and encourage respect for difference, diversity, beliefs and culture.
- Don't discriminate or leave discrimination or bullying unchallenged.

I agree to abide by the above code of conduct while working with children & young people at Yorkshire Synod events and activities.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

## Privilege ‘Walk’ questions

As part of the presentation by Rev Zaidie Orr, we are all invited to fill out this form and add up the score at the end. The results will not be published, they are just for you, but I hope that by doing so you will be able to relate more to the contents of the presentation and be able to understand more about the issues highlighted.

Start with a score of 0 and add and subtract points depending on your responses. Maintain a tally in the right-hand column as you go. Go into negative scores if you need to at any point.

Consider the questions as well as your answers – are you aware of these as components of privilege?

	<b>0</b>
If you are right-handed, add one point.	
If one or both of your parents have a University degree, add one point.	
If English is your first language, add one point.	
If you have to rely, or have relied, primarily on public transport, remove a point.	
If you can find plasters at high street pharmacies designed to blend in with or match your skin tone, add one point.	
If you have worked with people you felt were like yourself, add one point	
If you constantly feel unsafe walking alone at night, remove a point.	
If you were ever made fun of or bullied for something you could not change or was beyond your control, remove a point.	
If your household employs help as cleaners, gardeners, etc., add one point.	
If your family ever left your homeland or entered another country not of your own free will, remove a point.	
If you studied the culture of your ancestors in primary school, add one point.	
If you would never think twice about calling the police when trouble occurs, add one point.	
If you are able to move through the world without fear of sexual assault, add one point.	
If you come from a single-parent household, remove a point.	
If you have ever been able to play a significant role in a project or activity because of a talent you acquired previously, add one point.	
If you ever had to skip a meal or were hungry because there was not enough money to buy food, remove a point.	
If you can show affection for your romantic partner in public without fear of ridicule or violence, add one point.	
If you have a physically visible disability, remove a point.	
If you have an invisible illness or disability, remove a point.	

If you feel respected for your academic performance, add one point.	
If you were ever discouraged or excluded from an activity because of race, class, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation, remove a point.	
If you routinely see your identity reflected in mainstream media, add one point.	
If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms, accent or behaviour to fit in more, remove a point.	
If you were ever accepted for something you applied to because of your association with a friend or family member, add one point.	
If you have ever been profiled by someone else using stereotypes, remove a point.	
If you have health insurance add one point.	
If someone has ever spoken for you when you did not want them to do so, remove a point.	
If you live in an area with crime and drug activity, remove a point.	
If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, religion, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation but felt unsafe to confront the situation, remove a point.	
If you are never asked to speak on behalf of a group of people who share an identity with you, add one point.	
If someone in your household suffered or suffers from mental illness, remove a point.	
If you went to college/University, add one point.	
If there was ever drug or alcohol abuse in your household, remove a point.	
If you have been a victim of sexual harassment, remove a point.	
If you can make mistakes and not have people attribute your behaviour to flaws in your racial or gender group, add one point.	
If you have more than fifty books in your household, add one point.	

**Total**

# The Keld Project

## Report to the Yorkshire Synod Spring 2021

*A resource for Christian Mission: a place for those whose ears, eyes and hearts are prepared to penetrate the background noise of a secular world.*

1. The Mission Project at Keld is led by the United Reformed Church Northern Synod, shared by the neighbouring Yorkshire and North Western Synods, together with ecumenical partners in the Anglican and Methodist Churches and the Tees Swale Mission Pastorate.
2. This tiny hamlet has long been recognised as a 'thin place.' The Project aims to contribute a spiritual dimension to the lives of the thousands of visitors who pass through it. Like all churches - and every other public resource - the Keld Project, including the Upper Room conference facility, the Keld Visitor Centre and the Manse, have been closed on account of the coronavirus epidemic. This has been at a significant cost in terms of lost income and the disappointment of being obliged to delay our plans to restore and develop the old School.
3. Nevertheless, contributions in the visitors' book during the limited recent opening times are supportive and give us encouragement for the future. These include:
  - Visitors from South Devon: 'Praise God for the amazing beauty of his creation, especially this wonderful place at Keld and its surroundings, and this Resource Centre. God bless this place, and all involved!'
  - From Northamptonshire: 'Back in Keld after 12 years, if only for a flying visit. Wonderful to see the Resource Centre with all the history of the place. Last visit it was still a derelict building.'
  - From Skipton: 'Great walk, lovely centre, thank you!'
  - From Toronto: 'What a lovely walk! Hope it doesn't take too long to get back to Muker though, hopefully before it gets dark.'
  - From New York: 'With so many thanks for a fabulous place - our New Year's Eve walk. Welcome, 2021!'



Figure 1: Presenting the Project at Muker Show 2019. The show was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19 but we hope to be back in 2021.



Figure 2: The Visitor Centre is a huge success, attracting over a thousand visitors a year and providing a base for a popular programme of events.

4. With enterprising plans for the old School finalised, and the pandemic hopefully receding we are now actively seeking funding for this last stage of the development and are confident that the work on the first phase of it will be able to go ahead in 2021/22. This involves stabilising the building, unused for twenty years, installing heating, and creating what we will call a 'Muddy Boots' facility. This will be a discovery room to welcome walkers and school parties as well as visitors in general. It will be simply furnished, display information about the village along with a new exhibition on the history of Christianity in the Dale, and will also act as a 'base camp' for our team of volunteers.

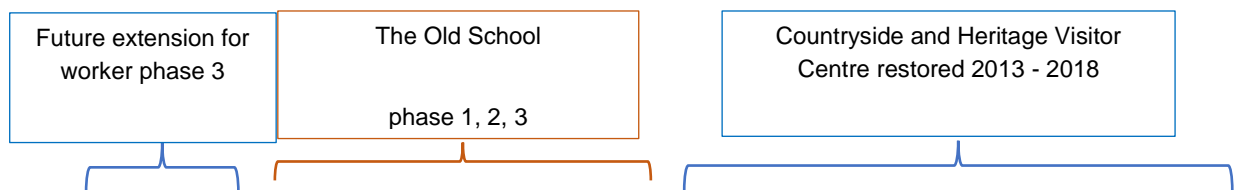


Figure 3: The upper room in the Literary Institute provides excellent facilities. We have very fast broadband but are still waiting for 1G let alone 5G mobile.

5. When eventually all the stages are finished, this will mark the completion of our long period of reinstating Keld's historic buildings as a resource for mission. This was the vision of the Keld minister James Wilkinson in the mid 19th Century, reimagined by the creation of the Keld Project in the early 1970's and refocused in the time of Julie Martin, the Keld minister between 2008 and 2013.
6. We hope that at least the Muddy Boots Centre, (the first of three phases) can be completed in 2021/2022 and would welcome an expression of encouragement and support from the Synod.



Figure 4: Keld Resource Centre is an ideal location for small group work such as awaydays and training



West Elevation

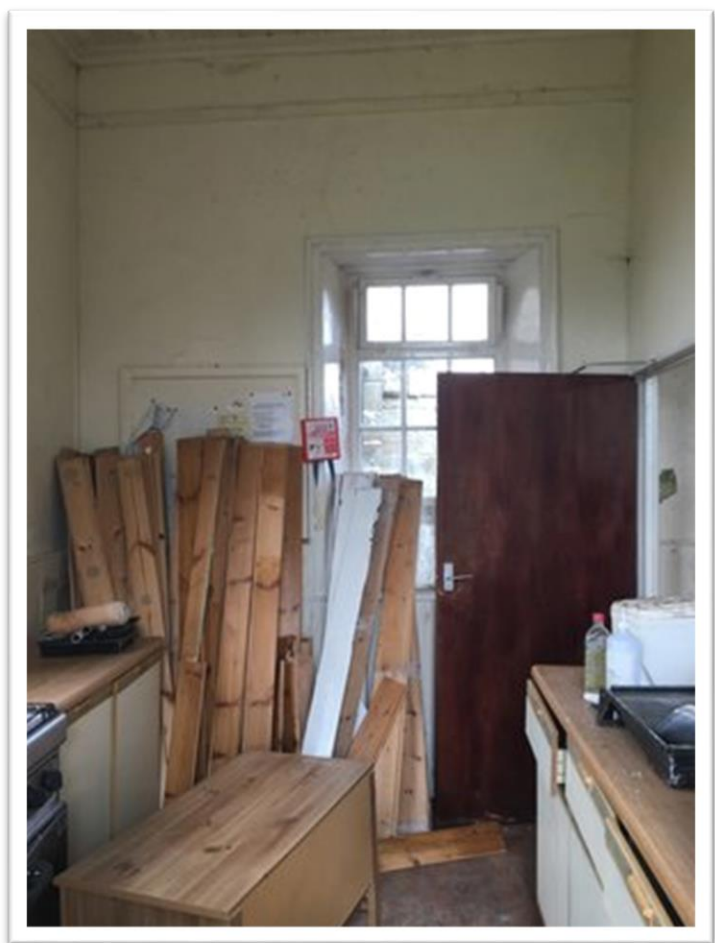


Figure 5: All the buildings surrounding Keld Chapel are Listed and owned by the United Reformed Church. Over the last 10 years they have been restored and are lovingly cared for by Keld Resource Centre (a special purpose company and charity set up in 2009/10). The school is the remaining project. For the past 20 years it has been used mainly for storage and whilst externally maintained needs to be consolidated and repurposed.

7. The Minister in Residence steering group has been reorganized and has already met three times to plan for 2020 and 2021. In addition to fixing dates and nominating ministers, each for a week's residence, the group is also looking at a new idea for Mission called n'Counters at Keld. A booklet on the first 10 years of 'The Minister in Residence Programme' is in preparation.



*Figure 6: Keld Manse offers excellent accommodation for ministers in residence and is available as a holiday let at other times.*

8. The Keld project has also produced a short profile to assist the Tees Swale Mission Pastorate and the two interim moderators in the call for a new minister. We look forward to the new minister joining the board of management and know that they will be joining a team of enthusiastic people committed to an enterprising and exciting Mission Project.

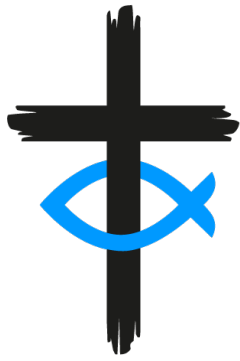
*Figure 7: Henry Vasey, minister of Keld, with a group of the Cooperative Holiday Association, early visitors to Keld, pictured in 1900. Our roots go back a long way.*

For more information see:  
[www.keld.org.uk](http://www.keld.org.uk)

David Figures and Clive  
Davies

February 2021





*The*  
**United  
Reformed  
Church**  
**Yorkshire**

## **Zoom Guidance for Yorkshire Synod**

[Appendix 1](#)



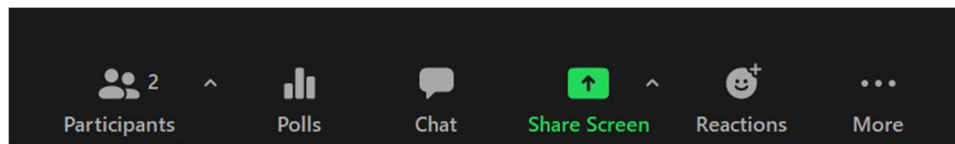
# Zoom Guidance for the Synod Meeting



- If you haven't downloaded the Zoom computer program, you will need this to be able to vote. Visit [www.zoom.us/download](http://www.zoom.us/download) to do so.
- If you already have the computer program, please ensure it is updated by clicking 'Check for updates', there's a video tutorial here: <http://bit.ly/updatingzoom>
- If you use an iPad, tablet, or phone, you will already have the relevant app that will usually be suitably updated.
- You will be muted throughout the meeting. Please keep yourself on mute unless you are speaking.
- We will usually switch you between 'Speaker' and 'Gallery' view to aid your viewing. But you can change this at any time by clicking the 'View' button in the top right hand corner of your screen (sometimes the word view might not be there, but an icon will be).
- You will need to rename yourself when you enter the meeting (see 'How do I rename myself?')

## How will the chair know if I want to speak?

To maintain good order during the meeting, We will be using the 'Raise Hands' function on Zoom to do this. The raise hands button can be found by clicking on 'Reactions' (see Figure 1 below) at the bottom of your screen. On an iPad/Tablet/phone, these are found by tapping 'More'.

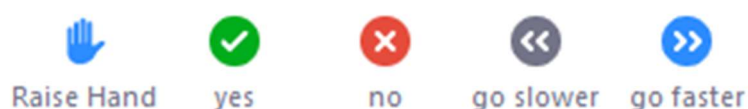


*Figure 1: Bar at the bottom of your screen (PC and Mac apps only)*

When you tap 'Raise Hand' it will remain raised until you press it again (it will say Lower Hand!). Please keep your hand raised until you are called to speak, unless you do not wish to speak anymore.

The moderator will call you to speak, you will unmute your own microphone (bottom left corner), speak, and re-mute yourself afterwards. If not, we can do this for you.

If you wish to raise a **point of order**, press the 'No' button (see Figure 2) indicated by the red circle with a white cross, below. If you feel your point of order hasn't been



*Figure 2*

noticed/spotted by the Moderator / tech team, **PLEASE VERBALLY MAKE THIS KNOWN**. It is more important that your point of order is heard than a smoother looking process!!

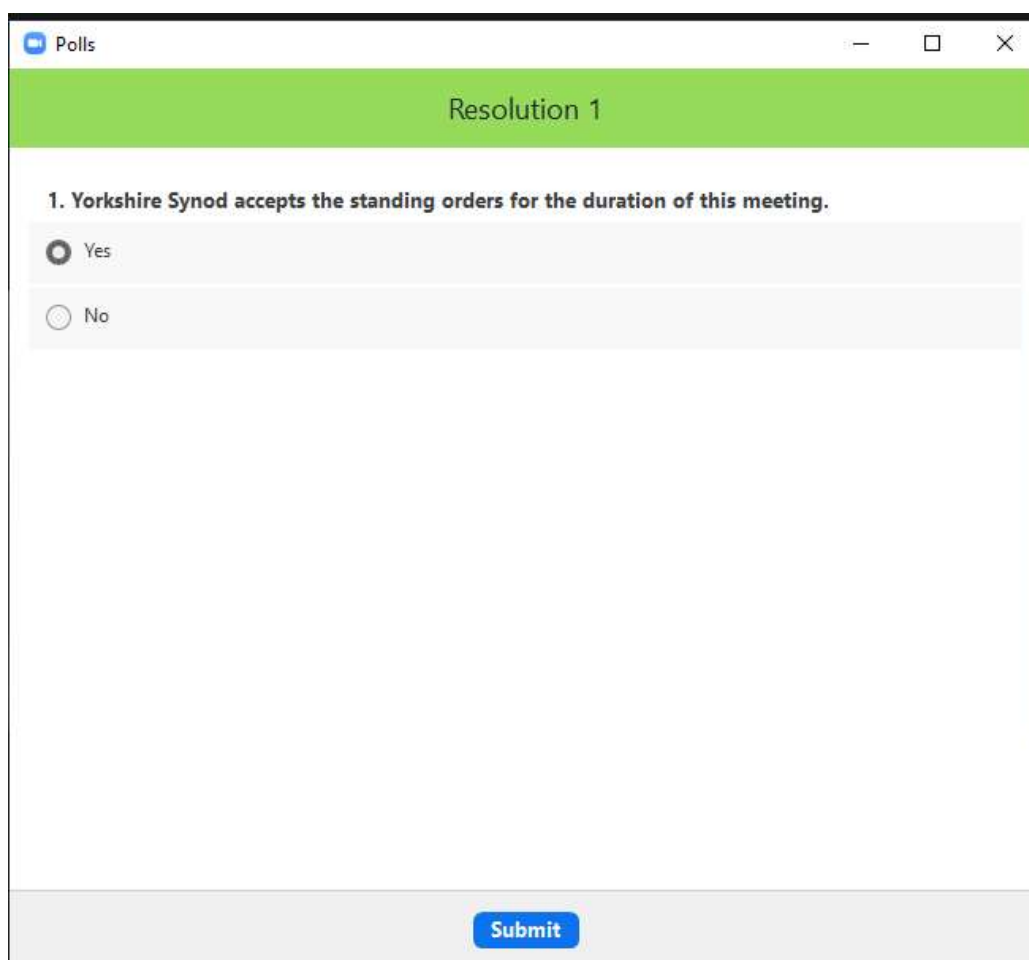
## Can I use the chat to say something?

The chat in Zoom must only be for people to share thought with other delegates. This is because it puts delegates that are attending on a phone or tablet at a disadvantage. We strongly advise to use the raise hand feature if you wish to contribute to the meeting. The chat will not be monitored by the moderator or any of the top table for business purposes.

## How do we vote?

We will be using polls to record official votes. Polls are as the name suggest! The chair will make it clear what you are being asked to vote on.

- If there are two voting members of synod in your household, you **will** need to use separate devices.
- When the poll is going to take place, it will appear on your screen like in Figure 3 below.



The image shows a screenshot of a Zoom 'Polls' window. The window has a title bar with the Zoom logo and the word 'Polls'. Below the title bar is a green header with the text 'Resolution 1'. The main area of the window contains a poll question: '1. Yorkshire Synod accepts the standing orders for the duration of this meeting.' Below the question are two radio button options: 'Yes' and 'No'. The 'Yes' option is selected. At the bottom of the window is a blue 'Submit' button.

*Figure 3*

- Click on the option you wish to vote for, double check it's correct, and then click submit. You cannot change your vote once it is submitted.

- If the poll doesn't appear on your screen or flashes off. Click the 'Polls' button at the bottom of your screen. (Figure 1)

There may be times when the Moderator will choose to **'test the mood'** of synod rather than take an official vote. This will be made clear to you, and we will use the 'Yes' / 'No' buttons for this (see Fig. 1).

## How do I rename myself?

You will need to rename yourself for the meeting, with a 'V' at the beginning of your name if you are a voting member. Or 'NV' if not. To rename yourself:

- If you've joined the meeting on a **computer**, move your mouse to hover over your own video, you will usually be second along from the left on the top row. When you hover over it, you will see three dots in a blue box appear in the top right hand corner of your video.



- Click on this box and a menu will open up. Click on the rename option and a new box will pop up. Type in your new name then click 'Ok'.

If you're on an iPad, or other tablet, or a phone. Tap 'Participants' at the top, and then tap on your name to rename yourself.

If you wish, you can also add your church name or role (the capacity in which you are attending synod) to the end of your name. But this is not a requirement.

Naming examples      NV Dan Morrell  
                                  V Dan Morrell

**Note** 'names' are limited to 64 characters.