

J STRUCTURES 1 Synod and its Committees

Introduction

- 1 The Synod established a new structure for the North Western Synod and the Districts within it at its meeting in March 2005. This structure was based on reports entitled 'Renewed for Witness and Service' approved by the Synod in October 2003 and October 2004, after consultation across the Synod. The Synod meeting in March 2005 also welcomed into the Synod the former Cumberland District Council from the Northern Synod.

The General Assembly in July 2006 ratified the proposals that from 2008 there should be one council of the United Reformed Church between the General Assembly and the local church and that the one council should be the 'New Synod'.

- 2 The principles of 'Renewed for Witness and Service' are that the functions of the Synod and District should be defined to avoid duplication, some functions requiring the broad scale of the Synod while others need more local knowledge. These principles can be maintained in the new structure. There will not be an autonomous District Council, but local bodies within the Synod can undertake pastoral and other functions with the Synod's powers delegated to them.
- 3 The clear definition of functions, with the Synod focused on finance, property and training and the Districts on pastoral support and mission activities, should be an appropriate pattern for the New Synod. The principle that the local church should send the same representative to the both Synod and District has helped to bring the two councils together. The emphasis on encouraging the local churches and enabling their mission through providing appropriate resources remains paramount.
- 4 In 'Renewed for Witness and Service' local churches were encouraged to develop Mission Partnerships with their ecumenical and United Reformed neighbours. The words 'Mission Partnerships' are probably inappropriate as they are used in other Synods for ministry clusters or grouping of pastorates. The idea is not to create any structure, but to encourage churches to work together with their neighbours in ways which they choose and which are relevant to the communities in which they live. Words for this may not be needed; churches are taking such initiatives and within the Synod more can be done.
- 5 Many church people are interested in the wider issues facing the church, but enabling concerted discussion and action has proved hard to achieve. It was thought that the identification of Advocates in Districts would enable effective publicity and events, but attempting to co-ordinate their activities on a District basis has had some problems. Initiatives for issues come from different levels: some, such as youth and children's work, have leadership within the Synod; others like Commitment for Life have a strong Assembly organisation. However, where events can take place is affected by the distance people will be prepared to travel and even the present Districts may be too large for people to be attracted to an event from all the District. There is probably no single answer. For some things there may be only one Synod advocate; for others there can be four people sharing experience; and it may be valuable to share activities on some issues, as the Church and Society network in the Synod has done. The

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Area Meeting will be an important forum for presenting and discussing the current issues affecting the church, the nation and the world.

- 6 Most decisions about financial matters will be taken at Synod level, but there will continue to be a need for people with local knowledge to engage with local churches on their responsibilities for Ministry and Mission payments and to provide the Synod decisions on grants and building projects with understanding of local pastoral priorities. The title Area Finance Officer is more appropriate than Treasurer, as the role is more of knowledgeable liaison about finances and there should be a Property Officer to relate to building proposals and maintenance. A levy may be applied by the Synod to meet the costs of Area Meetings and the Area Pastoral Committees. The Synod would make provision for local events promoted by the Area Meetings. The Training and Ministries Committee has extended terms of reference, additional members, and a sub-committee to develop advocacy for ministries.

- 7 The Synod structures include local representation on the Executive and Resources Committee. The Area Secretaries will serve on the Synod Executive and the Area Secretaries and Finance Officers on the Resources Committee.
 - The Synod Executive includes the officers of the Synod, the Conveners of its committees and the Area Secretaries.
 - The Communications Group advises on publicity matters and produce the Bulletin, including pages of local news and information.
 - The Resources Committee includes the officers of the Synod, the Area Secretaries and Finance Officers, the Synod Property Co-ordinator, and the Chairman of the Trust. It is advised on grants by the Synod Grants Advisory Group, with Area representation. The Committee has sub-committees one dealing with investment and another dealing Ministry and Mission payments and other Area Finance matters
 - The Training and Ministries Committee with a sub-committee for ministries advocacy.
 - The Synod Pastoral Committee enables the Area Pastoral Committee Conveners to develop strategy together and has responsibility for ministerial self appraisal.
 - The United Reformed Church (North West Province) Trust comprises the officers of the Synod, the Area Secretaries, the Synod Property Co-ordinator, and the Chairman of the Trust, all of whom are members of the Synod Resources Committee

- 8 There are normally two Synod meetings a year, in early March and early November, including Area Meetings. The March Area Meetings will include the election of Pastoral Committee members and other officers and representatives, whose appointment will then be affirmed by the Synod.

Synod Executive – normally meets four times a year	
Membership	Functions

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Synod Moderator - Synod Clerk - Synod Treasurer - Conveners of Resources, Training and Ministries, and Pastoral Committees and Communications Group - Area Secretaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. to act when necessary on behalf of the Synod to ensure the good ordering of the affairs of the Synod in the interests of the mission of the church; ii. to exercise overall responsibility for the appointment and employment of Synod staff; iii. to appoint sub-groups to advise or to authorise the Synod officers to act on personnel matters (inc. grievance procedures), Synod venues and preparation, appeals, discipline (to activate the Section O process), nominations, etc.; iv. to receive and commission reports from the Communications Group; v. to receive and deal with matters sent for the Synod's attention by Area Meetings, local churches or General Assembly; vi. to keep procedures under review.
<p>Sub-committees: Communications Group</p>	

Synod Resources Committee – normally meets six times a year	
Membership	Functions

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convener - Synod Treasurer - Area Secretaries (or permanent nominees) - Area Finance Officers (or permanent nominees) - Synod Moderator - Synod Clerk - Synod Property Co-ordinator - Representative on Assembly Grants and Loans Group - Chairman of the URC (NW) Trust <p>attended by: the Legal and Trust Officer the Finance Officer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. oversight of the Synod's finances and to deal with the salaries of Synod staff; ii. to appoint and have oversight of a budget sub-group; iii. to appoint and have oversight of an investment sub-group; iv. to appoint and have oversight of three sub-groups concerned with the Ministry and Mission Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An Allocation Group to determine M&M contributions, comprising: a Convener, Synod Treasurer and the Area Finance Officers; b. A Consultation Panel for appeals, comprising the Conveners of the Resources Committee and Allocation Group and two representatives of each Area (one minister and one lay); c. A Review Group to be appointed by the Synod Executive when required;
<p>Sub-committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry and Mission sub groups - Investment sub group - Synod Grants Advisory Group - Listed Building Advisory Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> v. to manage those properties under the control of the Synod; vi. to oversee the operation of the scheme for the structural surveys of church buildings, with the power to appoint a sub-group for this purpose if required; vii. to operate the guidelines on manses, with the power to appoint a sub-group for this purpose if required, and when necessary to revise the guidelines; viii. to receive from the Area Pastoral Committees, per the Synod Grants Advisory Group applications, applications for grants and loans relating to property and other matters and to decide on these applications, including the power to submit them to the Assembly Grants and Loans Group; ix. to carry out the responsibilities of a Synod Property Committee on control of works to listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas, including the power to appoint a Listed Building Advisory Committee to ensure that the Synod fulfils its obligations under the procedure established under the Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Buildings In Conservation Areas) Order; x. to liaise with and offer guidance and instruction to the North Western Province Trust Limited and to act on behalf of the Synod in relation to buildings held for local churches under the United Reformed Church Acts or otherwise; xi. to give approval to the Moderator and Synod Clerk to sign Sharing Agreements; xii. to carry out such other responsibilities as

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Synod Training and Ministries Committee	
Membership	Functions

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convener - Synod Moderator - Candidates Secretary - Representatives of Northern College and Windermere Centre - Link with Assembly Training Committee - Synod Lay Preaching Commissioner/ Worship Leaders Co-ordinator - YCWTD manager and support persons for other TD Staff - A serving CRCW - Member from any Area not otherwise represented - Minutes Secretary - Ministries Advocate - Local Leaders Co-ordinator <p>attended by: the Synod Training and Development staff (for Ministries, Youth and Children's Work, Elders & Members)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. to act on behalf of the Synod and appoint a Candidating Group for each applicant for training for the Ministry of word and sacraments and church related community work; each Candidating Group to have authority to commend applicants; ii. to agree annually the membership of the pool for each Candidating Group; iii. to exercise pastoral oversight of persons in training for ministry if word and sacraments and church related community work, in consultation with Area Pastoral Committees; iv. to receive reports from training institutions on persons in training for ministry if word and sacraments and church related community work, and to act on behalf of the Synod, particularly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. in authorising those approaching their final year of training to proceed into the process of candidating for a pastorate or appointment; b. in the withdrawal of a person in training for ministry if word and sacraments and church related community work; v. to have oversight of EM2 and encourage EM3; vi. to promote and have oversight of training and development for youth and children's work; vii. to promote and have oversight of training and development for lay preachers and worship leaders; viii. to promote, provide for and have oversight of the programme of local leaders; ix. to promote and have oversight of training and development for elders, church officers and members; x. to maintain active links with the training institutions of the United Reformed church, particularly those located in the Synod; xi. to have oversight of the work of the Synod Training and Development staff (for Ministries, Youth and Children's Work, Elders & Members) together with any other Synod appointments responsible for promoting and facilitating training; xii. to set and monitor the budget for training in consultation with the Synod Treasurer; xiii. to encourage recruitment for all forms of ministerial service; xiv. to appoint the members and have oversight of the ministries advocacy sub-group.
<p>Sub-committees;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Candidating Group pool - Ministries Advocacy sub group 	

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Synod Pastoral Committee – normally meets twice a year	
Membership	Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convener (appointed by the Synod Executive) - Synod Moderator - Conveners of the four Area Pastoral Committees - Ministerial Self Appraisal Co-ordinator 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. to review the procedures and practices of the Area Pastoral Committees; ii. to provide mutual support for the Conveners of the Pastoral Committees; iii. to consult on the deployment of ministers across the Synod; iv. to oversee the programme of ministerial accompanied self appraisal.
Synod Communications Group – normally meets three times a year	
Membership	Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convener (appointed by the Synod Executive) - Synod Moderator - Web-master - Compiler of the Bulletin - Area Communication Officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. to monitor the content of the Synod web-site and support the Web-master; ii. to act as an advisory body for the production and distribution of the Bulletin; iii. to encourage better media coverage of church news iv. to link with the Assembly Communications and Editorial Committee; v. to advise the Synod on communications in general and to report regularly to the Executive.