

United Reformed Church

Wessex Synod

World Church Group

**Minutes of the meeting held at London Street URC, Basingstoke on
Monday, 16th May 2011 at 2.00 pm**

Present: Martin Waldron, Peter Pay, Ian Simpson, Clare Downing, Derek Lindfield, David Webb, Helen Everard and John Downing.

Opening: Martin opened the meeting with prayer.

Welcome : Martin welcomed John Downing to the Group. John will be a member of the WCG until the 2012 Olympics.

Apologies: There no apologies.

WC 11.10 The minutes of the meeting held at London Street URC. Basingstoke on Monday, January 17th 2011 were approved.

Matters arising

WC 08.04 Register of Churches in Wessex with links to churches overseas. Ian spoke to the spreadsheet that he had electronically circulated. He was thanked for the initiative. It was agreed that Derek would update the Register in line with the information that Ian had discovered.

Action: Derek to update the Register.

WC 08.08 Council for World Mission. Derek reported a conversation he had had with Steve Cox, the Secretary for Communication in CWM. It appears that our request for an information pack to be sent to our churches has disappeared off CWM's radar. Derek said that he had been insistent that CWM should provide us with one and had secured a promise that one would be forthcoming although the time scale was no mentioned. Derek was asked to write to Steve with a copy to the new General Secretary and Jane Rowell asking that CWM should attend to the request we made over two years ago!

Concern was expressed that the UK Border Agency still had not granted a work permit to the new General Secretary of CWM. There was great anxiety over the perceived incompetence and belligerence of the Agency. There was much discussion about this and during the course of it Derek was requested to write to Roberta Rominger suggesting that one possible approach would be to issue of certificate of eligibility to Colin Cowan so that he could come into the country as a URC minister. It might also be suggested that the UWI, CongFed and PCW also issue similar certificates.

Peter read a copy of the letter from Roberta and her colleagues in the UWI, CongFed and PCW to the Times newspaper. Peter agreed to e-mail it to the members of the committee.

Action: Derek to write to Steve Cox and Roberta Rominger.
Peter to e-mail the Times letter to the members of the committee.

WC 08.07 2012 Olympics: John reported that he had presented the Olympics 'More than Gold' DVD at the March Synod and that now all churches should have one. He also said that he had attended a meeting of Churches in Weymouth about what might be organised around the boating/yachting events. He mentioned that the local churches there have employed a worker specifically for the Olympics. They are having a 'dry run' of a Mission in September as a 'taster' for what might happen in 2012. In terms of publicity it was agreed that John will liaise with Anton, the Synod webmaster and also keep Deborah informed. It was also agreed that Helen and Ian should 'flag up' our desire to know if the ERF and UCZ will have competitors in the 2012 Olympics.

Action: John to liaise with the Synod webmaster.
Helen and Ian to note that in due course the ERF and UCZ to be asked about any competitors coming from those churches.

WC.11.02 Links with the Eglise Reformee de France (Nord Normandie) and Le Weekend: Helen reported on an excellent Le Weekend in Salisbury which at one point had 62 participants. She said that all the feedback had been most positive. There was some discussion about the relative lack of support from the Synod itself (English numbers were boosted by Old Colloquians). It was suggested that future Le Weekends should be organised keeping the Youth and Children's committee involved. It was agreed that there should be a presentation at the November Synod.

Helen asked that she be given some assistance with organising the link. It was agreed that David Stephen Butler should be approached and asked if he and Helen could have an exploratory discussion about whether he would be willing to assist her.

Action: David Stephen Butler to be approached.

WC 11.03 Links with the Lusaka Presbytery of the United Church of Zambia: Ian reported that he had now managed to establish his own line of communication with the UCZ. Two Wessex churches have indicated that they would like to have links with the UCZ, Marston and Sarisbury Green. The latter church has indicated that it would like to link with the Mount of Olives UCZ.

Ian will announce through the e-newsletter that he has a number of pen portraits of UCZ churches interested in URC links.

Clare and the Chair of the Southampton Methodist District are visiting Zambia on the 11th July for two weeks. Martin and four other members of the church in Chandler's Ford will be visiting the five churches in Chilanga with whom they have a link, in September.

Action: Ian to contact Carol Rogers about the pen portraits.

WC 08.06 Website: Martin reported that the website had been updated to include John's role concerning the 2012 Olympics. He said that the CWM conference 'Window on the World' was also on the site. Martin was asked to get information from Carol Rogers about the young peoples' presentation to Synod on their visit to Zambia and include some of this information on the website.

Action: Martin to contact Carol Rogers about the young peoples' presentation material.

WC08.11 Zimbabwe: Derek reported that there was no news, as yet, about the request for an honour. It was suggested that this could take up to two years.

Derek agreed to ask Johnston Simpson if Martin could have a copy of his Zimbabwe articles for the Walton magazine. He would also be asked if he might like a stall at Fawley Grange.

Action: Derek to contact Johnston Simpson.

WC11.04 Co-operation with Southern Synod: Martin reported on the meeting he and Helen had attended with Jane Rowell and Barrie Scopes of Southern Synod. He learned at that meeting that Alison Gibbs is a URC missionary serving in northern Zambia through CWM. Jane had agreed to produce a quarterly newsletter and Martin agreed to remind her of this.

Action: Martin to contact Jane Rowell about the quarterly newsletter.

WC11.05 Committee Membership: Martin reported that we still had to find a replacement for the late Stephen Smith as CWM person on the committee. Derek reported that due to family reasons he and his wife Carole were hoping to move to North London to be closer to their grandchildren whom they look after two days a week. As a consequence it was with reluctance that he had to tender his resignation as secretary of the committee. Martin thanked Derek for his work as secretary. As a consequence of Derek's resignation the committee the committee now also had to find a new secretary. There was discussion about possible retired CWM missionaries living in Wessex who might be approached to join the committee. Derek agreed to ask Barrie Scopes who keeps a register of retired CWM missionaries if he knows of any residing in Wessex.

Action: Derek to contact Barrie Scopes.

WC11.06 Job Descriptions: Martin reported that these had been cast in a form suggested by Ian and they were agreed and will be posted on the website. John's Olympics job description was tabled.

Action: Martin to ask Anton to put the job descriptions on the website.

WC11.07 Synod Day at Fawley Grange. It was agreed that Ian and John will produce material to be displayed on the WCG notice boards and that Helen (who had by this time left the meeting) be asked to prepare material on Le Weekend as well. Martin would contact Carol Rogers to find out where we might display the boards.

Action: Martin to contact Carol Rogers.
Ian, John and Helen to produce material for the display boards.

Any other business: There was no other business.

Date of the next meeting: Saturday, 24th September at 10.00am at Elvetham Heath Church.

Close of meeting: The meeting closed with members saying the Grace with and to each other.