

## **Review of Terms of Reference Church Meeting, Elders & Elders' Council and adoption of URC Rules of Procedure for virtual meetings.**

The Church Meeting on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2019 adopted Terms of Reference for its Church Meeting, Elders & Elders' Council noting that it should be reviewed at or before the Church AGM in 2020.

This paper is accordingly submitted to the 2020 Church Meeting, recommending the integration of the newly amended Section C Rules of Procedure for the conduct of the United Reformed Church, which regularises “virtual meetings” and “virtual attendance at physical meetings” in the URC.

The impact of government restrictions and guidance arising because of the coronavirus pandemic has dramatically increased the use of video conferencing and similar technologies to enable the continued effective operation of groups and organisations during 2020. The United Reformed Church and our church, among many others, has benefitted from the use of platforms such as *Zoom* to continue and promote our work. The new wording for Section C of *The Manual* helpfully distinguishes physical and virtual meetings and clarifies responsibilities of the moderator of virtual meetings.

In accordance with our Terms of Reference this paper gives fourteen days' notice of this proposed change to the Terms of Reference which involves an addition only to the Terms of Reference. (No deletions or changes are required.)

The following resolutions have been drafted:

1. Church Meeting agrees that ***Section C 10.1 – 10.5: Rules of Procedure for the conduct of the United Reformed Church as amended by Resolutions 32 and 33 (Virtual Meetings) agreed by Mission Council 10th July 2020*** be included (as Appendix 1) in the church's ***Terms of Reference: Church Meeting, Elders & Elders' Council***.
2. Church Meeting (noting (a) Footnote 1 to ***Section C: Rules of Procedure for the conduct of the United Reformed Church*** in *The Manual*, Section C 10.3.2 of the ***Rules of Procedure for the conduct of the United Reformed Church*** and (c) Section 3.1.2 of the ***Terms of Reference: Church Meeting, Elders & Elders' Council***) asks that the moderator of a “virtual” Church Meeting considers deferring decisions, suspending or postponing the meeting should it be clear that attendance of a significant number of members who have indicated their intention to attend or who have already been

in attendance are not able to be in attendance because of an area wide internet outage or similar event.

3. Church Meeting agrees that the following text introduce Appendix 1.

*The following URC Rules of Procedure agreed by Mission Council resolutions 32 and 33 on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020 were adopted, together with this introduction, into our Terms of Reference by resolution at the Church Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020.*

*When planning and organising future meetings, in order to maximise participation and engagement, the Minister, Elders and organisers of church groups, as appropriate, will give careful thought whether it is best to plan for a meeting to be held physically or virtually and how to permit virtual attendance at physical meetings.*

*Should the moderator of a virtual meeting be or become aware of an internet outage or other technological issue affecting a significant number of members in a geographical area or of a service provider, consideration will be given to deferring decisions, suspending or postponing the meeting.*

4. Church Meeting agrees that the following text be added to the **Preamble** to the church's **Terms of Reference: Church Meeting, Elders & Elders' Council**:

*At the Church Meeting held virtually on 27th January 2020, it was agreed that the URC Rules of Procedure regularising Virtual Meetings and virtual attendance at Physical Meetings in the URC.*

# **Procedure for Conduct of the Virtual Annual General Meeting**

## **Introduction**

The Annual General Meeting that was scheduled for 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 was postponed because of the imposition of the Covid Regulations which required closure of the Church. The Terms of Reference established in 2019 for Church Meeting, Elders & Elders' Council require that an AGM should be held. A proposed amendment to these terms to allow the meeting to be held virtually will form part of the opening business of the postponed AGM.

The following sets out the arrangements and protocols for the conduct and decision making of the virtual AGM.

Log on details for those wishing to attend will be in a separate communication.

## **Conduct of the Meeting**

1. The business of the meeting will be conducted using Zoom and will be chaired by the Minister, who will open and close the meeting.
2. Eligible members only will be able to vote. They will be required in advance to register their intention to attend with the Church Secretary by email, or by telephone.
3. Copies of the Agenda, Annual Accounts & reports and other papers will be provided by email to those who have registered to attend.
4. Questions from members will need to be sent to the Church Secretary by email in advance of the meeting.
5. Voting will follow the procedures established by the Terms of Reference agreed on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Votes will be counted and recorded by the secretary from the display screens. The voting will take place by the display of a white card on screen comprising: - In favour; Abstentions; and Against (no display).