

Paper AD1

Church Life Fund Implementation Progress Update

Business and Resources Committees

Basic information

Contact name and email address	Myles Dunnett, Director of Strategy and Programmes myles.dunnett@urc.org.uk
Action required	Decision
Draft resolution(s)	Resolution 5 Assembly approves and adopts the Terms of Reference of the Church Life Fund Committee, as set out in Appendix Five, and directs Business Committee to review and appoint co-opted members to the Church Life Fund Committee where appropriate.

Summary of content

Subject and aim(s)	To update Assembly on progress towards implementing the 47 Church Life Review (CLR) Phase Two outcomes from the Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) in November 2025
Main points	<p>Executive Summary This paper updates Assembly on progress implementing the 47 resolutions agreed at the Extraordinary General Assembly (November 2025), with a focus on establishing the Church Life Fund (CLF). The key enabling step is appointment of the Church Life Fund Committee. Once in place, contributions can be received and the Fund can begin operating.</p> <p>Implementation of shared services is underway through a phased approach. The URC Resources Hub and Helpdesk will be delivered first, with accounting, HR, and payroll services to follow. Grant processes are in development, with initial funding expected between Autumn 2026 and early 2027, and first grants in early 2027.</p>
Previous relevant documents	Papers A1-A11, EGA, 2025 Resolutions 1-47 (as enacted), EGA, 2025
Consultation has taken place with...	Resources Committee Business Committee

Summary of impact

Financial	Implementation costs are currently being borne out of a designated fund within URC Trust. Once in place, Church Life Fund will provide funding.
External (eg ecumenical)	Exploratory conversations around potential areas for collaboration with ecumenical partners, particularly the Methodist Church in relation to shared services, are currently ongoing.

1. Background

- 1.1. This paper outlines progress towards implementing the 47 resolutions passed at the Church Life Review (CLR) Extraordinary General Assembly (EGA) in November 2025. The resolutions are included as Appendix One, with additional commentary on resolutions which are not addressed in this paper.
- 1.2. Extensive information on the proposals is outlined in Papers A1-A11 from the EGA in November 2025. Please consult these papers for specific information regarding the proposals themselves.
- 1.3. Around half of the resolutions are now complete or in progress, although this includes a number of enabling and procedural items; this does not imply that we are halfway through the implementation process. Progress to date has focused on establishing the necessary governance and design work. Many of the more substantial delivery elements, particularly grant-making, will progress once the Church Life Fund Committee is in place. Shared services are being established according to a phased approach.

2. Recap: purpose of the Church Life Fund

- 2.1. The CLF is designed to resource three areas:
 - Shared support services
 - Grants for lay workers in local churches
 - Grants for the development of new communities of discipleship and worship.
- 2.2. The fund aims to reduce administrative burden, enable local mission, and support sustainable growth in new and existing contexts. The vision is of ***a flourishing church, less burdened and better enabled.***

3. Establishing the Church Life Fund Committee

- 3.1. The priority piece of work has been establishing the Church Life Fund Committee (“the Committee”). Funds offered by synods and trusts can only be received once the Committee is in place. A safer recruitment process has been undertaken, and a list of nominees can be found in the Nominations Committee paper.
- 3.2. The Committee’s initial work items will be to:
 - Agree and publish criteria for synods to use when deciding whether applications are appropriate for the CLF
 - Agree and publish application documentation (forms, advice, guidance)
 - Ensure appropriate resources and advice is in place for applicants on the URC Resources Hub
 - Establish a Risk Register with appropriate mitigations
 - Review the communications strategy

- Agree a mechanism for local churches and individuals to contribute
- Agree support arrangement for applicants
- Establish governance relationships with Accreditation sub-committee for new communities work, and Resources Committee for shared services
- Begin providing advice to URC Trust on use of the CLF.

3.3. Draft terms of reference for the Committee were passed at the EGA (Resolution 10, November 2025). As required by the resolution, updated terms of reference are brought before this Assembly, subject to resolution, and are included as Appendix Five.

4. Funding update

4.1. Immediately after the Committee has been appointed by Assembly, the Committee Secretary (Director of Strategy and Programmes) and Convenor will write to synods and trusts, requesting that the offered contributions be sent to URC Trust, along with a pre-agreed restriction to Church Life Fund purposes.

4.2. Please see Appendix Three for an updated version of the fund income table, which was originally included in Paper A11 at the EGA. The current expectation is an income of £3.17m in year one and £3.27m in years two and three. This is the position before any potential contributions from local churches and individuals.

5. Shared services implementation overview

5.1. Resources Committee are overseeing the establishment of the CLF shared services, and have agreed a three-phase process, intended to introduce new shared services in order of priority.

5.2. Phase One

- URC Resources Hub and Helpdesk (launched June 2026)
- Property support service (this is an ongoing consultative process to design the service, as less progress was made on this in CLR phase two – a consultation to begin design work is planned for mid-2027)

Phase Two

- Accounting service
- HR service
- Payroll service

Phase Three

- Buying/procurement service
- IT service

Please see the Gantt chart in Appendix Two for an indicative timeline.

5.3. The URC Resources Hub and Helpdesk, formerly known as MyURC, was renamed through a joint decision of Business and Resources Committees, honoring the commitment made at the EGA to review the name.

5.4. The reason for implementing the Resources Hub and Helpdesk first is that it has a modular design: access to other shared services will be routed through the helpdesk, and supporting documentation for those services will be made available on the hub. Likewise, support documentation for the CLF applications process (forms, criteria, advice, etc) will be made available through the hub.

- 5.5. Phase two is expected to commence after the URC Resources Hub is operational, over the course of the second half of 2026 and into early 2027. Phase three will follow when phase two is completed. Preliminary conversations for the phase two services have already commenced, in line with the proposals set out in Papers A3-A6 at the EGA. It is possible that some work on later-scheduled services may begin sooner than expected. This may include, for example, initial work on the back-end of an IT service, needed to enable future front-end work.
- 5.6. Plans are in place to have much of the shared services implementation work completed between late 2026 and Spring 2027. Staff are balancing the desire to establish services as quickly as possible with the reality of limited capacity. Many staff are balancing implementation work alongside business-as-usual responsibilities. Where necessary and appropriate additional capacity is being sought, for example the new URC Resources Hub and Helpdesk Coordinator role. Capacity requirements will be kept under review, with potential for outsourcing if particular pieces of work require more intensive or specialist support.
- 6. Lay worker and new community grants**
- 6.1. Processes and documentation are being created for the lay worker and new community grant applications, based on proposals brought before the EGA in November 2025. Alongside this, a set of criteria for synods to use when deciding which applications are proceedable to Church Life Fund Committee is being created. Further communication will follow in due course.
- 7. Initial funding availability**
- 7.1. The Committee will meet as soon as practical after Assembly, and quarterly thereafter. Initial funds are expected to be available between Autumn 2026 and early 2027. Due to the phasing of applications, it is likely that initial grants will be made in early 2027.
- 8. Church Life Fund communications**
- 8.1. A communications strategy for the CLF is in development. Further materials for synods and local churches will follow shortly.
- 9. Church Life Review Strategic Reference Group**
- 9.1. Resolution 45 from the EGA established a CLR Strategic Reference Group, to guide the strategic implementation process, drawing on individuals who contributed to the CLR through its steering and working groups. The group does not have any formal governance authority. Business Committee will oversee the work of the group. Terms of reference are included as Appendix Four (but are not subject to resolution).
- 10. Delivery risk management**
- 10.1. A number of risks are being actively managed, including:
- Staff capacity constraints
 - Low uptake of shared services
 - Governance complexity.

- 10.2. Resources Committee own the risk management for shared services implementation. The Church Life Fund Committee will establish its own Risk Register shortly after it is formed.

Appendix One – EGA Resolution Summary

No.	Resolution (as enacted)	Additional notes
1A	General Assembly receives the package of Church Life Review (CLR) proposals and notes that they are the product of extensive consultation across the councils of the Church. Assembly extends its thanks to the wide range of people who have engaged and contributed to the process	Complete
1B	Assembly acknowledges the extraordinary and different nature of this Assembly, and its place in the wider process of change. Assembly commits to consider the proposals in light of this significant Kairos moment.	Complete
2	Based on learnings from the Church Life Review’s methodology, General Assembly commits to a denominational intention to continue ad hoc consultations, to allow people from across the councils of the Church to collaborate and discern the future of the denomination together, addressing challenging strategic questions in well-facilitated, safe, honest spaces.	In progress (property services and Ministry and Mission Fund consultations planned)
3	Based on learnings from the Church Life Review process and beyond, General Assembly commits to a way of working where resources and services are denominationally developed and locally delivered.	In progress
4	General Assembly instructs the Business, Faith in Action, Ministries, and Resources Committees to consider their collection, analysis, and usage of data, and to reflect on how data could enhance their decision-making.	In progress
5	General Assembly endorses the proposal to establish a Church Life Fund (CLF) and invites the URC Trust (URCT) to make necessary arrangements to implement the fund. Assembly directs relevant URC staff to support this process as required.	In progress
6	Assembly instructs Business Committee to initiate a review of the Church Life Fund after two years of operation, with outputs brought before the first available Assembly.	Not started
7	General Assembly invites synods, trusts, and others to make contributions to URCT to create a fund known as the Church Life Fund. It is proposed that any such funds will be donated by synods, trusts, and others and received by URCT on the following terms: - The donations will form a restricted fund known as the Church Life Fund whose purposes will be funding new shared services, making grants for lay workers in local churches, and new communities of discipleship and worship. - If the Church Life Fund shall be dissolved at any time in the future any remaining funds after settlement of all liabilities will be returned to the synods, trusts, and other contributors in the proportions to which they contributed to the Church Life Fund	Not started (to immediately follow Assembly)
8	General Assembly resolves that a Church Life Fund Committee is established, with a representative from every synod. URCT is invited to take advice from the Committee on the expenditure of the Church Life Fund and on request the Committee is authorised to provide such advice.	In progress

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9	General Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to publish criteria, which synods should use to make judgements about which applications to send to the Church Life Fund	In progress
10	General Assembly notes the draft Terms of Reference laid out in Appendix Three, and instructs that relevant committees undertake the necessary work and bring back final Terms of Reference and proposed members to Assembly/Assembly Executive in 2026	Complete
11	General Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to make arrangements so that local churches and individuals can also contribute to the Church Life Fund. Assembly recommends that the Committee explores options for grants from external funding bodies	Not started
12	General Assembly resolves that the URC shared resource hub will be known as myURC, and instructs Resources Committee and relevant staff to implement the URC shared resource hub, as soon as feasible.	In progress
13	Assembly resolves to establish a myURC helpdesk to receive and respond to emails, chat, and phone calls from myURC users, and instructs Resources Committee to implement the helpdesk as soon as feasible	In progress
14A	Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to give advice to URCT in relation to providing funding out of the restricted Church Life Fund for the operation of the myURC shared resources hub and helpdesk	Not started
14B	Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to review the operation of myURC and the helpdesk annually	Not started
14C	Assembly instructs Resources Committee to ensure sufficient staffing for the myURC helpdesk at its inception, and to monitor and review staffing levels to ensure effective staffing levels are maintained.	In progress
15	Assembly affirms the proposed myURC hub and helpdesk, governance model, and apportions operational governance responsibility to Resources Committee, with PLATO to contribute on questions of content	Complete
16	Assembly instructs Resources and Church Life Fund Committees, along with relevant United Reformed Church (URC) staff, to establish an accounting support service, consisting of support for churches who can prepare their own accounts, and support for those who cannot	Not started (preliminary conversations underway)
17	Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to give advice to the URC Trust (URCT) in relation to providing funding out of the restricted Church Life Fund for an accounting support service.	Not started
18	Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to review the accounting support service annually	Not started

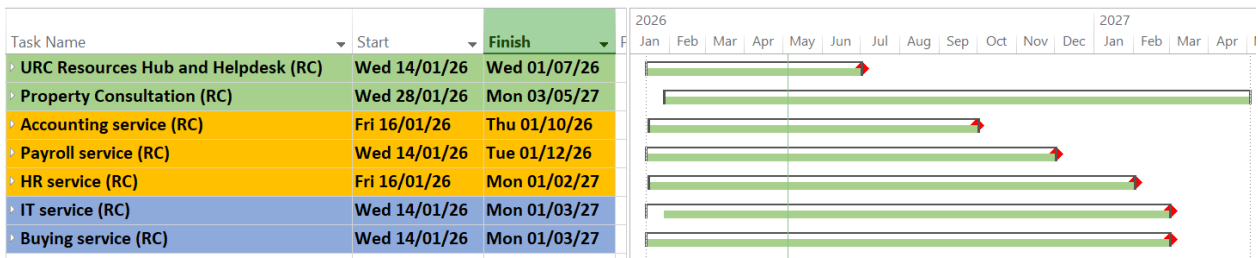
19	Assembly invites synods to apply to the Church Life Fund to request direct accounting support on behalf of select local churches, in cases where the church could not otherwise manage their accounts. To enable this, Assembly advises that synods maintain a list of those churches who struggle with their accounts, and refer those that require additional support after training and confidence building activities.	Not started
20A	Assembly extends thanks to Small Charity Support for their willingness to support the denomination, and gratefully accepts the offer of support.	Complete
20B	Assembly instructs Resources Committee to liaise with Small Charity Support, to find ways of working together to establish an accounting Adult Learning Model for the denomination	In progress
21	Assembly advises that the URC should actively incorporate more systematic procurement approaches and improved resources in the future	Not started
22	Assembly instructs Resources Committee to undertake work to further investigate, cost, and propose a preferred procurement model to be adopted by the URC	Not started
23	General Assembly affirms that, wherever possible, the provision of support services for local churches, provided by synods and General Assembly, is best done in a coordinated and joined up fashion. Assembly encourages the whole church to develop a culture in which we develop resources collectively for the benefit of the whole church, whilst engaging within synods and locally to ensure those resources actively support local congregational life.	In progress
24	General Assembly tasks the Resources Committee with developing an IT infrastructure that has the potential to serve the General Assembly and the Synods	Not started
25	General Assembly encourages synods to, when possible, move their IT infrastructure provision to that which has been developed for the whole church.	Not started
26A	General Assembly tasks the Resources Committee with bringing together key stakeholders together, to devise a means by which each local church has access to professional HR advice, at a minimum in the form of a helpline.	Not started
26B	General Assembly encourages synods to work constructively and generously with the Resources Committee in working towards HR provision available to each local congregation within the United Reformed Church.	Not started
27A	General Assembly tasks the Resources Committee with developing a model of payroll services that can be made available to each synod and local church.	Not started
27B	General Assembly tasks the Resources Committee with consulting widely with synods and the members of the Church Life Fund Committee to arrive at a workable, affordable funding model for a shared payroll provision.	Not started

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28	General Assembly tasks the Resources Committee with hosting a consultation with a wide range of stakeholders from synods, General Assembly and the Retired Ministers' Housing Society to explore issues surrounding the existing, and possible future, arrangements for supporting the maintenance and development of buildings held in trust for United Reformed Church purposes.	In progress
29	Assembly instructs Resources Committee to prioritise this work, starting with more easily attainable shared services, like payroll and HR.	Complete
30	General Assembly receives the findings of the Eido report, and notes and endorses the model and toolkit outlined in the appendices	Complete
31	General Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to give advice to the URC Trust in relation to the making of charitable grants out of the restricted Church Life Fund for lay worker roles, in line with the criteria set out in section four.	Not started
32	Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to publish relevant templates and application advice via the Resources Hub.	Not started
33	Assembly affirms the proposed distinction between lay work and ordained/commissioned ministry, and instructs Church Life Fund Committee to uphold this distinction and seek advice from the Accreditation sub-committee where necessary.	Not started
34	Assembly instructs that funding is only given when Church Life Fund Committee have confidence that the liability of individuals will be limited and all legal obligations will be met. Assembly reminds employers that they are personally responsible for ensuring they are compliant with all legal requirements when employing someone, and failure to comply can lead to serious legal consequences	Not started
35	Assembly recommends that applicants for lay worker grants carefully consider the appropriate employing entity	Not started
36	General Assembly receives the new communities of Discipleship and Worship proposal, and endorses the values and principles in part two.	Complete
37	General Assembly notes the best practice and opportunities in part three, and requests that any new communities established through a Church Life Fund grant follow these recommendations	Not started
38	General Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to adopt the application and review procedures outlined in part four.	Not started

39	<p>(a) General Assembly instructs Ministries Committee to update the Accreditation sub-committee Terms of Reference to accommodate the proposed application and review model. Assembly requests that updated Terms of Reference are brought before Assembly in 2026.</p> <p>(b) General Assembly instructs Faith in Action Committee and Ministries Committee to promote new Christian Communities and develop the mechanisms by which they might be recognised as a Mission Project or local church of the URC, in collaboration with Church Life Fund Committee.</p> <p>(c) General Assembly encourage synods to identify where these communities might be developed, in collaboration with Church Life Fund Committee.</p>	<p>a) Complete</p> <p>b) Not started</p> <p>c) In progress</p>
40	<p>General Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to give advice to URCT in relation to the making of charitable grants out of the restricted Church Life Fund for new communities of discipleship and worship, in line with the detail set out in this proposal</p>	Not started
41	<p>General Assembly instructs Church Life Fund Committee to publish templates and advice for applicants on the Resources Hub.</p>	Not started
42	<p>General Assembly endorses the design and commencement of a denominational communication strategy, aimed at raising awareness of the Church Life Fund and the services, lay worker roles, and new communities it can fund. The strategy should raise hopes, generate enthusiasm, and encourage lay worker and new communities applications.</p>	In progress
43	<p>Assembly acknowledges the role Resources Committee will play in implementing the Phase Two outcomes, and thanks them for this. Assembly instructs Resources Committee to bring a clear timeline back to Assembly in 2026, covering work already implemented and work yet to be completed</p>	Complete
44	<p>General Assembly acknowledges the end of Church Life Review Phase Two, and with it the Church Life Review as a programme. Assembly thanks those involved in phases one and two for their generosity, input, and commitment.</p>	Complete
45	<p>General Assembly instructs Business Committee to form a Strategic Reference Group, with published terms of reference, distinct from the Church Life Fund Committee, which can be drawn on by relevant committees, synods, and others in their ongoing strategic work.</p>	Complete (See Appendix Four for ToR)
46	<p>General Assembly instructs Resources and Ministries Committees to arrange a consultation with synod officers, synod trust company trustees, and other relevant decision-makers, to address underlying theological and other strategic and covenantal questions related to finance and governance, particularly in relation the sustainability of the Ministry and Mission Fund and the ministry provision made possible by that fund.</p>	In progress (non-CLF work – see Paper GH1)
47	<p>General Assembly instructs relevant committees to return to future Assemblies with the outcomes of strategic investigations, in light of the denominational commitment to collaboration</p>	In progress

Appendix Two – Gantt Summary of Shared Services Implementation



This excerpt from the CLF implementation programme plan shows an indicative timeline for shared service implementation. Green items are phase one, orange are phase two, and blue are phase three. The delivery date for phase three services will depend on progress with the phase two services. Please note that, although the plan shows all phases progressing simultaneously, this is not the case – some early work has been undertaken for phase two and three workstreams (hence the bars beginning in January), but intensive work has not begun.

Appendix Three – Updated Church Life Fund Financial Scale

This table was originally included in Paper A11 (EGA, 2025), along with an impact model. This table has subsequently been updated to reflect additional offered contributions.

Synod	Y1	Y2	Y3
North Western Synod	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000
Mersey Synod	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
Yorkshire Synod	£60,000	£60,000	£60,000
East Midlands	£150,000	£150,000	£150,000
West Midlands	£300,000	£400,000	£400,000
Eastern	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000
South Western	£325,000	£325,000	£325,000
Wessex	£180,000	£180,000	£180,000
Thames North	£541,000	£541,000	£541,000
Southern	£550,000	£550,000	£550,000
National Synod of Wales	£100,000	£100,000	£100,000
National Synod of Scotland	£66,667	£66,667	£66,667
Northern	£200,000	£200,000	£200,000
Total	£3,172,667	£3,272,667	£3,272,667

Appendix Four – Church Life Review Strategic Reference Group Terms of Reference

Group Name	Church Life Review Strategic Reference Group
Convenor	Group member (at the request of Business Committee)
Secretary	Director of Strategy and Programmes
Ex Officio Members	None
General Assembly Appointed Members	All members will be appointed by Business Committee
Length of Term	Linked to the implementation of Church Life Review outcomes, expected to be 1-2yrs To be reviewed by Business Committee once the implementation period concludes, to determine future need for a strategic advisory body
In Attendance when required (to cover their areas of expertise)	Chief Operating Officer Any other staff member seeking advice on strategic work
Minute Secretary	Strategy and Programmes Administrator
Meeting Frequency	Two times per year
Subgroups/Sub committees	None
Quoracy	No quoracy requirement (advisory only)
Accountability & Reporting Duties	Accountable to Business Committee Brief, descriptive annual report on activities sent to Business Committee Will provide advice to committees requesting input on relevant strategic work
Terms of Reference Review	Annual

Background

The authority for establishing the Strategic Reference Group (“the Group”) is drawn from Resolution 45 (Paper A10), Extraordinary General Assembly, November 2025:

General Assembly instructs Business Committee to form a Strategic Reference Group, distinct from the Church Life Fund Committee, which can be drawn on by relevant committees, synods, and others in their ongoing strategic work.

It was seen as useful that, as Church Life Review outcomes are implemented and the Church adopts a more strategic posture, we have an identified Group with accrued expertise to review, advise, and support implementation work. The Strategic Reference Group therefore exists to provide time-limited, non-binding strategic advice when requested by Assembly bodies, drawing on members' experience of the Church Life Review and its implementation, as a resource for the church in its continued process of discernment. Although the Church Life Review programme has ended, the Group retains the name in their title, to make clear the distinction from Church Life Fund Committee.

Membership

Membership is invitation-only, limited to those who were closely involved in the Church Life Review process, i.e., the Phase One Church Life Review Group, that Phase Two Steering Group, the Phase Two Finance and New Communities Working Groups, and the Phase Two Sub-Committee. Members are appointed for their ability to reflect across systems, rather than represent particular workstreams.

Responsibilities

The Group has an advisory role across a number of interlinked areas related to implementation of the Church Life Review. The Group may be asked to:

- Review emerging proposals
- Act as a test bed for new services, platforms, and models
- Examine strategic coherence
- Identify risks
- Provide historical context
- Stress-test assumptions.

This work will primarily be undertaken in relation to Church Life Review implementation, as follows:

- Shared services
 - URC Resources Hub and Helpdesk
 - Accounting service
 - HR service
 - IT service
 - Payroll service
 - Property services
 - Buying service
- Matters relating to lay worker and new community grants made by Church Life Fund Committee.

In undertaking this work, the Group may be approached by:

- Business Committee
- Resources Committee
- Church Life Fund Committee
- Other Assembly Committees
- Others, via Business Committee.

If any committee or other body wishes to seek the Group's advice on any matter beyond Church Life Review implementation, this may only be done with the written consent of Business Committee. In such an event, the Secretary will notify the Business Committee Convenor that a request has been made.

Scope

The Group will be advisory only, operating in response to requests. The Group's authority in advising on strategic work will be derived from Business Committee; as such, Committees are encouraged to give due consideration to the Group's advice. In summary, the Group:

- Will not have delegated decision-making authority
- Will not direct staff or committees
- Will not be a budget-holder
- Will not initiate projects.

Risk Management

The Group's role is advisory only, and as such the activity is low risk; no formal risk register will be kept. Any risks associated with strategic work will be owned by the relevant Assembly Committee. Any major risks identified by the Group must be escalated to Business Committee.

Conducting Business

Committees may approach the Group directly; others will make a request for advice via Business Committee.

The Group will meet twice per year, with discretion to request additional meetings related to specific pieces of work. The Group may be consulted via email.

Appendix Five – Church Life Fund Committee Terms of Reference

Church Life Fund Committee

Final Terms of Reference – March 2026

Committee	Church Life Fund Committee (CLFC)
Convenor	The Convenor will be appointed by General Assembly following the Nominations Committee safer recruitment process
Secretary	Director of Strategy and Programmes
Ex Officio Members	Two representatives from URC Trust (See 'Membership' section below)
General Assembly Appointed Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One nominated representative from each synod, appointed by General Assembly following the Nominations Committee safer recruitment process • One representative of URC Youth, appointed by General Assembly following the Nominations Committee safer recruitment process • The Committee will have the authority to co-opt additional members (See 'Membership' section below)
Length of Term	Three years
In Attendance when required (to cover their areas of expertise)	Members of the Senior Leadership Team Offices of General Assembly Staff (e.g. Chief Finance Officer, Communications) Other URCT trustees, as required Any others as requested by the Committee
Minute Secretary	Strategy and Programmes Administrator
Meeting Frequency	Quarterly
Subgroups/Sub committees	Accreditation Sub-Committee will review new community applications and progress Possible lay worker application sub-committee Other sub-committees at the Committee's discretion, based on operational requirements
Quoracy	There will be no requirement for in-meeting quoracy, to avoid this becoming an obstacle. However, there will be a requirement for quoracy in ratifying decisions: at least 50% of synods (7) and one URCT trustee. If there are not enough members in a meeting to ratify a decision, this may be done by email.

<p>Accountability & Reporting Duties</p>	<p>Accountability to General Assembly The Committee will be directly accountable to General Assembly, and must submit an annual progress report. Business Committee will initiate and coordinate a major review of the fund after three years of operation. This must include at least one non-URC reviewer.</p> <p>Reporting to the URC Trust The Committee will need to submit its advice on the application of the Church Life Fund to URCT after every meeting.</p>
<p>Terms of Reference Review</p>	<p>Annually</p>

Responsibilities

The Church Life Fund Committee (the Committee) has delegated authority from General Assembly to advise URC Trust (URCT) on the application of the Church Life Fund (CLF), mirroring the role of Resources Committee in relation to the Ministry and Mission Fund.

In exercising this authority, the Committee shall:

Shared services

- Oversee allocation of CLF resources to support new shared services, including accounting support, denominational procurement, HR, IT, payroll, property, and the denominational resources hub and helpdesk.
- Ensure shared services are delivered consistently and effectively, acting on the outcome of Resources Committee reviews.
- Monitor usage of the URC Resources Hub and Helpdesk and identify usage trends.
- Advise URCT on where to direct CLF funds for shared services.
- Ensure that the cost of shared services is proportional given the overall income to the CLF, and in light of the number of applications for lay worker and new community funding.

Lay worker grants

- Consider applications from synods for lay worker grants, ensuring eligibility criteria are met.
- Advise URCT on where to direct CLF funds for lay worker grants.
- Safeguard the distinction between lay work and ordained/commissioned ministry, in concert with the Deputy General Secretary (Ministries) and potentially a sub-committee.
- Ensure grant-funded roles meet requirements of legal compliance, safer recruitment, insurance, line management, and pastoral care.
- Monitor outcomes through proportionate reporting and evaluation mechanisms.

New communities grants

- Consider applications for new communities of discipleship and worship, taking advice from the Accreditation Sub-Committee on the suitability of applications.
- Advise URCT on where to direct CLF funds for new community grants.
- Ensure that new communities funded reflect agreed values and principles.
- Oversee the review process, taking advice from Accreditation Sub-Committee.

Fund stewardship

- Ensure that CLF expenditure aligns with Assembly resolutions.
- Ensure funds contributed by synods are applied only for CLF purposes.
- Liaise with synods in the case that applications are not proceedable, trying to find mutually agreeable solutions.
- Act with discretion, seeking to advance innovative and permissive projects which fall within the remit of the Church Life Fund.
- Review the CLF's income and advise synods on the level of contributions needed after the initial three-year term, if the fund continues.
- Explore and enable contributions to the CLF from local churches.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration outside the URC, particularly avenues for funding from external bodies.

Applications: communications and support

- Devise, implement, and oversee a service which seeks to support local churches and synods with applications and identifying opportunities.
- Oversee a communications strategy which aims to raise awareness of the fund and its opportunities.
- Actively advocate for the fund with each synod and across the denomination.

The intention of this remit is to give the Committee broad discretion in identifying which application of the funds available to them will have the greatest impact.

Membership and Appointment Process

Synod representatives

The Committee shall consist of one representative from every synod. Given the complexity of the Committee's remit, there needs to be a wide diversity of skills and experience within the membership. Synods will notify Nominations Committee of two potential representatives; Nominations will then review the proposed synod representatives and undertake a safer recruitment process, including a conversation with each potential member and references. One representative will be selected from every synod. The primary criterion for decision making will be determining which combination of representatives provides the broadest cross-section of skills, experience, diversity, equality, and inclusion. Nominations Committee will present a final list of members to General Assembly, which will be invited to appoint the members of the Church Life Fund Committee.

Skills within the Committee should include accountancy, grant-making, charity law, service provision (e.g. HR, IT, etc), mission work, community development, URC history

and ethos, Reformed theology, and safeguarding. This diversity of skills reflects the breadth of the Committee's responsibilities.

To assist Nominations Committee in making their determination, synods will need to provide a mini-CV for their prospective representatives. This will help Nominations appraise the overall spread of the proposed membership. Ensuring the right diversity of skills, experience, and EDI on the Committee is likely to be a challenge, requiring close collaboration between Nominations Committee and synods.

Convenor

The Convenor will be an additional member of the Committee, rather than one of the synod representatives. The Convenor will be recommended by Nominations Committee following a safer recruitment process and appointed by General Assembly.

URCT members

To ensure URCT have confidence in the advice they receive from the Committee, two URCT trustees will also sit on the Committee in an ex officio capacity.

Youth representative

The Committee will include a representative of URC Youth.

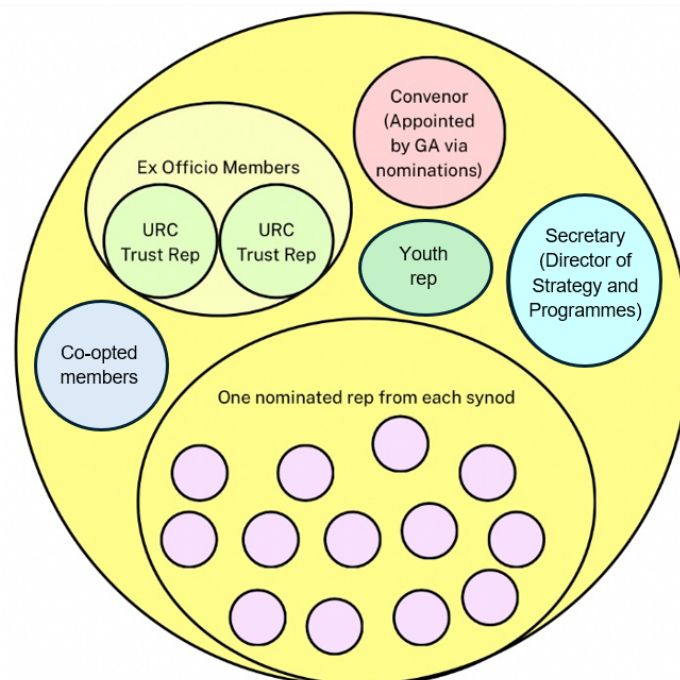
Co-opted members

The Committee will have the power to co-opt members for specific reasons, e.g. to bring additional skills or address Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging imbalances. This must be done in conjunction with Nominations Committee. Co-opted members will be reviewed and approved by Business Committee.

Other routine attendees

It is expected that ex officio members will routinely be in attendance, including the General Secretary and the successor role to the Church Life Review Programme Manager.

All members will need to undergo the URC's safer recruitment process.



Relationships with other Committees

URC Trust

The Committee will provide advice to URCT on the application of the Church Life Fund under delegated authority.

Resources Committee

Close liaison will be maintained where CLF funds shared services, which will fall within Resources Committees' operational remit.

Business Committee

Business Committee will initiate and coordinate the three-year review of the CLF. The Committee must also liaise with Business Committee over the submission of its annual report to General Assembly, as well as any other General Assembly Resolutions which pertain to the Church Life Fund.

Nominations Committee

Appointment of members will be handled via the agreed nominations process, ensuring balance of skills and experience within the Committee.

Conducting Business

Additional meetings can be scheduled, with reasonable notice, if business requires it. Decisions may be taken via email with the same rules of quoracy applying. Such decisions will be recorded by the Convenor/Secretary and noted at the next meeting with updates on progress as needed.

Expertise from outside the Committees membership can be utilised for projects and instruct task groups from beyond its membership to develop specific pieces of work. The Committee has the power to seek external professional advice if they deem it necessary with reference to the Chief Operating Officer for unbudgeted professional fees.

The Committee has discretion to seek input from the wider staff team as deemed necessary.

Risk Management

The Committee will review the Risk Register as it relates to its key responsibilities, at least once per year, but will add additional risks as and when they arise.

Data Protection

The Committee will comply with data protection regulations (GDPR) and uphold URC guidelines and best practice with regards to data processing.