

# Paper G6

## The URC Legacy Fund

### Finance Committee

#### Basic information

<b>Contact name and email address</b>	Ian Hardie, Treasurer ianzhardie@googlemail.com
<b>Action required</b>	Decision.
<b>Draft resolution(s)</b>	<b>Resolution 26</b> <b>General Assembly resolves that half of the current balance in the URC Legacy Fund be transferred to the Annenberg Fund with a view to that latter fund being available to meet expenditure of Church Life Review projects on external expertise and/or capacity building, such as temporary additional staffing.</b>

#### Summary of content

<b>Subject and aim(s)</b>	To establish how certain future possible Church Life Review ('CLR') project expenditure might be funded.
<b>Main points</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The Finance Committee and URC Trust have agreed to redesignate the Annenberg Fund to enable its money to be used for specific CLR purposes.</li><li>2. Because the money in that fund may be insufficient for all the expenditure which might be required, they also suggest that half of the current balance in the Legacy Fund be transferred to the Annenberg Fund to be available for this purpose also.</li><li>3. Although the committee believes the basis on which the Legacy Fund was established allows them to do that without the need for approval, in view of the limited way in which the fund has been used in recent years, they seek explicit approval from General Assembly for their proposal.</li></ol>
<b>Previous relevant documents</b>	Minutes of January 2008 Mission Council.
<b>Consultation has taken place with...</b>	The General Secretariat and The URC Trust.

#### Summary of impact

<b>Financial</b>	The resolution will enable the Church to use some of the money currently in a designated fund to progress the Church Life Review project. If the money did not come from this
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	source, it would need to come from the already hard-pressed M&M fund budget.
<b>External (eg ecumenical)</b>	

1. The paper before this General Assembly from the Church Life Review ('CLR') Group outlines its work to date and recommends further work being done re certain aspects of Church life and structures. A number of these suggested explorations or evaluations would benefit from input from external experts and/or capacity building measures, such as temporary additional staff input to enable the work to be undertaken most effectively.
2. Finance Committee has not attempted to prejudge the decisions of General Assembly about any of these proposals: but has considered how they might be afforded were General Assembly minded to agree to take some, or all of them, forward. In view of the stresses on the M&M budget, the committee has considered whether there are other funds which might be utilised instead.
3. The United Reformed Church Trust ('URC Trust') holds on behalf of the Church a designated fund named the Annenberg Fund. This fund resulted from a significant gift from an American Ambassador to the UK. Until now, this fund has been earmarked for supporting relationships with the church in America; but that was not a stipulation at the time of the gift.
4. In practice, it has been many years since any use has been made of the fund, which currently stands at £179k. It is the view of the Finance Committee that the designation of the fund should be changed to enable this money to be utilised to the extent necessary in engaging consultants or capacity building to support such of the various projects outlined in the CLR paper as commend themselves to General Assembly. The URC Trust has considered this recommendation from Finance Committee and has agreed to the change in designation.
5. However, Finance Committee is concerned that the amount currently available in that fund may be inadequate for all the work that General Assembly might consider to be required. We have looked at other funds which are not restricted in their use as a result of conditions attached by their giver.
6. One of those which we have considered is the Legacy Fund. This designated fund was set up by Mission Council in January 2008 to receive all the unrestricted legacies which were bequeathed to the denomination centrally. The paper proposing the establishment of the fund spoke about "the opportunity ... to fund projects that cannot be supported from normal budget resources", and the minutes of the Mission Council decision speak of encouraging assembly committees to "share visions for future special projects".
7. In practice the Finance Committee and its Legacy Group have tended to consider requests (primarily from local churches or Synods, though occasionally from Assembly committees) for financial support for innovative, mission-oriented, projects.
8. It is important that such projects are not inhibited in any way and the Finance Committee does not, therefore, suggest any change in the practice of directing

unrestricted legacies to the Legacy Fund going forward. Nonetheless, particularly since the pandemic, the Legacy Fund has not received the same volume of applications for support as previously and a large amount of money – £1.14 million – is being under-utilised.

9. Although the terms on which Mission Council established the fund would, we believe, already enable us to utilise some of this money to further CLR projects, in view of the way in which the fund has been operated in practice, we judged it advisable to seek the express approval of General Assembly to use up to half of the current balance of the fund for such works by transferring the money into the redesignated Annenberg Fund.
10. Of course, any money not required for CLR projects would be made available in due course for other purposes – including, if necessary, for implementing any other General Assembly decisions for which no budget has been allocated.
11. We believe the other half of the Legacy Fund balance to be adequate to fund the level of applications from local, churches or Synods during the next few years, by which time further legacies are likely to have reached the fund.
12. Accordingly, we invite General Assembly to support the resolution at the head of this paper.