

MINUTES of the meeting of **WESSEX SYNOD** on Saturday 10th October 2020 via Zoom.

The Moderator, the Revd. Clare Downing, welcomed members to the meeting and constituted the Synod which was being held on Zoom for the first time.

The World Church Group led worship, using material from our partners in Zambia and France, including a reflection from Zambia about partnership, "Go and build bridges".

Attendance

31	URC Ministers and CRCWs
37	Church representatives
0	Ministers of other denominations
3	Retired Ministers
3	Ordinands
22	Others holding Synod appointments
1	Visitors
97	Total

20S01 Apologies were received from

4	URC Ministers
12	Church representatives
0	Ministers of other denominations
0	Ordinands
6	Retired Ministers
2	Others
24	Total

20S02 Worship with a global perspective:

The Revd. Ana Gobledale offered a wide-ranging, illustrated presentation about life and mission in Zambia, interspersed with questions which were discussed in breakout rooms.

20S03 Ministry and pastoral news:

- a The Moderator drew attention to the listing of ordinands and ministerial changes, and welcomed three newly inducted ministers, the Revds. Wayne Hawkins (from the Congregational Union via CWM), and Adam Payne (from the Methodist Church in the USA), have come into URC ministry through Certificates of Eligibility. Elize Goddess (Methodist from South Africa) is serving at Drayton United Church along with other Methodist churches.
- b She further welcomed the Revd. Stephen Ansa-Addo, ordained and inducted to Hungerford and Park, Reading URCs.
- c The Moderator noted that the closure of Marsh Gibbon URC has been postponed, while they think further about their future.
- d The Moderator drew attention to the deaths of the Revds. Tom Grant and Graham Long and led in prayer.

20S04 Minutes of the last meeting: The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th October 2019 were taken as read, approved by consensus and signed as a correct record.

20S05 Order of business: The Synod Clerk noted two small changes to the order of business.

20S06 Synod Executive Report: The Synod Clerk presented the written report and brought Resolution 1:

RESOLUTION 1

Synod welcomes Executive's appointment of Miss Karen Bell as Synod Clerk, and offers Karen its support and encouragement.

The resolution was agreed by consensus and Karen was welcomed unanimously. The Moderator explained that Sue Brown is clerking this meeting, Karen will be inducted at the end of it and will then take over as Synod Clerk.

The Revd. Dr. Romilly Micklem drew attention to the fact that the Moderator's review has been conducted, and felt that Synod should be given the opportunity to express its appreciation of her willingness to serve a further term. As a result of the review the Moderator should be confirmed by Mission Council to serve until August 2026.

20S07 Synod Day: The Revd. John Downing indicated that the organising committee is hard at work but has concluded that it is not practical to hold the event in 2021, because of the uncertainties of coronavirus, so it has been rearranged for 7th May 2022, with the same venue and theme. A video was shown and more information will be available in due course. The Moderator thanked the whole team for their hard work and wisdom in making a difficult decision.

20S08 Synod Youth Executive: Laura Everard presented the report and introduced Resolution 4:

RESOLUTION 4

Wessex Synod:

- Recognises the need, at both local church and Synod level, to use modern communication methods and flexible ways of working, in order to be fully accessible to younger people
- Encourages local churches to recommit to young people's representation and participation in planning groups and committees
- Resolves to pursue young people's representation on Synod committees
- Resolves to form a working party (representative of the diverse demographic in Wessex) to plan future Synod meetings, beginning with the October 2020 Synod meeting.

Following questions the Clerk explained that a working party has already been formed, a decision made by Executive after the cancellation of the last Synod meeting. It was therefore agreed to delete the last phrase of the resolution, which then read as follows:

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This was passed by consensus and the Moderator invited churches with young people from diverse backgrounds to encourage them to get involved in Synod Youth Executive.

20S09 Advent Boxes: Mrs. Ruth White spoke about Advent Hope and Joy Boxes which have been developed by Church House via the CYDO Plus Team, to help people to reach out intergenerationally to families around the church. They will be available about early to mid November for £4 each and a link will be sent to churches. Following an enquiry about suitability for SEND people, Mrs. White undertook to pass this question on to the writing group.

The Revd. Nigel Appleton took the chair.

20S10 Ministries and Learning Committee: The Moderator presented the report, drawing attention to the deployment crisis. Following an enquiry about Interim Moderators, the Moderator explained that Pastoral Committees and DSOs are working hard at being in touch with churches, beginning with those in vacancy.

The Moderator resumed the chair.

20S11 Children's and Youth Work Committee: The Revd. John Downing presented the report, which was originally written for the March 2020 Synod. He commended the CYDOs to Synod for all the work they have been doing supporting local churches and youth workers, working online and developing Assembly resources. Much training has also been happening online.

Paddington is nearing the end of his journey round the Synod and Synod Youth Executive was asked to think what they want to do at the end of his journey.

The Faith-Filled Life module from Stepwise has been started online and is being developed in Wessex as an all-age resource. Anyone interested should contact Mrs. Ruth White.

The report was accepted, with particular thanks to CYDOs Ruth White and Phil Ray.

Synod broke for lunch.

20S12 Children and Youth at Assembly level: Phil Ray showed a slide presentation put together by Church House, showcasing various items and events which have been worked on since lockdown.

Looking ahead to 2021, the Children's & Youth theme for the year is Heroes and Villains and a book offering different approaches will be sent to all churches, as well as being available through the Synod website and newsletter.

20S13 Wessex Trust: The Revd. Dr. Romilly Micklem presented the report, explaining the system required by the Charity Commission for property disposals and the value the Trust gets for them. He also drew attention to the fact that, for a variety of reasons, money is much shorter than it was and so a lower level is available for grants. He then brought Resolution 2:

RESOLUTION 2

Wessex Synod approves the transfer of £50,000 from the General Fund to the Church Mission Fund of the Wessex Trust.

This was agreed by consensus.

Dr. Micklem also brought Resolution 3:

RESOLUTION 3

Wessex Synod approves a grant of £110,000 from the General Fund of the Wessex Trust to support the URC's Inter-Synod Resource Sharing for 2021.

The resolution was agreed by consensus.

20S14 Ministry and Mission Fund Report: Peter Pay indicated that the latest figures from Church House show an overall shortfall of £373,000 but that Wessex Synod is currently holding up quite well, with a possible shortfall of £35,000-£55,000 on the year. He is very grateful for continued support but has made a reduced offer of £1,950,000 to Church House for 2021, although he would very much like to achieve £2 million.

The Moderator expressed Synod's thanks to Peter Pay, Colin MacBean and to all churches.

20S15 Mission and Outreach: The Revd Ray Stanyon presented the three constituent reports, with Mission Development Group and Church & Society being those from the March 2020 Synod papers. The World Church Group report has been updated because of the Zambian food poverty situation. Although the appeal for money was originally for drought relief, it later became needed for Covid-19 relief for ministers who were not able to be paid. This wider use was endorsed by Synod.

20S16 Breakout Rooms: There was discussion on Zoom for Ministries & Learning, Children's & Youth, Wessex Trust, Mission Development Group and Church & Society.

20S17 Thanks: The Moderator expressed her thanks to everyone for their patience in the new experience of conducting Synod business by Zoom. In particular she thanked Deborah Walker, Chris

Copley, those presenting reports and the technical team comprising Roger Clark, Ray Stanyon, John Downing, Tony Brett, Phyllis Williams, Michael Hopkins, Karen Bell and Adam Payne. She then expressed very special thanks to Sue Brown for being a really good colleague to work with as Synod Clerk.

The Revd. Ray Stanyon thanked the Moderator for convening Synod and for all the preparation that went into it.

20S18 Worship and Induction of Synod Clerk: The Moderator led worship, speaking about wisdom, power and knowledge from Jesus. She then inducted Miss Karen Bell as Synod Clerk.

Synod closed at 3.50pm.

The next meeting is on Saturday 13th March 2021 at Avenue St. Andrew's URC, Southampton, though the right is reserved to hold it online if necessary.