

Churches' Mutual Credit Union

At General Assembly in July 2016 at Southport during business session four, the Assembly called for the report of the finance committee. The Treasurer, Mr John Ellis, formally proposed resolution 26 and asked permission for the Venerable Anthony MacRow-Wood, Archdeacon of Dorset, President of Churches' Mutual Credit Union, to speak about the Churches' Mutual Credit Union, which the Moderator granted.

After the presentation by the Venerable, the resolution was put and passed by consensus.

Resolution 26

General Assembly welcomes the participation of the United Reformed Church in the Churches' Mutual Credit Union.

Further information can be obtained from the URC website or from John Ellis, URC Treasurer, who would be happy to receive any questions on John.Ellis@urc.org.uk or 01732 353914

Below is a **Model church magazine article** freely available for use or adaptation drafted July 2016 by John Ellis, URC Treasurer.

Do you want to make the economy work better for ordinary people? Then here's an idea. The United Reformed Church has recently joined the Churches' Mutual Credit Union.

Since the financial crash of 2008-9, it has become much harder for households with low or erratic incomes to borrow to cover emergencies and other short term needs. High Street banks have had to be much more restrictive in their lending to those they rate as high risk, and the gap in the market has mainly been filled by firms with questionable ethics and dramatically high interest rates.

In some communities credit unions provide a good alternative. They can provide help at times of financial hardship by simple processes and at clear, low interest rates. In many communities, however, credit unions do not exist or are struggling to find adequate leadership or financial stability. A lively new contribution to addressing the issue is the Churches' Mutual Credit Union (CMCU).

The CMCU was launched in February 2015, embracing the Anglican Churches in Britain, the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church; and from July 2016 the URC is part of it too.

Initially the CMCU only seeks to offer the most basic savings and loan products but hopes in due course to expand its operations, including by providing loans to churches for mission projects. Its facilities can be studied on its website www.cmcu.org.uk.

As with any credit union, fundamental to its structure is the "common bond" which links all its members, whether borrowers or savers. Initially this is limited to those with a formal link with one of the partner Churches as ministers, elders (serving or non-serving), employees or trustees. Members of their households can also join, as can a local church. The longer term ambition is to extend the common bond to all members of participating denominations.

How much impact the CMCU can make in the longer term largely depends on establishing a track record that persuades the regulators to allow it to widen the scope of its activities. This in turn depends on growing as rapidly as is prudently possible its membership, both savers and borrowers. Will you join in this opportunity to do something practical to promote economic justice?