

**Theme: Resourcing Mission**

1. **Arrival and Registration:** Members of Synod Together started arriving at 9:00 am. Registration was done in the David Sweet Hall.
2. **Health & Safety Notices:** At 10:30 am Ms Joana Marfoh, Joint Church Secretary at East Croydon welcomed everyone to East Croydon and gave Health & Safety notices.
3. **Constitution of Synod Together:** The Synod Moderator, the Revd Nicola Furley-Smith, duly constituted the Synod meeting.
4. **Opening Worship** was led by the Revd Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor, Synod Clerk and minister of East Croydon URC. On the theme of resourcing mission, the reading was Jeremiah 18: 1 – 6 which used the analogy of clay in the potter's hands. As the clay is moulded and re-shaped in the potter's hands, so are we in God's hand responding to his guidance. Prayers were led by the Revd Fiona Thomas. The hymn "Go forth and tell, O church of God awake" was sung.
5. **Child Friendly Church Awards:** Tom Hackett, the Synod's Children's and Youth Development Officer (CYDO), introduced representatives from Emmanuel URC, West Wickham and Lindfield URC to receive their re-award certificates. The Synod Moderator presented them with the certificates.
6. **Synod Roll and Apologies for absence**
  - 6.1 **Synod Roll:** The Synod Clerk placed the roll on the table, informed the meeting that it contained a total of **274** voting members comprising 86 active/serving ministers and 136 church representatives, 52 co-opted members and others.  
In addition, there are 75 Retired ministers and 10 Observers on the roll.
  - 6.2 **Attendance:** The Moderator presided over a total of **146** people according to the signed in register - comprising: 54 active/serving ministers; 59 church representatives; 20 co-opted members, 8 observers and 5 retired ministers;
  - 6.3 **Apologies** had been received from 7 active/serving ministers; 14 church representatives; 3 co-opted members; 10 retired ministers.
7. **Pastoralia**

The Synod Clerk advised that the Revd Beryl Chatfield, the Revd Geoffrey Beck and Mr Peter Bunker had died since the last Synod Together meeting. Subsequently, the meeting was advised of the sudden death in November 2018 of Mr Roy Powell, local church leader at Camberwell Green. Other pastoral news was shared.  
The Synod Clerk led the meeting in a prayer for the deceased and those for whom there was concern in the Synod.
8. **Reception of Jubilee Ministers**

The Moderator apologised that the list provided of Jubilee ministers always grouped ministers as ordained on 1<sup>st</sup> July and advised the meeting that, for this reason, she would in future greet such ministers only at the October meeting.
9. **Appointment of Tellers**

The following resolution was passed unanimously :

**Southern Synod Together appoints as Tellers Revd Peter Flint as Chief Teller, and Miss Pamela Tolhurst, Ms Grace Marriott and Mr Colin McCracken as tellers.**

**Traffic lights** were to be operated by Revd Wendy Swan.

10. **Minutes of Synod Together Meeting held on 13 October 2018 at Caterham School.** The Minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true record and signed by the Moderator.
11. **Matters arising from those minutes: (Paper A)**
- 11.1 Synod Strategy (minute 14.1)**  
Synod Council continued to look at ways of implementing the strategy in practical terms for local church resourcing.
- 11.2 Synod Policy on Authorised Elders for Lay Presidency at the Sacraments (minute 14.3)** Synod/United Area Pastoral Committees had received the process for implementation. The Moderator had written to all Church Secretaries and Ministers with the process to be rolled out for 2019/2020 until further notice.
- 11.3 Active Ministers (minute 18.2)**  
The Moderator had compiled the list of active ministers to send to Ministries Committee at URC Church House.
- 11.4 Isolated Members (minute 18.3)**  
Any church wishing to be a host church for Isolated members was asked to contact the Moderator or their Synod/United Area Leader.
- 11.5 Money to CWM for use of the churches in India (minute 18.5)**  
This was being implemented in accordance with the decision of Synod Together in October 2018.  
All of the above was noted and received without any questions.
12. **Synod Council Report: (Paper B)** A Report had been prepared by the Moderator and circulated in advance of the meeting. Attention was drawn to the following:
- i. **Partnership between the URC and the Presbyterian Church in Korea** The arrival of Ms So Young Jung from the Presbyterian Church in Korea who was coming to the Synod as a lay missionary bridging the gap between North and South Koreans in New Malden and Kingston.
  - ii. **Church Growth and Development for Southern Synod [Part 1]:** Synod Council was working on a discussion paper for Elders and Church Meetings along with Bible Study material as a follow-up to the Mission Officer's paper on this subject.
  - iii. **Church Growth and Development for Southern Synod [Part 2]:** The decrease in number of stipendiary ministers was a cause for concern especially as there was evidence that growth and good leadership went together. The target figure for the deployment of stipendiary ministers in Southern Synod in 2022 was expected to be 37 (for 140 churches). The Moderator suggested that this could be alleviated if more candidates were to present themselves for training, more certificates of eligibility were issued and more flexibility around retirement exercised. Synod Council was to reconsider its Deployment Policy looking at new ways in which ministers might be deployed and considering whether to make a distinction between what might be regarded as "maintenance" churches as opposed to "missional" churches. The role of local church leaders was becoming more and more relevant.
  - iv. **Safeguarding Lead:** Synod Council had agreed to work with Thames North Synod to recruit a Safeguarding Lead for both Synods. The post was to be advertised shortly. The Moderator thanked the Revd Roger Jones for all that he had done in the past and for his role in preparing the job description of the new post. These thanks were endorsed by the meeting. Good Practice 5 was to be ready later in the year.
13. **Synod Ministries Committee matters [Paper C]:** A report had been circulated prior to the meeting and was received. The Revd Bridget Banks, convener highlighted the following:
- i. **Special Category Minister (SCM) posts**  
The Moderator had reflected on the process currently used for SCM and strategic posts and wondered whether these sat more happily with the Synod's strategic thinking, i.e. Synod Council, rather than the Ministries Committee.  
The Committee thought that new work should be encouraged, perhaps initiated by Synod Council, but applications should be dealt with by the Ministries Committee. It was thought that finance should never dictate the final decision on whether a project should go ahead.

ii. **Authorised Elders to preside at Holy Communion**

The Moderator had written to all ministers in pastoral charge and church secretaries with a process for agreeing Authorised Elders. The Moderator intended to write a further paper on the process.

iii. **Compassionate Leave**

It was noted that the Moderator can authorise compassionate leave of up to two weeks; it was for the Moderator to determine whether compassionate leave should be granted. It could not be granted when a minister was on sick leave (doctor's certificate was required for sick leave.) The Moderator was to send a note to all ministers.

iv. **Training and Development**

The Committee had found it encouraging that 20 people from across the Synod had signed up for the daytime and 3 for the evening Lay Preachers course. A pilot Stepwise group had started; everyone on the course would have a Mentor.

v. **Model 4 NSM (Non-Stipendiary Ministry)**

Mission Council, acting on behalf of General Assembly, had authorised a model 4 NSM which would provide for locally ordained ministers.

vi. **Deployment**

The annual deployment conversation had been held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

**14. Synod Children's and Youth Work Committee matters [Paper D] :**

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Graham Purdye, the convenor highlighted:

- i. The need for further representation from the Areas on the Committee and for a new secretary.
- ii. Reuben Watt was congratulated on his election as Moderator Elect of URC Youth Assembly 2019. This would mean that he would have to step down as Synod Youth Rep during 2020. Four people from the Synod had attended this year's Youth Assembly in January. Tom Hackett presented a video on the recent Youth Assembly which had been on the theme of "One Body: we are all in this together." Resolutions this year had centred on the inclusion of youth in decision making bodies of Church Committees, mental health and wi-fi in churches. Hannah Jones, also from Southern Synod, was thanked for her term of office as Moderator of Youth Assembly. Next year's Assembly would take place from 24 – 26 January 2020 with the theme of "Common Ground".
- iii. Attention was drawn to the Crossfire Camp (24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May) in Leicestershire. Revd Andrew Willett was looking for at least a further 6 young people (age 12 and above) to fill his minibus. A short video was shown to promote the Camp. Cost of attendance was £30. Revd Andrew Willett can be contacted on: [revwillett@gmail.com](mailto:revwillett@gmail.com)
- iv. Children and Youth Questionnaire: The Children and Youth Development Officer (CYDO), Tom Hackett, had still to analyse the results of the questionnaire which had been included with the Annual Return from churches. Several churches had not yet responded. Early observation of the responses suggested that more work needed to be done to retain secondary age children.
- v. Plans were in hand for Messy Church training and mental health training, possibly to be provided by Young Minds or Rethinking Mental Illness.
- vi. It was hoped to re-launch the Synod Youth Executive and to run a youth event at the Synod Together Meeting in October 2019. New members were being sought from churches across the Synod.

Tom Hackett drew attention to **The Big Speak Out** which was an event due to take place 5 to 7 July 2019 for children 11 – 18 and the opportunity to act as Green Belt ambassadors for 16 to 25 year olds.

15. **Southern Synod Grants and Loans Structure: [see Paper - Proposal for Restructuring]** The paper had been prepared by the task group which had comprised John Denison, John Ellis, Lesley Charlton, David Walters and the Moderator. John Ellis and Lesley gave a very entertaining presentation to illustrate the thinking behind the ideas of the task group and the proposals they were presenting. They hoped that these would provide effective support, simplicity, speed and flexibility.

The guiding principle was that the financing of the synod's grants and loans would come from a pool – i.e. such funds of the synod as were available for this purpose after core costs of Synod Office and wider Synod commitments had been deducted and provision made for reserves and restricted funds. It was proposed that the administration of grants and loans be split into two areas: The **Church Building Fund** which would cover building work, feasibility studies in respect of preservation of buildings, feasibility studies in respect on environmental projects and emergency repairs (a separate budget of £250,000) – and a **Strategic Mission Fund** which would cover Turn the Tide, New Growth and other strategic mission related projects. The Manse Fund was separate and not included. It was proposed to allocate £1 million per annum to each fund for 2020 and 2021 with a review taking place in the latter part of 2021.

The meeting broke into 10 groups to discuss the following questions:

- What opportunities for mission would a pattern like that proposed make possible for your church?
- Do you support the issue of principle as set out in the draft resolutions?
- Have you any suggestions for improving the way this would all work?

Feedback from the various groups was to be shared in the afternoon session and assurances were given that all feedback would be taken account of in the details of the process. Questions were asked concerning the resolutions by the Revd Andrew Willet, the Revd Naison Hove and Mr Nigel Macdonald, which were responded to by John Denison. Having established that the meeting was in favour of proceeding to the resolutions, the following resolutions were put with an amendment to the second resolution from the Revd Peter Flint being allowed:

**1. Synod Together agrees to consolidate the provision of grants and loans (except the Manse Fund) into two designated funds (the strategic Mission Fund and the Church Building Fund).**

The resolution was passed with 118 in favour and none against.

**2. Synod Together agrees that the two Funds should be administered, in principle, as set out in the presentation.**

The resolution was passed with 118 in favour and none against.

**3. Synod Together agrees to place £1.0 million into each of the two funds in 2020 and 2021.**

The resolution was passed with 118 in favour and none against.

**4. Synod Together asks for the arrangements to be reviewed at the Synod Council meeting in September 2021 reporting to Synod Together in March 2022.**

The resolution was passed with 118 in favour and none against.

16. **Locally Recognised Lay Preachers:** Revd Andy Twilley, the Synod Training and Development Officer introduced Anne Runcorn, Lynne Skinner, Karen Kelland, Marie Jackson, Janet Higgs, Martin Leonard, Dan McQuillan, Nigel Macdonald and Bernard Moore who had successfully completed the Synod's lay preaching course and an assessed service thereby becoming locally recognised lay preachers. They were greeted by the Moderator and presented with their certificates. Andy gave thanks that 23 people had enrolled for the 2019 lay preachers' course and asked that they be upheld in prayer.

17. **Welcome to East Croydon United Reformed Church and directions for lunch:** Mrs Amma Boateng, Joint church Secretary at East Croydon URC welcomed everyone to East Croydon URC, gave directions for lunch and said Grace.

18. **Break for lunch:** At 1:00 pm the Meeting was adjourned for lunch.

19. At 2:00 pm the Moderator called Synod Together to order and the afternoon session commenced with **Introduction of new Ministers and Thanks.**

The following were introduced and greeted by the Moderator:

- i. **Central Sussex United Area:** Mr Cochrane Young introduced Mr John Lane as Co-Leader and he in turn, introduced Revd Andrew Mills who had returned to Synod after a spell of ministry in the north. He also expressed appreciation for Dr Graham Campling's service as Secretary to the Area.
  - ii. **East Kent Synod Area:** Revd George Kalu introduced Revd Bernard Fidler who was inducted to St Andrew's Canterbury with Littlebourne Chapel and Sandwich and a new Area Treasurer, Mr Mark Camp.
  - iii. **South London Synod Area:** Revd Lesley Charlton introduced Revd Nadene Snyman, inducted to Christ Church Petts Wood and interim ministry at Beckenham URC and Mrs Jo Patterson inducted as Church Related Community Worker at the Copleston Church and Centre.
  - iv. **Surrey and Sussex Synod Area:** Revd George Watt introduced Revd Martin Hazell who will be inducted to Redhill pastorate, Revd Graeme Allan who was to take over as Area Leader, Revd Julian Thomas who was stepping down as convener of Surrey Pastoral Committee and Alan Kirby who was stepping down as secretary to the Surrey Pastoral Committee. George Watt was taking on convenorship of the Surrey Pastoral Committee and Linda Richards taking on the role of secretary to the Surrey Pastoral Committee.
  - v. **Synod Lay Preaching:** Mrs Sue Knight was greeted as the new Commissioner.
20. **Presentation: "Lovingly Present: Lovingly disruptive.....developing whole life discipleship".** The Moderator welcomed Revd Steve Rouse from the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC) and invited him to address the meeting. Steve gave illustrations of how and where we live out our faith. The places were everyday places and the opportunities arose in everyday situations and relationships. We live out our faith as citizens, as servants, as married people, in real life in church, in spiritual conflict. He used the passage from 1 Peter 2:12ff which had the exhortation to "Live such good lives among the pagans that .... they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." He stressed the need to evangelise by being "lovingly present" and "lovingly disruptive" when we are scattered in community. He talked of frontlines – the place where God calls us to live out our faith by good works, grace and love, by modelling godly character, make good work, minister grace and love, mould culture, being a mouthpiece for truth and justice, and being a messenger for the Gospel. He believed the best days of the Church are in front of us.

The Moderator thanked Steve for his presentation.

21. **Matters from Synod Training and Development Officer:** Revd Andy Twilley

1. Revd Andy Twilley reminded churches of the new resources being published by BRF, which provided 8 weeks of study material for each of the Holy Habits.
2. Stepwise was underway – groups could be formed and start at any time. The modules were 6 sessions long. See <https://urc.org.uk/count-me-in.html>
3. Creating an Effective Team: Andy had material available to help churches to build an effective leadership team and was willing to visit churches to deliver training.
4. Church Learning Hubs (LICC) an 8 month process starting in September comprising two-hour workshops for ministers and/or local church leaders plus 6 people from the church. The full support of both minister and church was required. A Vision Day was to be held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

22. **Synod Grants and Loans (Part 2) :**

John Denison commented on the feedback received from the morning session group discussions. He confirmed that the Emergency Fund was outside the two funds voted upon in the morning. Some of the other queries centred on speed of decision making, composition of the awarding committees, communication between funds, reserves policy. All comments would be considered as details of the implementation process were worked out.

## 23. Synod Finance Committee Matters:

Mr John Denison, Synod Treasurer, reported as follows:

### 1. 2018 Financial Year End

Each year the budget for the Synod projects a deficit in expenditure over funds received. An excess is only realised when enough funds are received from the sale of Synod buildings to clear the deficit. During the 2018 financial year that did not happen leaving the Synod with a possible deficit of approx. £150,000.

As stated during the Grants & Loans presentation the Synod does not receive any funding from local churches or the M&M contributions which means that any deficit must be covered by the General Purposes Fund.

### 2. Church Accounts

John appealed to churches to provide the Synod Office with their annual 2018 accounts as soon as possible. There were still churches that had yet to provide their 2017 accounts.

It is *imperative* that a church's accounts are

- completed each year,
- properly independently examined
- and approved by the Elders / Church Meeting. This is not just the responsibility of the church treasurer. *It is also the responsibility of the minister, church secretary and elders meeting.*

Good practice advises that a church should annually appoint / reappoint its independent examiner thanking them for examining their accounts.

Each church regardless of size is considered a charity by the Charity Commission. Failure to ensure that accounts are independently examined can result in serious consequences should problems arise.

### 3. Ministry and Mission Contributions

John was pleased to report that the Synod's target of £2.6 million for 2018 was reached. Contributions for 2019 were being received and it was anticipated that this year's target would be reached. On behalf of the URC John thanked the churches for their generosity. Anyone with any questions on M&M contributions should contact either the Synod Area Treasurer or Catherine Kingdom at Synod Office.

### 4. Grants and Loans 2019

Although the new structure of grants and loans had been approved this would not come into force until 2020. Therefore during 2019 the current structure would remain in place with £250,000 set aside for this purpose. Churches were encouraged to put forward applications for funding. A reminder was given that without up to date accounts, a church's application for funding could not be considered.

Catherine Kingdom and Jenny Persaud-Haughton were thanked for their assistance to the Treasurer.

## 24. Synod Clerk's Items:

- 1. Elders Ordination Promise** The Synod Clerk referred to a section in the URC General Secretary's letter to Church Secretaries on this matter which said if a Church Meeting wishes to resist this proposal, then they should pass a resolution that the matter "be not proceeded with" and notify the General Secretary by the date indicated (31 December 2019). If more than a third of Church Meetings reply in that vein, the matter will fall; otherwise it will proceed to Assembly in 2020, to be considered there. This means those in favour should not write to the General Secretary. The Synod Clerk added that those who pass the resolution and have informed or will inform the General Secretary should send him a copy so the synod knows as well. Southern Synod was to consider its response at the October 2019 Synod Together meeting.

- 2. National Call to Prayer - Prayers around Brexit** The Synod Clerk introduced the subject and invited Mr John Ellis to expand on it.

There is a National Call To Prayer from Christians working in Government. A Day of Prayer on Thursday 28th March which is inspired by Christians working in Government. Christians

in Government is non-political and non-denominational, they are those working hard on our behalf in the Civil Service. It's so encouraging to know that there are Christians, many of them who know they are called by God into their positions, working at the heart of our Government.

There is a 2 minute YouTube video tells more:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRyOzhdHXco>

There also an extract from the website setting out of the vision.

<https://nationalcall2prayer.com>

A sample programme for an event is also on their website but one can use any format that is appropriate. Also, there are 6 prayers for the week around the 28th March.

The National Call to Prayer starts now! All are warmly invited to pray individually, and to mobilise their friends and communities to pray for our nation, leading to a Week of Prayer 24 – 30 March, and to join or host events across the UK for a NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER on Thursday 28th March 2019.

3. **Ministry Enquirers' Day** to be held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019 in Manchester. Further information is in Synod newsletter "Vision & Mission" Issue 40 and the Synod website.
4. **Church Annual Returns** Most had been returned but there were still some churches to return theirs.
5. **Stoles** Derrick showed some stoles which were being given away to anyone who would like one.
6. **URC Youth Assembly Moderator** The Synod Moderator greeted Ruben Watt and congratulated him on being elected as Moderator Elect of URC Youth Assembly.

## 25. Thank You

The Synod Clerk expressed his thanks and appreciation to .

- Everyone who had responded to the call to attend Synod Together.
- All who had prepared and presented reports.
- The IT team.
- Revd Jack Beeson for playing the organ for the meeting.
- The Moderator for her chairmanship and leadership.
- East Croydon and its personnel for hosting the meeting.
- Reigate Park Church for agreeing to host the October 2019 Synod Together meeting.

26. **Closing Worship:** The Synod Moderator led closing worship on the theme of Servanthood which included the commissioning of Ms So Young Jung from the Presbyterian Church of Korea as a lay missionary to work with Southern Synod on the Bridge Ministry – bridging the gap between North and South Koreans in New Malden and Kingston. The reading was from John 13: 1-17 which describes the washing of the disciples' feet and the conversation between Peter and Jesus. The Worship concluded with the hymn "Beauty for Brokenness".
27. **Closing of Synod Together:** At 4.10 pm the Moderator declared the Synod Together meeting closed until it meets again on Saturday 12 October 2019, 10.30 am to 4:30 pm at Reigate Park URC or at such other time and place as it may be called together by those charged with the direction of its affairs.
28. **Refreshments** were enjoyed in the David Sweet Hall prior to departure.