**The United Reformed Church**

**Minutes of Assembly Executive meeting**

**held at High Leigh, Hoddesdon,**

**28-30 November 2022**

**Monday 28 November**

**Session one\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

The Moderator, the Revd Fiona Bennett, was in the Chair.

**22/01**

The meeting opened at 14:00 with worship led by the Chaplain, the Revd Lindsey Sanderson.

**22/02**

The minutes of the Assembly Executive of 22-24 November 2021 were approved.

There were no matters arising.

The Assembly Clerk moved the appointment of a Facilitation Group comprising:

The Revd David Herbert

Ms Sarah Lane Cawte

The Revd Paul Robinson

The Revd Camilla Veitch

Assembly Executive *agreed*

On behalf of the Law and Polity Advisory Group, the Clerk moved that Paper P1 be withdrawn from the agenda for further work and consultation - *agreed*

The Meeting adjourned at 15:00.

**Session two\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Assembly Executive resumed at 16:30.

**22/03**

**Paper R1 MIND Advisory Group**

The Revd Andy Braunston, on behalf of the Advisory Group on the Ministerial Incapacity and Disciplinary processes moved the Resolution:

**Assembly resolves to add the following wording to Section O Appendix Y paragraph 16:**

Within one month of the conclusion of any case, reports to assist the General Assembly’s Advisory Group on Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline, or any group or committee succeeding to its functions in keeping this Process under review, are to be prepared and transmitted to the Secretary of the Assembly Commission for Discipline

1. by the Investigation Team and
b) by the Panel or Commission which last dealt with the case. ***In addition the minister, minister’s representatives, complainants and the Synod will be invited to offer feedback.*** The Secretary of the Assembly Commission for Discipline is to pass these reports on to the Secretary of the Ministerial Incapacity and Discipline Advisory Group.

This was *agreed*.

**22/04\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_Greenbelt Festival**

The Deputy General Secretary for Mission, the Revd Phillip Brooks, Dr Sam Richards and Mr Roo Stewart reported on the URCs ‘Revolting Christians’ presence at the Greenbelt Festival.

**22/05**

**Paper H1\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Ministries Committee**

The Convener of the Ministries Committee, the Revd Mary Thomas, presented paper H1, noting some minor changes to the original text, and moved the resolution:

**Assembly Executive adopts the URC Roll of Ministers Policy.**

Following discussion, Assembly Executive *agreed.*

**22/06**

**Paper H3\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Ministries Committee**

The Convener of the Ministries Committee, the Revd Mary Thomas, presented paper H3, and moved the resolution:

**Assembly Executive adopt the Marks of Ministry of an Elder and Marks of Ministry of an Elders Meeting\*1.**

**1 \*Or the Council fulfilling the functions of an Elders Meeting in an LEP or other expression or church.**

The Moderator invited Assembly Executive to discuss the paper informally in
small groups.

A number of reservations were expressed, and alterations and clarifications suggested. It was agreed that the paper should be addressed again at a later point in the meeting.

**22/07**

**Paper G5 Pensions Review Group**

The Treasurer, Mr Ian Hardie, reported on the consultation about changes to the pension arrangements for ministers and staff in the URC. The review group will soon contact all ministers and staff with responses to the many general questions that have been asked.

The Moderator invited Assembly Executive to indicate informally its approval of the report, and while no formal decision was required, the support in principle of Assembly Executive was sought and given. Reservations were expressed about the consultation with regard to the arrangements for lay staff, many of whom are Synod employees, and it was noted that little or no consultation with Synods has yet taken place. It was questioned whether it would be possible to consult adequately within the planned timescale. It remains possible to postpone implementation of the new scheme should that prove necessary.

Assembly Executive adjourned at 18:10.

**Session three\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Assembly Executive resumed at 19:45.

**22/08\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Legacies of Slavery**

Convener of the Mission Committee, Ms Sarah Lane Cawte, introduced a video film entitled *Telling It Like It Is (Uncovering white privilege in the Church),* and asked members of Assembly Executive to reflect, upon viewing it, upon how we might appropriately listen and act in response.

Assembly Executive spent some time in informal reflection in small groups.

**22/09**

**Papers J2\_and J3\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Nominations Committee**

The Convener of the Nominations Committee, Mrs Helen Lidgett presented paper J2 and the resolution:

1. **Assembly Executive agrees the term of service for the Secretary to the Appeals Commission will be five years in the first instance, with the option of further terms,**
2. **Assembly Executive notes the changes to Paper J1 to Assembly executive November 2022**
3. **Assembly Executive appoints according to the nominations in Section 3 of the report.**
4. **Assembly Executive appoints according to the nominations in Section 4 of the report**

Assembly Executive *agreed.*

Mrs Lidgett moved Resolution J3, with the addition, to paragraph 4.1.4 of the names:

**The Revd Tim Lowe November 2022 GA27**

**Mrs Kate Yates November 2022 GA27**

**The Revd James Kissack November 2022 GA27**

And the additional appointment to serve as Convener-Elect, Children’s and Youth Work 2023-24, and Convener 2024-2028:

**The Revd Samantha Sheehan.**

Assembly Executive *agreed.*

Assembly Executive noted a typographical error in paper J1, which would be corrected in the Nominations matrix grid, that ‘Mr Tim Hockley’ should read ‘Mr Tim *Hopley’.*

**22/10\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Emergency Resolution**

The General Secretary moved the resolution:

**Assembly Executive delegates to Assembly Officers the making of any Synod Moderator appointments that cannot wait until the General Assembly meets in 2023.**

Seconded by the Clerk

Assembly Executive *agreed.*

**22/11\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_En bloc resolutions**

The General Secretary moved the resolutions *en bloc:*

**A1 Former Moderators**

**D1 Education and Learning: Cost of Living**

**D2 Education and Learning: Continuing Studies**

**F1 Faith and Order**

**G1 Finance: Accounts**

**G4 Finance: Car Expenses**

**H2 Lay Pioneers**

**I1 Mission Report**

**J1 Nominations**

**M1 Loyal Address**

**M2 Risk Register**

**P2 Section Q Complaints Procedure**

**R2 Size of Investigation Team**

**S1 Safeguarding Annual report and Appendix**

Assembly Executive *agreed*

The Chaplain led the meeting in worship, and Assembly Executive adjourned at 21:15.

**Tuesday 29 November**

**Session four**

Assembly Executive resumed at 09:15.

Opening worship was led by the Chaplain, the Revd Lindsey Sanderson.

**22/12**

**Paper G3\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_Finance Committee – M&M Budget**

The Treasurer, Mr Ian Hardie, presented paper G3 and moved the resolution:

**Assembly Executive adopts the M&M Fund budget for 2023, as set out in the Appendix to paper G3 for November 2022 Assembly Executive.**

Following discussion, Assembly Executive *agreed.*

**Paper G2 Finance Committee – Energy Crisis Fund**

Mr Hardie presented Paper G2 and moved the resolution:

**Assembly Executive approves the recommendation of the Finance Committee and the decision of the United Reformed Church Trust to make £2m from the Trust’s reserves available as seed money for a new Churches’ Energy Crisis Fund.**

Following discussion, Assembly Executive *agreed.*

**22/13 (from 22/06)**

**Paper H3 Ministries Committee**

The Convener of the Ministries Committee, the Revd Mary Thomas, presented paper H3, slightly amended as suggested earlier in the meeting, including a new introduction:

*“The following is a description of what The United Reformed Church can reasonably expect of people who are called collectively to be an Elders Meeting. It is expected that every elder will be committed to ensuring the following marks of ministry are in place although it is acknowledged that not all elders will embody all of these marks to the same extent.”*

and moved the resolution:

**Assembly Executive adopt the Marks of Ministry of an Elder and Marks of Ministry of an Elders Meeting (or the Council fulfilling the functions of an Elders Meeting in an LEP or other expression or church).**

Following discussion, Assembly Executive *agreed.*

**Session five**

**22/14**

**Paper BDH1 \_\_\_ Call and Vocation**

The Revd Jenny Mills presented Paper BDH1 on behalf of the Children’s and Youth Work, Education and Learning, and Ministries Committees.

Assembly Executive broke into small groups to reflect upon the paper using discussion material provided.

**22/15 Digital Church**

The Revd Fran Kissack reflected on Digital Church, basing her reflection of the Pentecost story for the book of Acts: ‘*Each of them heard in their own language.’*

She noted that ‘*with modern communication technology we need not be together to meet. Since Covid, for some, the church online is a place, a community where we can gather to hear the good news in our own language …*  *the church takes many forms; a digital form offers opportunities to connect with people where they are.*

**Session six\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**22/16**

Assembly Executive met in closed session.

**Session seven** \_\_\_\_\_

**22/17**

The Moderator welcomed the Revd Dr Susan Durber, President of the World Council of Churches from the European region, who addressed the meeting, and led the meeting in discussion.

**Session eight**

The Chaplain led the meeting in worship, and Assembly Executive adjourned at 20:45.

**Wednesday 30 November**

**Session nine**

Opening worship was led by the Chaplain, the Revd Lindsey Sanderson.

**22/18**

**Paper N1 Church Life Review Group**

The General Secretary and Mrs Melanie Campbell presented Paper N1, Church Life Review update. Assembly Executive discussed the paper in a combination of plenary and group discussions.

**22/19**

The Moderator offered thanks to those who had enabled the meeting, and informed Assembly Executive that the postponed Jubilee celebrations will be held on 15 April 2023.

The session closed at 10:40, and the meeting was concluded with the celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, led by the Chaplain.

Assembly Executive adjourned to meet again online in November 2023 to agree a budget for 2024 and any other very urgent business, and for a residential meeting in February 2024 at the Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire.