

18 December 2025

To members, staff in attendance and observers at the February 2026 URC Assembly Executive

Dear All,

The Business Committee of the General Assembly met this morning, and I'm writing in the light of that to let you know that we have decided that the Assembly Executive will now **not** meet in person in February (6th-8th). Instead, we will hold an online meeting on the morning of Saturday the 7th.

Having reviewed the business due to come to the Executive, we have become aware that there is very little of it, and a significant chunk of what there is might normally be in en bloc. Most significantly, you will be aware that we were expecting a major report on the review of Education for Ministry 1 (initial ministerial training and formation) and the Resource Centres for Learning (RCLs), with recommendations on withdrawing from at least one RCL. The group conducting this review has been working hard, but the process is proving detailed and complex, and the original timetable has had to be put back. We now will not have detailed recommendations to discuss until General Assembly in July 2026. This item of business clearly would need addressing in an in-person meeting, and without pressure of time. Without that piece of business, we don't believe that the business before us merits asking people to travel from the four ends of three nations for 48 hours.

If we take that decision now, we will make a saving of 50% on the cost of the venue, because we will be giving them notice more than four weeks before the start of the meeting.

This situation has arisen for a variety of reasons. Firstly, two of the new, core, General Assembly Committees agreed at Assembly July 2025 could only have their membership confirmed at the recent on-line budget meeting of the Assembly Executive. Two of three core committees have therefore not been working in ways that would result in decisions for the Executive. The recent meeting of the Extraordinary General Assembly to consider the Church Life Review process also means there has been considerably more decision making capacity by the General Assembly this last year. Given this, and coupled with the unexpected delay to the RCL EM1 review process, which emerged only recently, we believe it an ineffective use of resources to continue with our plans for an in-person meeting.

Instead, **we will hold a meeting from 10am – 12.30 pm on Saturday 7th February on Zoom**, in a style similar to the budget meeting (although we are trying to take into consideration feedback about the sound and visual quality of those gathered to steer the meeting in Church House, and will endeavour to have arrived at something more effective). Please hold this time in your diaries.

We are aware that the Synod Moderators and the Synod Clerks are due to meet at the Hayes in Swanwick from the 5th-6th, for 24 hours before Executive was due to begin. Obviously, it is for those groups themselves to determine their arrangements, but there is no reason for these meetings not to continue to go ahead in person.

If you have already booked travel for the Assembly Executive, please explore the possibility of a refund. If that proves impossible, we will of course meet the cost of pre-booked travel that can't be refunded. Please send proof of purchase and travel to general.assembly@urc.org.uk and a refund will be made available.

We will be in touch about practical arrangements for the Zoom meeting in the New Year. Assembly Executive papers will be available online as normal prior to the meeting. Given the relatively few papers, we are expecting to follow the norm for the on-line budget meeting and only produce online papers for this meeting.

We apologise for the change in these plans, but we hope you will agree that, in the circumstances, this is the only sensible decision for us to take.

We look forward to our meeting, on-line, as the Assembly Executive on February 7th.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. P. Bradbury" with a small number "2" written below it.

Revd. Dr. John P. Bradbury (General Secretary)

Ms. Irish Simons (Convenor, the Business Committee).