

South Western Synod of the United Reformed Church

Synod Meeting, October 2023

Report of the Synod Executive Committee

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1. As you might expect, quite a bit of our time since the March meeting of Synod has been taken up with issues around the vacancy for the post of Synod Moderator. We continue to work with various people within the Synod and in the wider URC to move towards a nomination. In the meantime we are seeking the best ways to support Synod staff and the wider life of our churches during this extended vacancy.
2. Following the resolution passed at our March Synod, General Assembly endorsed the proposal that the Bristol Korean Church should be accepted as a church of the URC. We have welcomed Revd Yohan Song as the new minister for the Bristol Korean Church (URC) and have arranged suitable provision of housing for him and his family. We have also taken relevant action as other ministerial moves have taken place and hope to welcome new ministers and others when Synod meets.
3. We have continued to respond to applications for the variety of grants the Synod offers and are grateful for these opportunities to explore with local congregations some of the opportunities and challenges they face in developing their mission.
4. We have engaged with the relevant legal and financial processes as properties the Synod has responsibilities for have had works undertaken, been prepared for sale or sold. These have included Abbey Meads, Bath Central, Upton Cheyney and Elmore Road URCs.
5. The Executive has, with regret, received notice that three of our churches within the Synod have decided to close and have held closing services – Bedminster, Plymouth Trinity and Ilfracombe Emmanuel (UM). We give thanks for the faithful witness that these churches have given to their communities over the years.
6. The Executive have discussed Synod finances, including increases to grant packages and our contributions to wider URC funding issues, including pension provision. The Synod Treasurer will bring several items to the October Synod meeting.
7. The Executive wish to formally acknowledge the extraordinary work undertaken by the staff in the Synod office in support of our churches and by the networks of Synod committees, local ministers and church leaders, elders, Pastoral Advisors, Transition Ministers and others. It takes a lot of commitment from all of us to enable our Synod to not merely function, but to thrive. In the absence of our own Moderator, this means extra burdens fall upon many. We are deeply grateful.