

Minutes of the meeting of the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church held on Saturday 12th March at St Andrew's (Methodist & United Reformed) Church, Skipton and through the Zoom Digital Platform

1. Welcome

The Clerk, as a member of the hosting church, offered a welcome and a brief overview of the work at St Andrew's.

2. Synod Convened

Synod was convened by the Clerk who, in the absence of the Moderator asked Synod to agree to Mrs Val Morrison to chair the meeting. Synod was in agreement. Mrs Morrison then extended a welcome to all who were attending including those attending Synod for the first time.

Also we must note several departures from the Synod. Rev Jo Clare-Young has accepted a call to Newport Pagnell, Rev Alex Clare-Young will be taking on a new role in Cambridge, Rev Caroline Andrews has accepted a call to Dronfield and Mr Simon Loveitt has accepted a call to continue as a CRCW in London

Synod representatives were reminded of the conventions Synod use in relation to the use of Zoom as a forum

3. Present

The figures were as follows: There were 40 Lay people, 11 Ministers, 5 Retired Ministers, 1 Student Minister and 1 Lay Pastor representing 39 churches, Yorkshire Synod Youth, Leeds Universities Chaplaincy and Sheffield Teaching Hospitals Trust.

Please note,

Due to the nature of the hybrid element of the proceedings, a full count of those attending via Zoom was unable to be completed.

4. Apologies

Apologies have been received from 10 Ministers, 5 Retired Ministers, 8 Lay People.

5. Minutes

The minutes of the October 2021 meeting I hope all have read them.

I have some amendments whereby Rod Morrison's name is removed as a contact in paragraph 25 (and subsequently to be numbered 27), the late John Hilman's role in the In Memoriam list is that of Treasurer at Hall Gate and that the paragraphs from No 24 are renumbered as there are 3 paragraph 24s in the draft copy.

If there are no more amendments I will ask JK to sign a hard copy of them as a true record when we next meet.

Synod had met on one occasions since the October 2021 Meeting. It met on 4th December 2021 at Ardeen Rd URC Doncaster for the induction of Rev Matt Stone into the pastorate there (with 25% scoping).

6. Matters Arising

None

7. Notices

The Clerk gave the notices for the day

8. Date and Place of October Meeting

The Clerk noted that Synod usually meets on the 2nd Saturday of October, but this year as the 1st Saturday is the URC Jubilee service at Central Hall Westminster a proposal is that it is held on the 3rd Saturday, which is 15th October. However, where it meets and the format it takes is yet to be decided. Once a decision as to how and where the meeting will be held, it will be conveyed to Synod Representatives.

9. Worship

Worship was led by Rev'd Edward Sakwe of Trinity Church, Harehills, Leeds and focused on the work of the multi-cultural church in inner-city Leeds, its mission and its work in the local community.

10. "What is Mission?"

The Synods Mission Advocate, Mr Jon Steel led a session focusing on the new *Missional Synod* initiative. He challenged Synod to ask the questions *What is Mission?* and *What is a Missional Synod?* As at the core of what we are Christians should be the work of Mission.

Added to this is this year's Jubilee of the United Reformed Church and the national denomination's focus on what Jubilee means: an opportunity to reset our lives and to reset the life of the Synod. He argues that we need to make time for what real Mission is about.

This statement though begs the questions:

What is Mission?

Whose responsibility is it?

Is it core to church life?

Is it an extra to church life?

To answer these questions Synod was invited to break into small groups both physically in Skipton and via Zoom breakout rooms, focusing on Sharing stories of God, Invitations, Meeting our Neighbours' needs, Challenging the way the world works and Ecuminism.

On resumption the feedback from the dynamic conversations included many examples of how these suggested topics are working in the churches represented.

The wide variety of experiences was noted by Jon Steel and he noted that it was clear that Synod had sent a signal to the effect that the work of a Missional Synod is needed. Synod's message is that Mission is at the core of church life and should not be regarded as peripheral.

Jon Steel informed Synod that there is an open invitation from him to get in touch to explore further these themes as feedback from a wider audience is needed.

Synod agreed to ask Jon Steel to pursue the initiative and requested that it be brought back to the October 2022 meeting.

11. Synod Life – Business Session

Mrs Val Morrison from the Chair, opened this session and reminded Synod of the ways and means by which the business is to be conducted & in particular the Guide to Zoom Etiquette leaflet on the website.

Resolution No 1

Synod receives the report of its Council.

This meeting would have been the place whereby Synod nominates an individual for the role of General Assembly Moderator. As I have not received any names, I cannot offer a resolution to nominate anyone. Therefore, if it is the wish of Synod I propose to inform the General Secretary of the URC that Yorkshire Synod has not made any nomination.

For those who want to know the procedure it can be found in the Manual, section C, paragraphs 3.3 to 3.5.

Similarly in relation to the resolutions regarding Safeguarding and Ministerial Incapacity mentioned in the Synod Council Report I have not received any requests for a resolution that “they be not proceeded with”. Therefore, and in order with the procedures of General Assembly, if it is the wish of Synod I propose to inform the General Secretary of the URC that Yorkshire Synod have had no such request.

Synod agreed to receive unanimously.

Resolution No 2

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

- i. Moderator’s Report
- ii. Ministries Committee
- iii. Safeguarding Committee
- iv. Treasurer/Financial Resources Committee
- v. Property Committee
- vi. Listed Buildings Advisory Committee
- vii. Keld

Synod agreed to receive unanimously.

Safeguarding

The Clerk introduced the following resolutions regarding Safeguarding in the absence of both the current convenor, Mrs Ailsa Johnson, and our Safeguarding Officer, Mr Matt Knowles.

As has been reported in both Synod Council Report and in the Safeguarding Committee Report it is proposed that there be a new Safeguarding Committee formed to cover both Northern and Yorkshire Synods. Therefore

Resolution No 12

Mrs Eryl Ward has completed her term as a member of the Safeguarding committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mrs Eryl Ward for her years of service to Synod in this role. Synod so resolved.

Resolution No 13

Mrs Debra Milnes has completed her term as a member of the Safeguarding committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mrs Debra Milnes for her years of service to Synod in this role.

Synod so resolved.

The Clerk then moved the following:

Resolution No 3

Yorkshire Synod, meeting at St Andrew’s Methodist/United Reformed Church, Skipton on 12th March 2022, resolves the following.

- a) Synod acknowledges with thanks its existing Safeguarding Committee and agrees to form a new united Safeguarding Committee, to fulfil its duties and remit on behalf of both the Northern and the Yorkshire Synods of the United Reformed Church.
- b) Synod adopts the terms of reference for the joint Safeguarding Committee as set out in the Safeguarding Committee report for the March 2022 Yorkshire Synod, and requests that any subsequent amendments be agreed by both synods.
- c) Yorkshire Synod appoints Ailsa Johnson, Anne Robson, Alex Walker, to the joint Safeguarding Committee to serve until October 2023. Northern Synod Executive to nominate three suitably experienced Northern Synod representatives in due course.

d) Synod appoints the Synod Moderators and Synod Clerks of both Synods as members ex officio of the joint Safeguarding Committee. The Synod Safeguarding Officer serving the Northern and Yorkshire Synods will be in attendance.

e) The joint Safeguarding Committee reserves the right to co-opt additional members as necessary.

Synod so resolved.

General Assembly

The Clerk indicated that he is continuing to look for volunteers to represent the Synod at the 2022 meeting of General Assembly being held at Swanwick in Derbyshire. Eight names are brought here and are listed below in resolution 4, but a further eight are needed. As General Assembly has reverted to an annual meeting it will give more people the opportunity to represent the Synod at General Assembly.

Resolution No 4

Synod appoints the following to be part of its representation of 16 people to the URC General Assembly meeting to be held between 8th and 11 July 2022: Mr Tim Crossley, Rev Fran Kissack, Rev Jamie Kissack, Mr Dan Morrell, Mr Daniel Raddings, Ms Lydia Raddings, Mrs Terasa Raddings, Mr Kai Weynberg.

Synod so appointed.

Children and Young Peoples Committee changes

The Clerk reported that since Mrs Ruth Roddison stood down as Convenor of CYP at the October 2021 Synod there have been some changes behind the scenes. Mrs Susan Lord has decided to stand down and Mr Dan Morrell, Mrs Margaret Knapton, Mr Martin Lambourne and Mr Karl Hanton have all agreed to serve, in effect from last Synod, which is why their completion date is October 2024 rather than March 2025. Therefore:

Resolution No 11

Mrs Susan Lord has stood down as a member of the Children and Young People's Committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mrs Susan Lord for her years of service to Synod in this role. Synod so agreed.

Resolution No 5

Synod appoints Mr Dan Morrell to serve as Convenor of the Children and Young People's committee for a for a three year period until October 2024.

Synod so appointed.

Resolution No 6

Synod appoints Mrs Margaret Knapton to serve as a member of the Children and Young People's committee for a for a three year period until October 2024.

Synod so appointed.

Resolution No 7

Synod appoints Mr Karl Hanton to serve as a member of the Children and Young People's committee for a for a three year period until October 2024.

Synod so appointed.

Resolution No 8

Synod appoints Mr Martin Lambourne to serve as a member of the Children and Young People's committee for a for a three year period until October 2024.

Synod so appointed.

Pastoral Committee

Resolution No 9

Synod appoints Rev Heather Pollard to serve as the Stipendiary representative on the Synod Ministries Committee for a three year period until October 2024.

Synod so appointed.

Resolution No 10

Mrs Judith Garthwaite has stood down as Synod Pastoral Elder for the Don and Dearne area. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mrs Judith Garthwaite for her years of service to Synod in this role.

Synod so agreed.

Resolution No 16

Mrs Kathy Webb has stood down as Synod Pastoral Elder for the Hull area churches. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mrs Kathy Webb for her years of service to Synod in this role.

Synod so agreed.

Listed Buildings Advisory Committee

Resolution No 14

Mr Peter Langtry-Langton has stood down as a member of the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee. Synod wishes to place on record its thanks to Mr Peter Langtry-Langton for his years of service to Synod in this role.

Synod so agreed.

Amalgamation

Resolution No 15

Synod records the amalgamation of The Grove United Reformed Church, Gomersal and Heckmondwike United Reformed Church. Synod offers thanksgiving for the life and witness the constituent churches and prays that the new church well in its future endeavours.

Synod so records.

12. Lunch

Lunch was taken with the following videos being shown online and in the body of the church building:

The Moderator's Welcome Video

<https://youtu.be/OQoFIfkQMYA>

Digital Church Video

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uGH163fPQu8RBq2dAzauRROdvdSIW6Zy/view?usp=sharing>

General Secretary's 50th Anniversary Video

<https://youtu.be/3crc-4C0i8k>

Discipleship Development Fund video

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bsPMiSjEbtqiTXSXuXJKOY0DCpDPm- J>

13. Eco Synod

The Synod's Green Apostle, Mrs Alex Jowitt, addressed Synod with the news that the national Eco Group is still meeting. She called on churches to join the Eco-church scheme as it will only benefit them. Currently 11 churches are in the scheme, but this is not yet enough to allow Yorkshire Synod to apply for the "bronze" award.

If churches sign up lots of resources readily become available to help them achieve the various goals, and by doing this she used the example of Moldgreen URC who have achieved the “silver” award.

14. Youth Provision and “BIG DAY OUT”

Mrs Megan Tillbrook, the Synod’s Children and Young People Development Practitioner introduced herself and challenged Synod by asking “What does the URC mean to you?” and “What does the URC mean to Young People?”

She noted that there is quite a disconnect between URC as an entity and children in our churches and that all churches need to become more child friendly. She, with the Children & Young People’s Committee, working with the national Children’s body, is here to help. With the soon to be relaunched “URC Children” becoming a broader body encompassing all youth activity including Pilots, the resources will be much more easily obtained. All you need to do is ask.

She also advertised the BIG DAY OUT, to be held in September at Lightwater valley. It is open to all and is an opportunity to share all that is good within Synod. Information will be available via Synod office and on website.

15. Community Project – The Parish Nurse.

Synod welcomed Mrs Jane Simmons of Heath URC in Halifax. She outlined the “Parish Nurse” project that is run through Heath URC and is funded in part by the Synod Mission Fund..

The project started in 2015 although the seeds of the project were sown much earlier through the work of the Cinnamon Project.

Through research Heath has realised that loneliness in their area was a problem and that to help alleviate this the church decided to use the Parish Nurse scheme. So with majority funding from the Synod Mission Fund and facilitated by someone who could integrate the key mission needs the general requirements were identified. In essence the current Parish Nurse works 8 hours per week and has 10 or 11 contacts who do not necessarily have direct contact with the Church. Any more and the project would become too cumbersome and therefore ineffective. The help and support given by the Parish Nurse varies; from the practical medical side of life to the opportunity to pray.

The use of the Parish Nurse scheme links into other outward form of mission and has worked extremely effectively for Heath URC. For more information, contact Heath URC or visit the Parish Nursing website directly at <https://parishnursing.org.uk/>

16. Elders’ Development

Mrs Val Morrison as Convener of the Elders’ Development Group gave an overview of the work the Elders Development Group has and will be doing. The group is an essential one as it is designed to equip Elders’ development through resources and fellowship. As such conferences are organised, including the forthcoming one at Bilton Grange on 26th march 2022. These events are open to all, not just Elders and are advertised regularly via flyers, the website and in The Briefing.

The group was also approached by the national Education and Learning committee to take on updating national Elders’ resources. It has become clear that these resources needed updating, clarifying and reinvigorating. This work is ongoing and as the resources are completed and launched that news will be spread far and wide.

Finally the 24 hour conference at Wydale Hall is available to book and will be led by Jon Steel in his role as Mission Advocate.

17. Leading Your Church into Growth (LYCiG) report

Rev Ashley Evans was encouraged by what had been agreed at this Synod and reminded representatives that they need to keep their energy levels up. To help in this is LYCiG, which the Synod had now been using for seven years. Where LYCiG is extremely effective is that it helps churches to act on the resources drawn from other sources. The success of LYCiG within the URC

was such that it planned to organise a URC national LYCiG conference in the Autumn of 2022. More details available through the Synod Office, the Synod website and the LYCiG website.

18. Thanks

The Clerk offered thanks to

- Mrs Val Morrison for chairing the day's proceedings and he wished all those others who are not here as a result of a Covid diagnosis a rapid return to health
- Those who have participated, Jon Steel for this morning's missional work, all who have participated this afternoon.
- Lawrence Heath-Moore, Dan Morrell. Jacob Lowe & Neil Platt the behind the scenes work
- The Office Staff; Sally, Anne, Rachel and Hayley for coping with the strange way Synod has been put together this Spring
- All who have joined us and have coped with this hybrid way of doing Synod. The Clerk asked that representatives take back to their churches not just their impressions of the day but also the information received to share congregations. He also requested feedback as to how the day had felt.
- To the good folk at St Andrew's Skipton for allowing us to use their buildings

19. Closing Worship

Closing worship was led by the Clerk on behalf of the St Andrew's Eco Group, in whose name sunflower seeds were distributed so that representatives could cultivate them in their own places.

This service also included the reading of the In Memoriam list, a copy of which is appended to these minutes.

31. Dismissal and Departure.

Signed.....Date.....

Yorkshire Synod
In Memoriam

October 2021 to March 2022

Elders

Alison Carpenter	Elder, Castleford
Michael Ashbridge	Elder & Treasurer, Kimberworth Road Rotherham and a member of FRC
Dr Trevor Griffiths	Elder, Wigton Moor
Joyce Hornby	Elder, Wigton Moor
Shirley Varley	Elder, St Mary's in the Wood, Morley
Mary Sykes	Elder, St Mary's in the Wood, Morley
Ray Bell	Elder, Bolton Villas Family Church
Anthony Breckin	Elder, St Andrew's, Roundhay

Ministers

Rev'd Ruth Crofton Former Minister, Christ Church, Halton
Rev'd Eric Allen

Non-Elders (but who contributed to their church)

Roy Hare The Bridge Church, Otley
Peter Lightfoot The Bridge Church, Otley
Joan Allen