

United Reformed Church

Wessex Synod

World Church Group

Minutes of the meeting held at London Street URC, Basingstoke on Thursday, 15th January 2009.

Present: Martin Waldron (Convener), Derek Lindfield (Secretary), Peter Pay (Synod Clerk), David Webb (Methodist Church), Helen Everard, and Stephen Smith.

Apologies: Adrian Bulley (Moderator) and Rob Weston.

WC08.10 Minutes of the last meeting held in Southampton on the 27th September 2008 were approved.

Matters arising

WC08.04 Register of churches in Wessex with overseas links. Derek reported that a slip had been sent out but that the response had been very disappointing. It was agreed that another slip should be sent out with the Synod papers for the March meeting and to be returned at that meeting. Derek and Peter would liaise with Deborah in the Synod office. This slip would ask for two pieces of information – direct links with overseas churches and links with projects overseas.

Action: Derek and Peter to speak to Deborah.

WC08.06 Website. Martin reported that the website is now much improved. It was noted that the Mission and Outreach link to the World Church Group names the previous convener and Martin agreed to ensure that this was changed.

Action: Martin to have the Mission and Outreach link amended to show him as the present convener.

WC08.07 2012 Olympics. Derek reported that he had sent a copy of his original letter to the Methodist Church minister in Dorchester but had had no response. David agreed to let Derek have this minister's postal address so that another copy can be sent through the mail. It was agreed that Derek should contact the URC Mission Committee to ask about the overall URC approach to the Olympics because it was felt that there should be an overall plan. Questions need to be asked about the plans the URC has for responding to this unique opportunity and whether any consideration has been given to appointing a short term Chaplain for the Games.

Action: David to give the Dorchester Methodist minister's postal address to Derek. Derek to send him a copy of his letter to the churches in Weymouth by post. Derek to contact the URC Mission Committee convener.

WC08.02 Links with the Eglise Reformee de France (Nord Normandie). Helen reported that she had attended the Synod in Criel-sur-Mer in the Autumn and had found the experience a good one. She had managed to speak to people about Le Weekend. She reported on some of the issues facing the Eglise including 'sharing the Gospel with grandchildren'.

She then spoke about Le Weekend being held on April 17th to 19th at High Cross Church, Camberley. It was agreed that this will be publicised and Helen would write something to be included in the Synod e-newsletter. It was agreed that an ideal number of participants was about twenty. Helen will co-ordinate the weekend.

Action: Helen, Peter and Martin will meet to finalise arrangements for weekend.

WC08.03 Links with the Lusaka Presbytery of the United Church of Zambia. Martin reported on a meeting that had been held the previous day on the visit of Zambian young people and distributed a proposed itinerary. He also distributed a proposal requesting funding from the Synod Finance and Property Committee. Martin said there would be four URC (as well as four Methodist) young people and that they would be chosen very carefully and given that they will be asked to share their experiences afterwards, communication skills would feature highly in the criteria used for selection. Our young people will also be asked to contribute to their costs. It was reported that Adrian Bulley and his Methodist opposite number, Andrew Wood, are seeking to establish links with senior people in the UCZ.

WC08.08 Council for World Mission.

Stephen distributed leaflets on the CWM conference 'Window on the World' being held in August from the 10 to the 16th. He suggested that it was a good forum for overseas people. It was agreed that Stephen should get enough leaflets for all Synod participants and that these would go out with the Synod papers. Stephen will also write to the Synod Youth and Children's Work committee to ask if any young people might like to attend and suggesting that the Synod should pay for them.

It was agreed that, given the visit of the Zambians, our website should have a background piece on Zambia with a link to the Synod e-newsletter.

It was agreed to invite the Revd Dr Des van der Water, General Secretary of CWM to address the 13th March 2010 Synod at The Avenue URC, Southampton. Before doing so Peter would check that this will be alright.

It was agreed that Stephen should try to get enough copies of the CWM magazine 'Inside Out' to be given out at the March Synod.

Derek reported on conversations with Stephen Cox about worship materials and contacts with CWM and it was agreed that he and Stephen would arrange to visit Ipalo House to discuss this with him. He also reported on a communication with Dale Rominger who is moving on from Church House at the end of the month. Derek has communicated with Dale suggesting that it would be good to talk to Dale's successor once he/she has been appointed.

Action: Stephen to obtain copies of the 'Window on the World' leaflet and 'Inside Out' for the March Synod. Martin to ensure background information on Zambia is on our website. Peter to check on whether it is alright to invite Des van der Water to speak at the March 2010 Synod. Derek and Stephen to visit Ipalo House for discussions with Stephen Cox..

WC08.11 Zimbabwe. Derek again reported on the wonderful work being done by Johnston Simpson of St Andrew's URC. Walton-on-Thames. It was agreed that Johnston should be invited to the March Synod and be asked to put on a display of sculptures from Zimbabwe. Derek would invite him.

Action: Derek to invite Johnston to put on a display at the March Synod.

Any other business

WC09.01 Orissa. Concern was expressed about the situation concerning Christians in the Indian state of Orissa. The violence against Christians appears to have stopped for the time being but the atmosphere is still very intense. Hindu extremists have burned down churches and killed Christians. The police appear to have turned a blind eye to this. Some Christians are still living in tents. We have been asked if there is anything we can do to improve the situation. It was agreed that Derek would speak to Des van der Water and Dale Rominger about this.

Action: Derek to contact Des van der Water and Dale Rominger.

WC09.02 Martin 'flagged up' the need to discuss prayers for churches and situations overseas, and it was agreed that this should be addressed at our next meeting.

Date of the next meeting: Thursday, 4th June at 2.00 pm in Basingstoke.