

United Reformed Church History Society

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2019

Administration Details

- 1.1 The Charity is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales with the number 279213. Its Registered Address is Westminster College, Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0AA
- 1.2 The Trustees of the Society, known as the Council, manage the charity. They are the officers, up to four members elected by the Society's members, up to three members appointed by the United Reformed Church, and up to two co-opted members. The years in brackets after a person's name indicate the end of their present term of appointment/ election.

The Officers are:

The President – The Revd Professor David Thompson (2023)

The Chairman of the Council – The Revd Dr David Cornick (2023)

Vice Chairman – Mr John Ellis (2021)

Secretary – Mrs Margaret Thompson (until June 2019),

The Revd Michael Hopkins (from June 2019) (2024)

Treasurer – Mrs Jean Wyber (2022)

Librarian – The Revd Professor David Thompson (2023)

Journal Editor – The Revd Dr Robert Pope (2022)

The trustees elected by the members are:

The Revd Christopher Damp (2021)

Mr John Ellis (2021)

The Revd Fleur Houston (2020)

Those appointed by the United Reformed Church are:

The Revd Dr Michael Jagessar (2024)

The Revd Dr Kirsty Thorpe (2023)

Mrs Jean Wyber (2022)

Dr Anne Samson and Professor Clyde Binfield were co-opted throughout the period of this report.

Other Administration matters

- 2.1 The Society holds bank accounts with HSBC UK and with CAF Bank. Accounts with the latter were opened during the year, since CAF Bank provides an electronic dual authorisation for making payments which is faster and more cost-effective than writing cheques which have to be countersigned and posted to

recipients, who then have to pay them into their banks in the face of a much-reduced number of physical outlets.

- 2.2 The Society's investment holding of COIF Ethical Units is held by the United Reformed Church Trust Ltd for its benefit. The holding of Epworth Multi-Asset Fund units is held directly by the Society.

Structure, governance, and management.

- 3.1 The affairs of the Society are governed by its Constitution, which was approved by the Charity Commission in August 2005.
- 3.2 The Officers are elected annually and are eligible for re-election, but the President shall not normally be re-elected to serve for a total period of more than five years. The Council meets twice a year.

Objectives, activities, and achievements

- 4.1 The object of the Society shall be to advance the Christian faith, and in particular:
- (a) To encourage interest in and the study of the history of the United Reformed Church with its antecedents within the Congregational, Presbyterian, and Churches of Christ traditions and related movements and churches, their origins, principles, theology, churches and missions.
 - (b) To publish a Journal regularly, and such other publications as the Council shall from time to time determine.
 - (c) To provide an Annual Lecture.
 - (d) To encourage the collection and preservation of historical records and where appropriate to act as custodian, by arrangement with the United Reformed Church, of manuscripts, books, portraits, paintings and other relevant objects belonging to the Church.
 - (e) To make grants for the pursuit of historical studies in connection with the churches and movements referred to in (a).
- 4.2 During 2019, the Society has continued to fulfil its objects of encouraging interest in and study of the history of the United Reformed Church, and its antecedent traditions and related movements. Two issues of the Journal, vol. 10 issues 4 and 5, have been published, the Annual Lecture was given at the Conference, and work on the organisation of historical records continued. Risks associated with the charity have been assessed. The council has a Data Privacy Policy in place to minimise the risk of a data breach. The Council co-operates with other similar societies through the Religious Archives Group and the Association of Denominational Historical Societies and Cognate Libraries in order to raise awareness of the minority religious traditions in England and Wales.
- 4.3 The Conference and Annual Meeting was held at Westminster College Cambridge on 26-27 June, at which a number of papers were given. Since 2019 was the 30th anniversary of the re-unification of Germany, the Annual Lecture was given by Dr Stephen Brown on the subject of the influence of the Lutheran Church in the GDR in paving the way for re-unification. At the Annual Meeting, Mrs Margaret Thompson relinquished her responsibilities as Secretary, held in various forms since 1981.

- 4.4 The College archives, (Westminster and the Cheshunt Foundation), of which the Society holdings form a part, remain in the care of Mrs Helen Weller. She can be contacted every weekday morning except Friday by phone, 01223 330620, or by email, hw374@cam.ac.uk
- 4.5 The Marquis Fund, to further the study and publication of Nonconformist history, is administered jointly by the Society and representatives of Westminster College, Cambridge. Grants may be made to scholars of any denominational affiliation or none, if the criteria are satisfied. Application should be made to the Treasurer, using the College address. Two grants were approved in 2019, subject to the authors finding publishers.
- 4.6 The standard subscription rate for membership remains at £20. For all enquiries about Society membership, including a 25% reduction for students and newly retired ministers, please contact the Secretary, the Revd Michael Hopkins, michael.hopkins@mansfield.oxon.org, 01252 711359. Gift Aid declarations continue to make a valuable contribution to the society's finances.
- 4.7 Society information is available on our website: www.urchistory.org.uk

Financial Review and Reserves Policy

- 5.1 There was a surplus of receipts over payments for the year of £3842 (2018 deficit of £1444) and unrealised gains on investments of £7412 (2018 deficit of £2979), mostly due to the reduction in the cost of producing the Journal and the reduced spending on bookbinding. The Council was unable to make any grants in the year. The cash at bank at the end of 2019 of £22,559 would cover annual costs for at least five years at the current level, and therefore the Council did not suggest any change in the annual subscription to members of £20 (accredited students £15) for 2020.
- 5.1 In 2019, the Council moved £15,000 of its cash reserves to increase its investments with the Charities Official Investment Fund and Epworth Investment Funds. It also rationalised its holdings of Epworth Investment units into one holding of Multi Asset Fund units.