

Church Life Fund Committee

Terms of Reference – May 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	- 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.

Accountability & Reporting Duties	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. Reporting to URCT The Committee will need to submit its advice on the use of the Church Life Fund to URCT after every meeting.
Terms of Reference Review	Annually

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 myURC resources hub 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 URC 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 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.

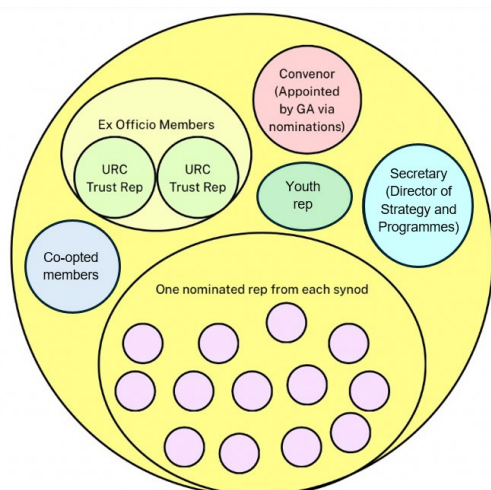
Co-opted members

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 Chief Operating Officer.

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 use 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