

**SOUTHERN SYNOD**  
**Minutes of the Sixteenth Synod Together Meeting**  
**A virtual meeting held via Zoom**  
**on Saturday 10 October 2020**

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1. **Zoom Etiquette:** Members of Synod Together joined the meeting via Zoom. This was the first time that such a meeting had been held. Revd Russell Furley-Smith clarified the etiquette for taking part in the meeting and the voting procedure. He thanked particularly all who had contributed on the technical side to enable the meeting to take place. He welcomed Revd Bridget Banks as the newly appointed Synod Moderator.
2. **Welcome and Constitution of Synod Together:** The Synod Moderator welcomed all who had joined the meeting. She congratulated Revd Russell Furley-Smith on his appointment as Synod Clerk and recorded the Synod's thanks to Revd Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor for his considerable past service to the Synod in that capacity. She duly constituted the Synod meeting.

**Pastoralia:** The roll of Synod Together was tabled, including the names of 59 Ministers of Word and Sacraments, 1 Church Related Community Worker, 96 Lay Representatives, 16 Local Church Leaders and 64 retired Ministers. Apologies had been received from 2 ministers, 4 retired ministers, 2 local church leaders and 1 lay representative. The Synod Clerk remembered all those affected by Covid-19.

Since the last meeting the following ministers had died  
Norman Jenkinson on 26 January, his ministries being in Southsea, Seaford, Newhaven, with Anchor Mission, then Ashurst Wood and CCWM; he lived in retirement in Bognor Regis  
Revd Derek Nuttall on 24<sup>th</sup> June, his ministries being in Falkirk, Aberfan, with CRUSE, then Windsor; he lived in retirement in Heathfield, East Sussex.  
Revd Ron Smith on 12<sup>th</sup> July, Ministry at Brighthelm, living in retirement in Brighton  
Revd David Mather on 21<sup>st</sup> July; following transfer from the Presbyterian Church of South Africa, his ministries were in Ashington, Workington, Snodland, Chatham, Congleton, Blackburn and Cobham; he lived in retirement in Greatstone, Kent.  
Revd Dr Eric Rogers on 4<sup>th</sup> August, ministries in Sheffield before retirement in Rustington  
Revd Michael Davies - 5<sup>th</sup> October, ministries in Rustington, Wallasey, Help the Aged, URC Youth Secretary, Moderator, Thames North, Assistant General Secretary World Council of Churches and in retirement, whilst living in Haywards Heath he offered service to this Synod, including as a Synod Officer and Convenor of the Synod Trust

The Synod Clerk led the meeting in prayer giving thanks for their ministries, commending them to God and praying for the bereaved.

3. **Opening Worship** was led by the Synod Moderator based on Ephesians 6:10-18. The hymn was "For the fruits of all creation". She encouraged all to survive these challenging times by taking good care of ourselves, standing firmly together and relying on the strength of the Lord. She emphasized the need for good communication not only between us and God but also between ourselves. She assured everyone that the Synod was available to offer support. She thanked everyone for their support of the work of the Synod.
4. **Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2019:** The minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed by the Moderator.
5. **Synod changes** Since the last meeting the following changes of personnel had taken place within the Synod.  
**Ministerial movements**  
**Left:**  
Bruce Allinson retired from Pagham URC and Selsey Methodist  
Martin Ferris - from Sanderstead to East Midlands

Dominic Grant - from Trinity, Wimbledon to Thames North  
Alison Davis - from Bexley & Bexleyheath to Thames North  
Andrew Birch - from Clive Vale, St Luke's, St Leonards and Hastings, St Marks to Eastern Synod  
Clare Callanan - Retired from chaplaincy to blind veterans, based in Hove, to South Western Synod  
Revd Iain McLaren from Dulwich Grove, Copleston Centre and Camberwell Green to East Midlands

**Arrived:**

Helen Higgin-Botham - Gosport (Wessex Synod) to Christ Church, Chichester and Pagham  
Craig Bowman - from Secretary for Ministries (Church House) to St Andrews Cheam and Wallington

**Internal:**

Bridget Banks: Left Crawley, became Moderator  
Derrick Dzandu-Hedidor: Resigned as Synod Clerk  
Russell Furley-Smith: Became Synod Clerk  
Alan Spence: Interim Minister - The Bay Birchington  
David Yule: Inducted to Westgate on Sea  
Revd Angela Rigby was congratulated on completion of EM2

**Local Church Leaders**

Graham and Katy Hill, local church leaders at Emmaus Christian Centre (Chatham)

**Synod staffing**

Mark Price Haworth to Synod Office as Property Administrator  
Belinda Nielsen as Synod Safeguarding Officer

Recently recognised lay preachers will be greeted at the next meeting.

**6. Synod papers**

- i. Synod Council [Paper A] The paper had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Revd George Watt, Convener of Synod Council, spoke of his disappointment that it had not been possible to make the environment the focus of the meeting as had been originally planned.

A video was shared prepared by the URC Youth Assembly and featuring a presentation given by Ali Greaves highlighting Mission Council's call to all councils, committees and local churches to do everything possible to making URC events and activities eco-friendly. (Note: This video is available to local churches. <https://youtu.be/FRI61IN51wY>)

Racial Justice Advocate – work was being done to develop a Racial Justice Network.

- ii. Synod Ministries [Paper B] The paper had been circulated prior to the meeting and was noted.

**7. Ministerial Supervision**

The Revd Helen Warmington, Convener of Synod Ministries Committee, stressed the importance of this process, the need for which had been highlighted by the Past Case Review. The Secretary for Ministries had written to all ministers and CRCWs on 26 August to advise of the introduction of the scheme which would be mandatory. Helen noted that it was not so easy for everyone to find a supervisor and suggested that ministers start sooner rather than later to find one. (There was a 3 year lead in time) Helen was available to answer questions and can be contacted on [revhelenurc@aol.co.uk](mailto:revhelenurc@aol.co.uk) She thanked Bridget for all her work as the previous convener of Ministries Committee and also Dr Graham Campling for his support of the committee as its secretary.

**8. Safeguarding**

Ms Belinda Nielsen, Safeguarding Officer covering both Thames North and Southern Synods, had recorded a presentation. She encouraged everyone not to be nervous of the safeguarding procedures and offered her support. Good Practice 5 had been sent out to local churches in February but could be downloaded on the URC website and she recommended that people

familiarize themselves with its content. A 2 hour basic training course was available. Churches were encouraged to contact Belinda for available dates. The safeguarding returns were collected with the Annual Church Returns and she emphasized the need for accuracy in filling in these sections. Belinda can be contacted by email at [safeguarding@urcthamesnorth-southern.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@urcthamesnorth-southern.org.uk)

9. There was a short break.

10. **Finance Reports and Budget:** Mr John Denison, Synod Treasurer, spoke to the following items

- i. **Accounts and Budget [Papers C & D]** These papers had been circulated in advance of the meeting. John reminded the Synod that the Synod expenses were financed from the sale of properties and investment income. Synod was asked to vote on the following resolution

<b>Southern Synod receives the accounts for 2019.</b>
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The resolution was passed unanimously.

- ii. **Pensions and M & M:**

For next year the budget headings had been retained from the previous year. Synod was asked to vote on the following resolution

<b>Southern Synod approves the recommended Synod 2021 budget for the General Purposes Fund.</b>
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The resolution was passed unanimously.

John noted that the change to fossil free investment was currently producing a better return than the previous investment fund would have done. Both panels for grants and loans had been re-started. Emergency funding for re-opening was still available. John encouraged anyone with questions or requiring clarification to contact himself or Catherine Kingdom.

He noted with extreme gratitude the efforts made by churches to meet M&M contributions wherever possible. Any church experiencing difficulties was asked to contact their Area Treasurer in the first instance.

The Ministers' Pension Scheme was currently experiencing a significant deficit. Discussions on the mechanism for clearing of the debt were underway involving URC trustees, trustees of the pension fund and the pensions regulator.

John concluded by thanking Catherine Kingdom and Opuene Charles for their contribution to Synod trust and finance matters. The Moderator thanked John for the effort and considerable time he devoted to the finances of the Synod.

11. **Children's and Youth Development Officer:** Tom Hackett advised the meeting via video of the new URC Children and Youth Friendly Church Award Scheme. This replaced the previous Child Friendly Award. This scheme was suitable for churches which did not even have children or young people in their congregation. It was not a box ticking exercise. It was a programme of the United Reformed Church. To find out more or get started contact Tom at [cydo@urcsouthern.org.uk](mailto:cydo@urcsouthern.org.uk)

12. **Discussion Item:** Covid 19 – how can we support each other? In what ways can the Synod offer support? The meeting broke into “breakout rooms” to talk about this and each was asked to provide any feedback to the Synod Clerk by email.

13. **Jubilee Ministers:** The following ministers were congratulated on their jubilees.

**25 years**

Alex Mabbs, Margaret Collins, Jean West, Bryn Thomas, Margaret Ashby

**30 years**

Norman Croft, Andrew Mills, Ray Sowerby, Janet Loveitt, Karen Street

**35 years**

Geoffrey Finch

**45 years**

Kenneth Lynch, Barry Carter, Bryan Shirley,

**50 years**

Dean Tapley

**55 years**

David Helyar, Fred Jackson, Howard Rady, John Waller, Alwyn Knight

**60 years**

John Key

**14. Closing of Synod Together:**

The Moderator expressed her thanks to the technical team and all who had contributed to the meeting. She closed the Synod Together meeting noting that the next meeting would take place on Saturday 13 March 2021 (details still to be decided) or at such other time as may be deemed necessary.