



Yorkshire Synod

Briefing

Number 156



10th July 2025

GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL

This past weekend has seen the Moderator, the Clerk, the Treasurer and 11 other representatives from Yorkshire Synod attend the annual General Assembly of the United Reformed Church at The Hayes Conference Centre in Derbyshire. For them it is the first of the two General Assembly meetings being held this year (the second being held in November to consider responses to the forthcoming Church Life Review results). They will be at our Synod meeting in October to feed back their experiences. For those who can't wait until then, all that happened there is readily available on the URC website at <https://urc.org.uk/> where links can be found to the papers presented, the resolutions brought for consideration, the minutes of the proceedings and the daily round ups, which do include videos containing a certain Synod Clerk and a certain Synod Treasurer singing <https://youtu.be/KRr0Ij5YiOw> (with the rest of Assembly, I hastily point out!!) There were serious and relevant resolutions, most pointedly the one which passed an emergency resolution on the Israeli government's action in Gaza. Details on that can be found here <https://urc.org.uk/general-assembly-passes-emergency-resolution-on-israeli-governments-actions-in-gaza/>. In other resolutions it was agreed to reduce the number of Synod representatives to a maximum of 12 from the 2026 meeting, although the number of youth representatives remains the same at 2 per Synod and work is being undertaken to review the role and composition of the Assembly Executive in light of the reduction in Assembly numbers and the changes that are now in



place with the "General Secretariat" transforming into the "Senior Leadership Team".

On a happy note we welcomed a former member of Headingley St Columba's into the role of General Assembly Moderator. Many of you may know Catriona Wheeler and it was an affirming and uplifting service on Monday morning as Rev Tim



Meadows passed the Moderatorship onto Catriona for 2025-2026. Not only that, but the new Moderator-elect, who will be in post from 2026-2027 also has Yorkshire links, as Rev Neil Thorogood served in the Halifax area between 1992 and 1999.

2025 Community Project Awards winners

On an even happier note the Community Project Award winners were announced during Saturday morning's session at General Assembly. It was brilliant to learn that Yorkshire Churches won two of the seven awards given, namely the **Forget-Me-Not Café at St Andrews Roundhay** and **Soupermums at Wilsden Trinity Church**, who both received Highly Commended awards. It was great to see Heather and Brenda from Roundhay and Diana and Daphne from Wilsden receive their awards from Rev Tim Meadows and I'm sure it will be a day that will be fondly recalled for many years to come. You can see all the seven churches stories at <https://urc.org.uk/2025-community-project-awards-winners-announced/> and where videos of each can be downloaded, but the important ones are <https://youtu.be/Yg6-L1KS8a0> for Forget-me-Not and <https://youtu.be/zhQbUVF0mto> for Soupermums.



From Left to Right: Diana & Daphne from Wilsden and Heather & Brenda from Roundhay

If your church has a Community Project which you would like to have recognised by the denomination as a beacon of outreach please keep an eye on the <https://urc.org.uk/your-church/church-local-and-global/community-project-awards/> page of the URC website as details and entry information for the 2026 Community Project Awards will appear there later in the year.

If you have any news of welcoming people into Church, stories of celebration and hope or even notices of future events, please let me know by dropping me a line at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk and I'll showcase it in the next edition, due out on Thursday 24th July 2025.

Thank you

Tim Crossley

Inviting



All members and friends of the Yorkshire Synod churches are invited to join us in faith-shaped conversation about **“Vocation and Leadership”** in the local church. This year there have been successful Forums at

St Ninian’s and St Andrew’s URC, Hull, HU5 4DJ,
West Park URC, West Park, Harrogate, HG1 1BL
and

Ravensthorpe with Hopton URC, North Road, Dewsbury, WF13 3AG

If you missed them, please come to the final Forums of the summer on

Saturday 12th July 2025

at

West Melton URC, Melton High Street, Wath-upon-Deane, S63 6RG

from 10.30am – 1pm

Followed by lunch together.

Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee, tea and cakes or pastries provided



"ALL THINGS NEW" COMMUNITY GATHERING

**11AM-2PM
SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER
STAINBECK CHURCH, LS7 2PP**



**Come along and meet all our wonderful
community groups**

Activities and crafts

Refreshments: drinks and cakes

Thanking our grant funders

www.stainbeckurc.org.uk



A Focus on Prayer

25th to 26th September 2025

The Elders Development Group is delighted to invite you to attend the Wydale Hall 24 hour residential.

This year the theme, led by Jamie Kissack and Megan Tillbrook is **'A Focus on Prayer'**. The dates are noon on Thursday 25th September running through to after lunch on Friday 26th September. The theme of prayer was chosen by those attending the Methetes Conference at Stainbeck URC in May 2025.

Through workshops, reflection, discussions and activities, prayer will be explored in its many facets.

Megan and Jamie say that **"Prayer is an essential part of the life of every Christian, no matter what our age. We will explore together how we each connect with God, and what helps us win prayer alone and with others. above all what helps each one of us to encounter God in worship."**

Wydale Hall is beautiful, idyllic retreat. For address and further information on Wydale itself visit www.wydale.org.



Yorkshire Synod will be paying for the food and accommodation; all we ask is that you make your own way to the Hall for noon on Thursday 25th.

Rooms are ensuite and Wydale can cater for specific access needs and dietary requirements. You just need to let us know what these are.

So, what happens next? **Places are limited so please send an email in response to this invite to the Yorkshire Synod Office (office@urcyorkshire.org.uk) by Friday, July 18th 2025.** In this email please say which church you are from, how many places you may want, the names and email addresses of the applicants plus details of any specific mobility or dietary requirements. Please note demand for this event tends to be high and as such we will limit applications to three from each Church, although additional names can be placed on a waiting list!

On behalf of the Elders Development Team, we look forward to seeing you at Wydale!

Lay Preachers' and Worship Leaders' Weekend

"Hope in a Troubled World"

25th – 27th July 2025

(Friday teatime to Sunday lunch)

at Wydale Conference Centre, Brompton by Sawdon near Scarborough www.wydale.org



We are excited that Hannah Fytche, Associate New Testament Tutor at Westminster College, will be our main speaker at the conference, and that we will be joined by our Moderator, Rev Jamie Kissack.

This weekend will again be paid for by Synod and grants so you will only need to cover your travel costs.

To register your place, contact:

office@urcyorkshire.org.uk or 0113 289 8490.

For any queries, contact Kath at:

kathlonsdale@talktalk.net

01274 315203 or 07759525936





HARROGATE'S FIRST

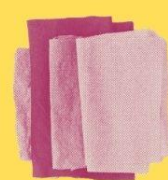


DESTASH

MARKET

CREATIVE PEOPLE SELLING THEIR PRELOVED
FABRIC, WOOL, PATTERNS, RIBBON, BUTTONS,
LACE, PAPER, PENS, PAINT, TOOLS, CRAFT
STORAGE, GADGETS, BOOKS AND MUCH MORE

*IN AID OF THE CHURCH'S SAMARITAN'S PURSE
SHOEBOX APPEAL*



SATURDAY 26TH JULY

RAFFLE

10AM - 1PM

REFRESHMENTS

£1 ADMISSION

BILTON GRANGE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
TOP OF WOODFIELD ROAD, HARROGATE

HG1 4LN



Presidency at the Sacrament of Holy Communion



Tuesday 28th October 2025 10am-1.30pm
West Park URC, West Park, Harrogate, HG1 1BL

Rev Jamie Kissack, Yorkshire Synod Moderator and Mrs Val Morrison, will be leading this event to reflect together on our practices of presiding at Holy Communion.

- All are welcome who preside at Holy Communion (lay and ordained) or anyone who is interested in finding out more
- Arrivals and tea/coffee from 10am – the session will begin at 10.30am
- Please bring a packed lunch and again drinks will be provided
- To attend this event, please book your place by contacting the Synod Office asap at office@urcyorkshire.org.uk or 0113 289 8490

If you have any questions or you would like to book, please contact the Synod Office (office@urcyorkshire.org.uk or moderatorpa@urcyorkshire.org.uk) to inform us, who will be coming from your church, so we can advise West Park URC of numbers expected.

Loving



Yorkshire Synod Discipleship Development Small Grant Fund 2025

The Ministries Committee have so far approved 21 applications to this fund since 2022 and we encourage all lay church members to consider applying in 2025. Please use the new application form available through the Synod Office as the amount which you can ask for resources or has increased to up to £300. This fund exists to help you on your Christian journey including the costs of attending a course or to offset the costs of buying resources for personal development or sharing with others. If anyone wants to discuss an application before submitting it please contact the Convenor of the Yorkshire Ministries Committee, Kath Lonsdale at kathlonsdale@talktalk.net.

Remember this is for any age of lay person in our churches to apply for so please discuss with your young people as well as adults.

PARTNERSHIP PRAYERS



Although this is primarily aimed at those of us who are linked with the churches of the Leeds URC Partnership, this invitation is open to everyone from around the Synod and beyond.

It will be happening on the first Thursday of the month on Zoom at 7:30pm. The next one will be on Thursday 7th August and the link is here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7019277749>

There will be a time to pray together, a time to share in reading the Bible and a time to share the joys and challenges in our lives, churches, communities and world.

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Partnering



TALKING ABOUT...

Rest & Self Care - How to do it well

22 JULY, 7 - 8PM

WITH RUTH STEVENS, JOIN THE DOTS
bit.ly/URCTalkingAbout



Disability Awareness Sunday

Janet Eardley, the Mission Programmes Manager for Through the Roof, a charity partner of the UFC has been in touch about **Disability Awareness Sunday**, which this year is on Sunday 28th September. Through the Roof are offering a short video of disabled Christian author Emily Owen that can be played in churches, and Emily has also written the materials for use in services too on the theme of 'Made in the image of God'. All the resources are free and include suggested hymns and songs, prayers, etc, as well as Emily's video and ideas for the talk. The material, though made for **Disability Awareness Sunday**, can be used on any Sunday: the important thing is to spread the message of welcome and inclusion for disabled people in our churches. Here's the link for people to request the pack:

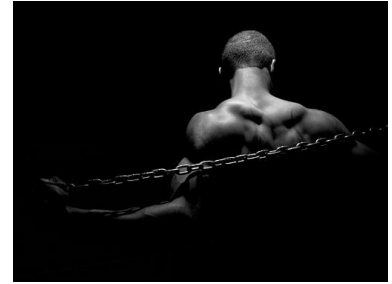
[Disability Awareness Sunday - Through the Roof](https://throughtheroof.org/forchurches/disability-awareness-sunday/) or
<https://throughtheroof.org/forchurches/disability-awareness-sunday/>

Legacies of Slavery Response

Update from the Synod Treasurer, Rev Simon Copley

I would like to give you an initial update on the progress of the URC's response to the Legacies of Slavery debate along with advance notice of Yorkshire Synod's potential response to a proposal to set up a URC-wide fund to address the issues. The fund is just one aspect of the URC's response to the issues that still reverberate today. URC General Assembly has approved the establishment of a fund (With a £250k starter contribution from the central URC Trust).

General Assembly suggested developing a fund of at least a £1m (with the aspiration of making the fund as much as £2m to £4m) and Synods have been asked to consider making a contribution.



URC Treasurer, Alan Yates

Yorkshire Synod will be considering this issue at our October Synod meeting. Financial Resources Committee and Synod Council are proposing that we consider a fairly manageable one-off donation. This is based on suggestions from Alan Yates (pictured), URC Treasurer about proportionate contributions from each Synod that would establish a medium-sized fund.

To remind us of the reasons for this fund and what it will be used for, I reproduce below extracts from the relevant Assembly paper and an explanatory letter from Sarah Lane Cawte, the Convenor of the Mission Committee.

When the URC statement of Confession and Apology regarding the legacies of transatlantic slavery was adopted in 2022, there was a recognition that any apology must be accompanied by practical actions to bring about healing and repair.

The funding response is not completely straightforward and will be dictated to some extent by the eventual size of the Fund created.

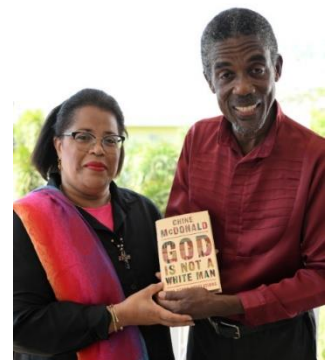
There are different strands of work through which we might meaningfully engage (including)

- *work across the UK developing and supporting regional mentoring for young black men in four locations which have clear historical links with transatlantic slavery*
- *collaboration with partners in the Caribbean and Africa to support areas of work in those locations, and to develop work jointly*

*A specific proposal for the second approach is a project in partnership with the **Churches' Reparations Action Forum (CRAF)** in Jamaica.*

This is the New Free Village movement which focuses on land redistribution and helping disadvantaged Jamaicans access viable housing.

The project aims to establish new village communities to which churches contribute land and resource utility infrastructure, helping disadvantaged Jamaicans become first-time owners. The United Church of Jamaica plan to three areas of land in the proximity of local congregations aiming to house up to 40 families and helping 120 direct beneficiaries.



Tessa Henry-Robinson with Gordon Cowans of the United Church in Jamaica

You can find out much more on the URC's response to the Legacies of Slavery debate on the URC website at <https://urc.org.uk/who-we-are/what-we-do/legacies-of-slavery/>. Here you will find links to videos on how the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade manifest themselves in church today, an interview with Rev Dr Tessa Henry-Robinson and a film documenting an ecumenical pilgrimage to Jamaica. Also available there are links to the consultation responses, the consultation overview and to a page of frequently asked questions, all of which will help you understand the reasons behind why Yorkshire Synod feels as though it should be part of this response.

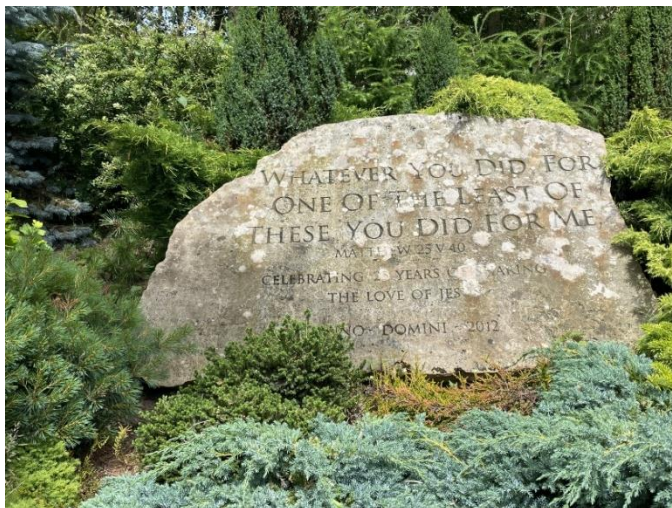
Sharing



Christchurch Ilkley news.

It has been a busy time in Ilkley and in the last two weeks Christchurch has had two different experiences which they are happy to share with us all in the Yorkshire Synod.

The first experience was led by their minister, Rev Roberta Topham, as they booked a table at the Ilkley Pride event to show Christchurch's belief that **God Loves and welcomes us all**. To enable conversations, they had butterflies for folk to write their hopes on, whether personal or for the wider community, and these were hung on their tree to be taken into Christchurch afterwards and used for prayer. They were also given a butterfly to take home with the word HOPE printed across. This was a new experience for many of the 14 church people who stood by our table during the day to help. It was a lovely, friendly, family occasion and one they hope to repeat next year. Dan's Den shared the time with us with their own family friendly table next to us. We were very welcome as the only Christian presence at PRIDE.



The second experience in engaging with the local community when 24 church goers visited **Caring for Life at Crag House farm** in Otley on their Sponsors Day when we were able to visit areas normally out of bounds, eat in their lovely restaurant and share in worship with over a thousand others. This is Christchurch's chosen charity for the year. A great experience. Crag House Farm is the headquarters of the Christian charity, Caring For Life, whose motto is 'Sharing the love of Jesus'. The charity supports disadvantaged people, many of whom have known only abuse and a lack of love since their earliest days: providing residential homes

for the most vulnerable and independent housing support for many others, throughout Leeds.

The 125-acre farm provides 12 therapeutic daytime projects for those housed and supported by the charity. Scores of damaged individuals come to the farm each week to enjoy caring for our animals; art and music; learn life skills, and much more. Since 1987 over 5000 individuals have been housed and supported and the farm has played a crucial part in helping people maintain their tenancies and lead more settled lives.

The words on their stone says it all - Matthew 25 v40

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me."



NEWS FROM THE DENOMINATION

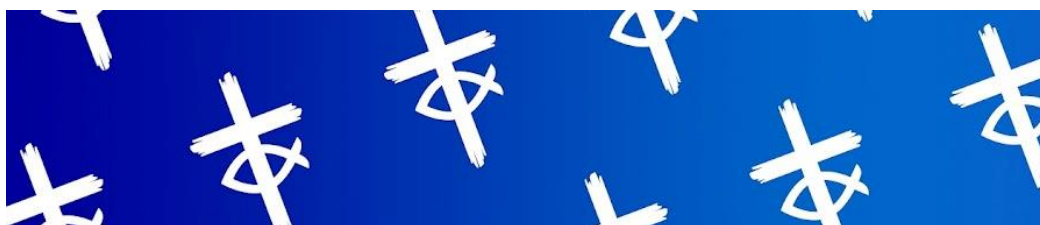
The URC's News Update is a monthly e-newsletter that keeps you informed about the latest news and events.

To receive this popular newsletter, please visit the

<https://urc.org.uk/news-updates-sign-up-form/> page on the URC

website and follow the links. If you just want to dip in and catch up on what is going on, that's fine and you can read and print recent editions

of our e-newsletter by visiting the [URC News Update](https://urc.org.uk/urc-news-update/) page at <https://urc.org.uk/urc-news-update/>.



Andy Jackson, URC Head of Communications has sent the following link to several of the new videos available to download from the URC's YouTube channel. Hopefully those who lead services or who are organising supporting events can download them so that they can be shown to a wider audience. You can find them on the URC's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/URCUK

transforming conflict • embracing difference

place for hope



As part of the ongoing strategy and development of the **Place for Hope** and **United Reformed Church** partnership which was begun at the URC's Assembly Executive meeting back in February

2024 (<https://urc.org.uk/your-church/place-for-hope-partnership/>), **Place for Hope** are conducting a needs assessment to better understand what is needed to help us reach their goals of creating transformation within our United Reformed churches and equipping our communities to navigate change, difference, and conflict well.

This form, the link to which is below, gives you an opportunity for your voice and opinion to be heard, and to shape the future of the project. All the responses will be used to help form an accurate and deeper understanding of conflict within the URC and will be used to shape the ongoing development of the project. This will help ensure that the programme we are building meets the needs of the wider community and that the roll out is sustainable.

Please follow this link to fill in the form <https://forms.gle/1zgeykMcpxm7QSjZ9>

The form is a mixture of multiple choice and longer form questions and should take between 15-30 minutes to complete, depending on how detailed the answers you give are! All your responses will be anonymous. Please send this onto anyone you feel may be interested in having a say - I would love as many people as possible to contribute.

If you have any questions, please contact the programme lead, Martha Hunt, on martha.hunt@placeforhope.org.uk.

Building



YOUTH, CHILDREN & FAMILY ENABLER

To serve as part of the Sheffield
Ministry team for the United
Reformed Church in Yorkshire :



- 4 YEARS ●
- 28 HOURS PER WEEK ●
- UP TO £30,095K PRO RATA ●

CLOSING DATE:
25/08/2025



For more information:



MEGAN TILLBROOK
07522 220 213

Application Pack Available:

office@urcyorkshire.org.uk



SAFEGUARDING

The Safeguarding team have asked that you are reminded that they are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year (and even 366 days in Leap Years!!). Details can be found on the Yorkshire website at <https://urcyorkshire.org.uk/safeguarding/> and any query, either by phone or by e-mail at safeguarding.1and4@urc.org.uk will be answered within 24 hours.

FIRE SAFETY

Jane Bunyan, our Synod Property Officer property@urcyorkshire.org.uk has asked that I remind churches that fire regulations for small non-domestic premises have changed in light of the Grenfell Tower Enquiry outcomes. The advice Synod is giving is that all churches should make themselves aware of the new regulations and advice updated in 2024 at [Making your small non-domestic premises safe from fire - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-your-small-non-domestic-premises-safe-from-fire) or <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-your-small-non-domestic-premises-safe-from-fire> but if you would like a pdf copy then please email Jane at the above e-mail address.



An annual conference
for schools,
childrens, families &
youth, chaplaincy,
layworkers &
volunteers.

Haxby & Wiggington Methodist Church
SATURDAY 18TH OCTOBER
9.30am til 4.00pm



Our keynote:
Victoria Beech,
GodVenture.

Early bird tickets £12 ea.
(booked before 20th July)
Book 4 get 1 free!

For more information and to get your Early Bird tickets follow this link
<https://joinedupconferencecom.wordpress.com/york/>

Church Action on Poverty

I do not know if you have heard already but the next Poverty Sunday has been brought forward to **Sunday 19 October 2025** to tie in with Challenge Poverty Week. If you feel called to this work, please contact the Church Action on Poverty team through their website at <https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/>

On Church Action on Poverty Sunday, give, act and pray with others – together we can end UK poverty.

- Use the powerful 'Dreams and Realities' portrait exhibition to challenge and inspire your congregation
- Use our free worship resources to **reflect and pray** for change.
- **Celebrate** what your church is already doing – and **explore** how you could do more in partnership with Church Action on Poverty.
- **Raise funds** to support people working together to reclaim dignity, agency and power across the UK.

If you took part in Church Action on Poverty Sunday in March, this is a great chance to celebrate the commitments you've made to tackle poverty locally. Please do join in again!

Please send me a resource pack for Church Action on Poverty Sunday, 19 October 2025

Contact name: _____

Address: _____

Church or group: _____

Email address: _____

I would like _____ prayer cards and donation envelopes.

☐ I enclose a donation of £ _____
(Please make cheques payable to Church Action on Poverty)

☐ I am a UK tax-payer and would like Church Action on Poverty to treat all gifts of money that I make today and in the future as Gift Aid donations.
I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify.

Return this form to Freepost RTTY-JGEE-JJEZ, Church Action on Poverty, 28 Sandpiper Court, Water's Edge Business Park, Modwen Road, Salford M15 3EZ

Or register and download resources now at www.church-poverty.org.uk/sunday

Church Action on Poverty Sunday
Registered charity no 1079986.
Company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, no 3780243.



Sharing our Dreams
19 October 2025



With our support, artist Stephen Martin created portraits that shared the dreams and realities of people in poverty

**It's a conscious effort
I'm making each day
to do something that
makes me feel
happy, and confident
and positive**

Give, Act and Pray with us.
Together we can share dreams
of a better world –
and challenge the reality of poverty

And Finally

Creativity on display in Huddersfield



WOVEN is a biennial festival held in Kirklees in West Yorkshire, celebrating innovation in textiles.

The two churches in the Huddersfield pastorate have been working with other community groups in their areas to run a number of creative workshops where people have come together to create over 500 bunting flags. During the month-long festival in June the bunting was displayed outside **FOCAL centre**, where **Waverley URC** meet, and in the community garden at **Moldgreen URC**.

As if that weren't enough, people have also been hard at work making woolly items and have "yarn bombed" Moldgreen. Bollard-jumpers, crocheted wind-spinners, material flowers and a pom-pom post-box topper were all created to brighten the streets and bring some smiles to folk's faces. The church also held a special service celebrating people's creative talents and worshippers brought along items they had made including quilts and a working Lego Ferris wheel.

Sue Cockcroft, Community Animator with the Unite Respect Connect project said, "It has been fantastic working with so many people of different ages and abilities to create all the items. The displays have proved to be great conversation starters with people in the community."



If you have a good news story from your part of the Synod or something that you feel would enhance the work of Synod in 2025, drop me a line at clerk@urcyorkshire.org.uk and I'll make sure it hits the back page!!

You can also keep an eye on all our social media platforms for news; on the website at [Home - URC Yorkshire Synod](#), at [United Reformed Church in Yorkshire - Home | Facebook](#) and [Wilderness URC Yorkshire - Home | Facebook](#), the YouTube page at [URC Yorkshire - YouTube](#) and the Twitter (X) page at [URC in Yorkshire \(@URCYorkshire\) / Twitter](#).