

SYNOD COUNCIL REPORT

The Synod Structures report in 2010 boldly declared that we strive always to be 'Christ's people ... transformed by the Gospel ... making a difference.' This is why we exist, and as this vision becomes reality we seek to be a foretaste of the kingdom of God, which is justice and joy. With a renewed ecumenical focus, we are driven by the Synod Mission Criteria which undergirds all our thinking. The Synod's mission is to encourage and enable local churches in their mission.

Synod Council continues to look for opportunities for being church in the geographical area of the Synod and is supporting and resourcing the local churches to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

1. **Synod Ecumenical Development Officer 50%.** At its meeting on 1st February 2018 Synod Council, on behalf of Synod Together, unanimously appointed the Revd Paul Dean as Southern Synod Ecumenical Development Officer (50%) from 1st March 2018 for five years. Paul is a gifted ecumenist and will balance this role with his pastoral ministry within the S E Kent Circuit.

Resolution 1:

Synod Together endorses the appointment of Revd. Paul Dean to serve as Synod Ecumenical Development Officer from 1st March 2018 for 5 years.

2. **Synod Clerk Review.** The role of Synod Clerk is one of the most demanding and exposed roles in a Synod which requires a wide range of skills and experience. Derrick first took on the role some 9 years ago when the post was a voluntary post. The role has grown considerably in this time and we are extremely grateful for the way Derrick has approached the task to which he feels called. Synod Council, on behalf of Synod together, unanimously reappointed the Revd Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor as Synod Clerk for a further term of 4 years until his retirement. Our thanks go to Revd Dr Peter Stevenson and Mr Peter Pay for leading the review.

Resolution 2:

Synod Together endorses the appointment of Revd Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor to serve as Synod Clerk from 1st February 2018 for 4 years.

3. **Line Management Review.** In May 2017 Synod Council asked for a review of line management of the current Synod staff. The resignation of the then Line Manager of the Property Officer, the Finance and Trust Officer and the Finance Administrator meant the Moderator had picked up all line management in the Synod Office. This was unsustainable in the long term. The line management review has been completed with a clear definition of line management with the Convener of Property Committee as line manager to the Property staff, the Convener of Finance Committee as line manager to the Finance staff, the Synod Clerk as line manager to the Office Administrator and the Moderator as line manager to the Moderators PA and Office Manager. The 'field staff' line management arrangements remain in place. Our thanks go to Revd Bridget Banks for leading the review.

4. **Synod Strategy.** Synod Council has been considering under the heading of a Synod Strategy what is Synod for in the context of supporting the mission of the local churches arising from the MAD (Make A Difference) Days and the surplus in reserves.
- advice and information on a range of issues
 - training provision
 - making links
 - easing administrative burdens
 - being there for a church when it was out of its depth
 - helping churches to identify their role in God's mission.

This is on-going work and it is hoped that Synod may use some of its resources to address the bullet-points above.

5. **Local Church Leaders Policy.** Synod Council have been co-ordinating with Synod Ministries Committee in updating the LCL Policy. In 2008 in its "Challenge to the Church" (Assembly Resolution 23 and accompanying report), the General Assembly expressed its "belief that each congregation and mission group has a need of its own local leader to work in partnership with the elders' meeting to challenge, enable and equip the saints and be a focus of Christian presence in the local community" but left it to Synods to "make arrangements for the recruitment, training, calling and support of local church leaders". At present we have 16 Local Church Leaders within Southern Synod. Most of our LCLs are in pastoral ministry within the local church context and virtually all of the training given is for those in pastoral ministry. Therefore, Synod Council, acting on behalf of Synod Together, resolved that from 1st January 2018 there will be only one defined model of local church leadership within Southern Synod: Lay Leader – offering pastoral oversight, preaching, worship and mission support.
6. **Interim Moderator guidance.** Guidelines for Interim Moderators have been revised, highlighting the need for absolute confidentiality, the need to have a concern for the likely duration of the vacancy and the need to produce a pastorate profile fit for purpose with Terms of Settlement and a copy of the latest accounts. There was a template for an order of service for the induction. An equal opportunities form was included for completion in the event of an unsuccessful introduction. Some guidance on the makeup of the vacancy group was suggested along with clarification on the invitations to the induction/ordination. All current Interim Moderators should have received this paperwork.
7. **Deployment Strategy.** This is on-going work but Synod Council felt it is important for Synod Together to know that further work was happening on this important policy.
8. **Concurrence.** Synod Ministries had requested changes to the requirements for concurrence to calls (and exits), asking that concurrence be devolved to Pastoral Committees due to the infrequency with which some Synod/United Areas met.

Resolution 3:

On the recommendation of Synod Council, Synod Together agrees that the Synod/United Area Pastoral Committee gives concurrence to a call, both for the incoming minister and the outgoing minister, on behalf of Southern Synod.

9. **GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).** Guidance had been sent to all Synod churches and ministers. There will be a presentation at Synod Together.

10. **Manse Policy.** The Synod manse policy is currently undergoing a review which we hope to bring to Synod Together in October. However, the £500 annual provision for repairs and maintenance has been in place for many years and more realistically should now be set at £1,000. Synod Council, acting on behalf of Synod Together, agreed unanimously to increase it to £1,000 with effect from the beginning of 2018.
11. **Changes on Synod Council.** Synod Council welcomed Revd Jim Thorneycroft as the CSUA (Central Sussex United Area) Co-Leader and Ms Pam Tolhurst, a Local Church Leader (LCL) at Gillingham URC and one of Southern Synod representatives to Mission Council to its meeting. Our other representatives to Mission Council (The Moderator, the Synod Clerk and Revd George Watts) are already on Synod Council.
12. **Changes in the Synod Office.** We also welcome Mr Jon Dean to the Synod Office as our interim Property Officer (part-time) whilst we seek a full-time Property Officer. Mr Simon Harding has resigned as Finance Administrator and we are currently seeking a replacement. Our thanks go to all our staff and officers in this intervening period.

The Moderator

24/02/2018