



Children's and Youth Work Committee
Report to Synod, October 2023

Submitted by Graham Purdye



*The good leave an inheritance to their **children's children**...*

Proverbs 13:22a

Members

Membership:

There have been no recent changes to the committee so there are currently 8 active members. Tom is valiantly covering the minute taking for which we are very grateful, but if anyone knows somebody in their church that may be willing to take on this role, please let me know. We are still looking at getting more involvement from young people in the Synod.

Recent Discussion Items, Events etc. – From CYDO – Tom Hackett

International youth exchange event

Zeerak fed back on the tri-national youth exchange. Zeerak attended as part of the leadership team. There were 54 attendees in total (including leaders) from France, Germany and UK. They stayed at Lee Valley and the event ran for one week. Included trips to London, Seven Sisters, and Brighton. Although many young people were shy at the start, you could see they became more confident in mixing as the event progressed. Worship took place each evening and was translated into the different languages and included hymns in different languages. Zeerak had a great experience and appreciated the opportunity.

4 participants attended from URC. (3 from Wales, 1 from Southern Synod). There is a need to explore how to increase participation at future events. Discussion and promotion at youth assembly would be important - Zeerak will put this forward at the next Youth Executive Meeting. Zeerak will give a PowerPoint report of the event at Synod.

Greenbelt Festival

This year we ran the Youth venues again, with a team of 21 volunteers, coordinated by 3 members of CYDO plus team. Tom, Heather Moore and Zara Shahbaz attended as part of team from Southern Synod. There were 2 separate venues for 11-17 years olds. The Den, a hangout space with boardgames, crafts, tuckshop and café. The engine, a programmed venue with workshops and activities throughout the day. Positive feedback was received from young people. URC is committed to running the venue for a further 2 years.

Report back on Synod Residential

The event went ahead at Kingswood Grosvenor Hall near Ashford, Kent at beginning of June. There were 18 young people attending in total. Most participants were from Thames North Synod. One participant attending from Southern Synod, from Christ Church Swanley URC. Numbers were impacted due to timing close to exam period. It was hoped that the younger age range (11-14) would attend, but several were put off attending by themselves without older siblings, who had exams. Zeerak also attended as a member of the leadership team and led worship sessions each evening. Zeerak gave feedback about his

experience attending as leader for first time. He shared that there was positive feedback from participants who had asked for the event to happen again. Tom expressed thanks to Zeerak and the other leaders who attended from Thames North. Due to sickness Lorraine Downer was unable to attend the event. This caused challenges ahead of the event, as Tom did not have access to the Thames North Synod participant contact details. Support from Thames North leader meant that we were able to contact all participants ahead of event and it was able to go ahead successfully. Lorraine has been on long-term sick leave since the residential, so evaluation meeting has not yet taken place, and no discussions have taken place regarding follow up event in 2024. It is hoped that this will go ahead again next year. Date of event should be reviewed, and advertising should take place earlier in order to help increase participation.

A contribution of £2000 will be made to Thames North Synod towards the cost of the event.

Mental Health First Aid Training

Online training course went ahead in May. Since starting course delivery in 2021, over 100 participants have now completed the course. Next online course will take place in December on dates below.

Session 1 – Monday 4th December

Session 2 – Wednesday 6th December

Session 3 – Monday 11th December

Session 4 – Monday 13th December

Running evenings from 6:30pm-9:30pm.

Advertising will be sent out via Mission & Vision newsletter.

Youth Worker Project

- No new applications received since previous meeting.
- Project is working well at Tolworth URC. Youth worker is settling into role. Tom met worker over summer when visiting church regarding Children & Youth Friendly Church.

Synod Youth Executive Report.

Zeerak was thanked for taking on the role of Synod Youth Representative and thanks were expressed to Heather for previous work in the role.

Zeerak reported on youth executive meeting which took place at the beginning of September. He attended online on the Saturday of the meeting. The group looked at plans for youth assembly 2024, including keynote speaker. They also met with the new comms intern. Training was also delivered on small group leadership in preparation for youth assembly. Next meeting will be in December at Whitemoor lakes looking at final plans for youth assembly 2024. An additional meeting is planned for January to look at motions submitted in advance of assembly. Exploring use of scannable QR codes to help participants to understand key info about youth assembly.

Synod Youth Assembly 2024.

URCYA will take place at Whitemoor Lakes, Staffordshire from 26th-28th Jan. The event is open to young people in school year 10 to 25 years (inclusive). Spaces for participants from Southern Synod to be funded from Synod Children & Youth Work Budget.

Bookings are now open via this link - <http://www.linktr.ee/urcyouthassembly2024>

For the latest news and resources for your Children's & Youth Work, please follow this link.
<https://urc.org.uk/resources-for-children-and-youth>

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

15th November 2022 (via 'Zoom')