

Information paper

United Reformed Church History Society

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Michael Hopkins: michael.hopkins@urc.org.uk
---------------------------------------	--

United Reformed Church History Society Trustees Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2020

Administration details

The Charity is registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales with the number 279213. Its registered address is Westminster College, Maddingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0AA.

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 – the Revd Michael Hopkins (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 (2024)

Dr Anne Samson (2024)

Those appointed by the United Reformed Church are:

The Revd Dr. Michael Jagessar (2024)

The Revd Dr. Kirsty Thorpe (2023)

Mrs Jean Wyber (2022)

Professor Clyde Binfield was co-opted throughout the period of this report.

Other administration matters

During the year, the Society closed its bank accounts held with HSBC UK and now holds accounts with CAF Bank Ltd. The Society's investment holding of COIF Ethical Units is

United Reformed Church History Society

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

The affairs of the Society are governed by its Constitution which was approved by the Charity Commission in August 2005.

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

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).

During 2020 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: volume 10, issues 6 and 7 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 minimize 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.

The Conference and Annual Meeting was held online on 19 September by Zoom, at which the Annual Lecture given by Dr Steve Tompkins on the subject of the events that led to the Mayflower.

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 330 620 or by email, hw374@cam.ac.uk

United Reformed Church History Society

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.

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 711 359. Gift Aid declarations continue to make a valuable contribution to the society's finances.

Society information is available on our website: **www.urchistory.org.uk**

Financial review and reserves policy

There was a surplus of receipts over payments for the year of £3,301 (2019 surplus of £3,842) and unrealised gains on investments of £3,600 (2019 gains of £7,412) mostly due to the restriction on our activities because of Covid 19. The Council was unable to make any grants in the year. The cash at bank at the end of 2020 of £25,863 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 2021.

The Council is considering investing more of its cash reserves to counteract the reduction in interest rates.