

NB: Synod document Sept' 2004

1 The serving elders (i.e. the members of the elders' meeting) of each local church are the `charity trustees' of its funds. Consequently the manner in which those funds are invested and in which the income and, if necessary, the capital also of the investments are actually deployed for the benefit of the church is their responsibility. This applies to the elders' meetings of all local churches.

2 The Trustee Act 2000 identifies the charity trustees as the people who, under the charity's governing document, control the management and administration of the charity.

3 The Structure of the United Reformed Church (the Structure), which is contained in Section B of the Manual of the United Reformed Church, sets out the functions of the elders' meeting of the local church. They are listed at Paragraph 2(2) on pages B3 and B4 of the current edition of the Manual and merit study by all elders.

4 The function which is particularly relevant here is Function (x): **`to recommend to the church meeting arrangements for the proper maintenance of buildings and the general oversight of all financial responsibilities of the local church'.** The elders are thus the charity trustees of all funds and investments of local churches, whether these are held locally or by the Synod Trust as custodian trustees on the church's behalf.

5 The Charity Commission has produced a Booklet CC3 updated June 2005, on the responsibilities of charity trustees which give a clear and concise summary of the position. Every church secretary is urged to obtain a copy from the Charity Commission, 2nd Floor, 20 Kings Parade, Queens Dock, and Liverpool, L3 4DQ. They have also produced Booklet CC14 on the investment of charitable funds. The information can also be downloaded free of charge from their website.