

United Reformed Church

Wessex Synod

World Church Group

Minutes of the meeting held at London Street, Basingstoke on Tuesday 31 January 2012

Present: Martin Waldron, Clare Downing, Helen Everard, Peter Pay, Ian Simpson, Philip Bonnier and John Downing.

Opening: Martin opened the meeting with Prayers for our partners around the world.

Welcome: We were hoping to welcome two young people but that will be delayed until our next meeting. In the meantime, Martin asked everyone to give some thought to the roles that the young people might play on the Group.

WC 12.01 The minutes of the meeting held at Elvetham Heath on 24 September 2011 were approved.

Matters arising

WC 08.04 Derek Lindfield had updated the register following the May 2011 meeting. Martin agreed to circulate it to Ministers and Church Secretaries.

Philip suggested that we use a world map to plot all the links using a title such as 'Are you here?' to attract attention. Helen agreed to produce a map for the March Synod meeting.

Action: Martin to seek the Synod Office's help with distribution.
Helen to produce a world map for the March Synod.

WC 12.02 Links with the Église Réformée de France (Nord Normandie) and Le Weekend: Helen reported that Clare Downing, Peter Pay and she had met Olivier Filhol, the ERF Moderator, Revd Andrew Rossiter and Revd Marie Pierre Van Den Bossche to discuss how relationships might develop and plans for Le Weekend.

The ideas emerging from the meeting were:

- The possibility of joint Spring Schools (or equivalent) for Ministers
- Encouraging individual church to church links
- Asking Le Weekend participants how the link might develop
- Encouraging young people to develop links, especially following the 3-way exchange.

The programme for Le Weekend had been agreed. It will take place at the parishes of St Quentin and Aisne. The theme for the weekend will be 'journeys' and the keynote speech will be given by Revd John Marsh, a former Moderator of General Assembly. As usual, the weekend will be a mixture of worship, workshops and relaxation.

Helen gave everyone a flyer which will be available at Synod, will be on our display boards and be plugged during the day.

Action: Helen to prepare a flyer for the display boards
Martin to have display boards at Synod.

WC 12.03 Links with the Lusaka Presbytery of the United Church of Zambia: Ian reported on his activities since the last meeting:

- Phil Ray will be asked again to follow up the link with the Manager of the Zambian Olympic team
- Ian attended a Millennium World Development Goals Conference organised by the Diocese of Bath & Wells. He displayed a PowerPoint presentation on our links with UCZ. Dr Elizabeth Perry prepares comment on lectionary readings linked to social justice issues with emphasis on Anglican links to Zambia. These are published regularly and contain useful sermon material on the following website:

www.bathandwells.org.uk/faithandmission/development-matters/

- St Columba's URC, Oxford is considering a link following Ian's presentation to them
- Ian hosted Regina Chilekwa, Mwape's wife, for 6 days after the St Matthews Choir's visit, and took her to the November Synod meeting. They discussed UCZ pastorate profiles and were able to update them. Mwape was to be asked to fill in the missing information.
- Ian had met Revd Laurie Garner a retired Methodist Minister and was informed of the Zambia Trust Society. They publish a monthly e-letter and the latest one was circulated for reading at the meeting. This month's letter had mentioned that the bicentenary of David Livingstone's birth will be celebrated this year
- Revd Mwape Chilekwa had very recently told Ian that he had stood down as Convenor of the UCZ International Relations Committee and had been succeeded by Lloyd Mugala, a lay member. Ian had emailed Lloyd to make contact and had received an acknowledgement
- Ian had met Bryan Coates and identified joint Methodist/URC congregations in the Synod/Methodist District with a view to sending out a joint letter on congregational linking a draft was circulated for comment.

Martin mentioned the difficulties experienced in communicating with UCZ congregations. Clare suggested sending regular text messages containing prayer requests which might stimulate responses.

Action: Ian to continue follow up with Lloyd Mugala
All of us to comment on the draft joint letter as soon as possible
Martin to send prayer text messages to Bethel congregation.

WC12.04 Belonging to the World Church (BWC) Global Partners Meeting

The annual meeting will take place at Cambridge from 23-25 March this year. Philip Bonnier will be our representative.

The first BWC newsletter had been issued last year but with restricted circulation. It was agreed that it should go on our website and be made known through the E-Newsletter.

Action: Philip to report back at our next meeting
Martin to publicise the BWC newsletter.

WC 12.05 Council for World Mission: Philip reported that no progress was likely until CWM had moved to Singapore and had set up a European Office in London.

In the meantime, Philip will prepare some material for congregations to use to celebrate a CWM Sunday.

Action: Philip to prepare worship material.

WC 12.06 2012 Olympics: John had nothing to report.

It was noted that through Cornerstone Hythe URC's efforts a copy of the 'Going for Gold' mini-mag will be obtained for the Synod mailing to each church.

We were discovering that action was being taken by local congregations, e.g. Weybridge, Dorchester and Weymouth and it would be good to publicise this and to provide links with relevant websites on our section of the Synod's website.

Action: John to produce some links to relevant websites for
Martin to upload.

WC12.07 Overseas Visits made by URC Members: Martin had become aware of 2 official overseas visits made in the last couple of months and wondered whether it would be useful to have details of such visits. We all felt this would be useful as a source of potential speakers, for example, and Martin agreed to make a start by contacting the International Relations Office.

Action: Martin to contact the International Relations Office for details of official visits overseas by Synod members.

WC12.08 Website: Nothing to report except for a reminder to send Martin information so that it can be kept up to date. Clare let us know that a revamp of the website is being considered.

WC12.09 Annual Report for Synod: There were no comments so Martin will forward it to the Synod Office. Peter Pay challenged the Group to consider something more radical for next year.

WC12.10 Any Other Business: Martin raised the possibility of holding 'area' meetings within the Synod for enthusiasts to share ideas, plans and for our links with ERF and UCZ to be publicised. We agreed that this was a good idea and Martin would pursue this with something in the E-Newsletter and at Synod. Ian and Philip thought that this was a possibility for the Oxford area churches.

Action: Martin to include an article in the E-Newsletter and mention at Synod
Ian and Philip to consider an Oxford churches meeting.

Date of next meeting: Monday, 21 May at 7.30 pm (venue probably Basingstoke).

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