

Report to Southern Synod Together March 2023 from Synod Ministries Committee (SMC)

Synod Ministries Committee has been busy on many fronts since the last Synod Together last autumn. It is with sadness that we report that our esteemed Secretary, Graham Campling, will be standing down after our April meeting but with gladness that Sue Eardley has agreed to be our new Secretary. We have already welcomed Sue to our last meeting as we did John Bunker, the new Convenor of Surrey and Sussex Pastoral Area.

We were delighted Rev Dr Janet Hopewell, Chaplain and Advocate for the Elderly, was also able to join with us at our last meeting as a guest speaker and share her enthusiasm for this ministry.

Lay Preaching – SMC has noted that the *Lay Preaching Commissioner* is now the *Lay Preaching Advocate*; the Synod led Lay Preaching Course will now train *Worship Leaders* rather than *Lay Preachers*. Eight names were brought to SMC of those who have successfully completed the course last year and they will be presented at the Synod Together along with another name who had not then undertaken their assessed service, but who has since passed (hooray). Too many names to mention here, especially as they will be named when welcomed, but we extend our thanks and congratulations to them all.

Candidates and Students -Sue Knight, Yu Kyung Kim (Yuki), and Joyce Edeki have all been accepted for training. Another candidate is to undertake their pre-interview Church Placement.

Ecumenical Officer – Rev Dr Paul Dean retires in September. All Pastoral Committees were therefore reminded to check if any LEPS need to update their Governing Documents whilst we still have Paul's expertise to draw on. Also, we were reminded of the report to the 2022 General Assembly on *Reinvigorating the Ecumenical Vision of the United Reformed Church*, emphasising the centrality of LEPs to the ecumenical mission and vision of the URC.

Safeguarding – there are both in person and online courses for Foundation and Intermediate Safeguarding Training, and also on-line events to support awareness of Domestic Abuse coming up.

Children and Youth – alongside more Youth Mental Health First Aid Courses, and the Youth Assembly at the end of January, we heard about the exciting new resource *Faith Adventures for Children Together (FACT)*, launched on 1st March.

Item from Assembly Executive – attention was drawn to paper H3 Elders see <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Assembly-Executive-2022-H3-Marks-of-Eldership.pdf>

CRCW Posts – CRCWs are an important part of the Synod's myriad ministries, and the post at the Copplestone Centre was recommended for continuation, and this was concurred by the Accreditations Sub-Committee. Advice was sought from Synod Council about the spread of CRCWs across the Synod recognising their scarcity. Synod Council have agreed "that it not in normal circumstances condone applications for more than two CRCWS in any area and would seek to have a more even geographical spread of CRCWs in areas of greatest need". NB the current recommendation is for each Synod to have two CRCWs.

Korean Mission Partner Review – the recommendation that this continue was also agreed, subject to details that needed concurrence from wider councils of the Church, and International Partners. Almost, but not all, details are in place at the time of this Report. Synod Council also gave its concurrence to this and are taking the final details forward.

Sabbatical – Agreement was given to Reggie Mundena plans to take his Sabbatical from mid-May to mid-September. He will be working for part of this time at Gloag Presbyterian Mission School in Zimbabwe. SMC also encouraged ways in which reports and feedback from Sabbaticals could be shared across the Synod. Alas, the Convenor of SMC has not yet completed all the details of her upcoming Sabbatical but hopes to rectify that by SMC in April.

New Terms of Reference for Synod/United Area Pastoral Committees were agreed, and *a copy is attached to this report*. The review was not easy, and each time a consensus seemed to be reached then life moved on and something needed to be revised. The Committee agreed to review again before the next formal review, to try and keep them up-to-date. Huge thanks to Hilary Miles and team.

Reports from Synod/United Pastoral Committees – commented on the complexities of finding people to take on roles, the tentative discussions between Synod Areas about boundaries and sharing ministry across boundaries, fellowships where

Ministers/Local Leaders are leaving and therefore the Synod Deployment Strategy is becoming reality, the challenges that arise where proper up-to-date leases are not in place, support for LMMR, fellowships which do not embrace the URC ethos, care of retired Ministers, and so much more. Thanks as ever to all who do so much.

Deployment – as ever this has been a major topic. The last Deployment Day was on 9th November 2022 and the next on 25th April. This has been the forum for much of the discussion on deployment and where many of the ideas have sprung from eg the days of prayer planned for June and July, and the concept of Visionary Companions.

Two delegates from each Synod/United Area have been invited to each deployment day, the Area Leader and the Convener of the Pastoral Committee, and alternates encouraged where it was not possible for them to attend.

From these discussions, and those at SMC and Synod Council, a paper *Synod Deployment Guide for Local Churches* was presented and adopted at the February Synod Council and a copy is attached for noting and subsequently implementing through Synod/United Areas. It is hoped a copy will soon be on the website, and also sent to each Church Secretary.

Update on Deployment Targets – these are reviewed annually and the latest figures are also attached. Thanks, as ever, to John Ellis who undertakes this task so diligently on our behalf.

NB There are four attachments to this report

- TOR Pastoral Committees (Paper B2)
- Synod Deployment Guide for Local Churches (Paper B3)
- Ditto Flow chart (Paper B4)
- Update on Deployment Targets (Paper B5)