**ACTION POINTS FOR CHURCHES WHO ARE UNITING (i.e., Forming a LEP or joining another URC congregation) – DEALING WITH CHURCH PREMISES AND FINANCES**

(Please refer to the Guidance Notes which accompany these action points)

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| **Action Point** | **Task** | **Practical Issues**  |
| 1 | The local church considers closure of the building but to continue as church by uniting either as an LEP or joining another URC congregation. Discussions will have been had with the proposed host church and provisional agreement will have been reached and Synod will have been involved. The decision to cease worshipping in its building belongs to the local church, but we hope that the Synod will have been involved in discussions long before the church reaches this point.  | ***Option:*** The church Elders may consider carrying out a whole church review of its future life and mission through engaging in the Being Church process.***Option:*** create a brief photographic record of the current congregation and their predecessors and details of the church premises, with brief historical accounts. |
| 2 | The church meeting passes resolution agreeing to seek Synod’s approval (1) to unite with another church/congregation and (2) to sell the church building and direct the application of the proceeds of sale. | See model resolution – **Appendix 01.** Synod will also make formal resolutions, acknowledging this. |
| 3 | On receipt of Synod approval, the church meeting passes a resolution agreeing to unite. The church’s own assets follow it to the host uniting church or LEP.  | See model resolution – **Appendix 02.** Synod will also make formal resolutions, acknowledging this. |
| 4 | In the case of uniting to form a LEP, a **Sharing Agreement deed** will need to be drafted by the appropriate authority of the host church and approved by Synod. The LEP will normally include the funds of both churches. | The Trust Officer can help arrange for the Sharing Agreement. |
| 5 | Normally, the church building will be sold. Church meeting passes a resolution requesting Synod & Mersey Province Trust to dispose of the church premises and directs how the proceeds of sale are to be used as agreed with Synod – see step 2. | See model resolution – **Appendix 02.** Synod will also make formal resolutions, acknowledging this and instruct a selling agent. |
| 6 | Where the building is closing, inform the **Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths** & return the register [[1]](#footnote-2). Arrange for the proper disposal of other registers, minutes and documents to suitable safe storage such as the **County Record Office**.. | Ensure good account is kept about where the documents are located. |
| 7 | Close all **church accounts** and issue audited accounts to Synod Treasurer. | Subject to approval from the Synod Treasurer make transfer of funds to the uniting church – subject to the Sharing Agreement. Surplus funds to be sent to the URC (Mersey Province) Trust Ltd.  |
| 8 | **Authority to be given to the officers of the uniting church** to continue to tidy up any outstanding business & prepare final accounts of the former church. | All details to be provided to the Synod Treasurer. |
| 9 | **The LEP will appoint officers** from within the membership of the LEP and formulate polices afresh. | This will involve a new constitution which will have been developed over some time with the help of Synod and officers from the joining denomination or church. |
| 10 | Organise a **Closing Service and uniting Service.** | Liaise with Synod for mutually convenient dates and agree who will take part in the services. |
| 11 | **Dispose of surplus contents** of the former church and make any necessary arrangements eg War Memorials see Action Points for closing churches ie churches ceasing to worship and dispersing. | Keep a detailed record of gifts or objects given over the life of the church - inform living relatives where practicable. Dispose of redundant contents & furniture. |
| 12 | Update the combined **churches’ websites** | Liaise with Synod office and Communications Officer re appropriate notices and management of church’s own website. |
| 13 | After vacating the property Synod will take over the disposal of the buildings and remaining contents. The proceeds of sale of remaining contents will be passed to the LEP less expenses unless otherwise agreed. The proceeds of sale of any fixtures and fittings will be applied in the same manner as the proceeds of sale of the building.. | Ensure that all utility service contracts are terminated and the buildings are left in a safe & secure state. Please complete the schedule in **Appendix 03.**  |

**APPENDIX 01**

**Resolution to request that the Local Church ceases and for the Congregation to Unite with another local church.**

At a meeting of the………………………………….United Reformed Church (“the Church”)

Held…………………… (date, time and place)

With…………………………….in the chair,

It was proposed by……………………………….and seconded by…………………….

And agreed ……………………… (unanimously/ nem.con……votes to……..)

[that the United Reformed Church, being the body of people who assemble here for worship, witness and mission, asks its provincial Synod, Mersey Synod, for permission to unite with ……………………………………………… church located at ………………………………………………. in accordance with the provisions of (4)A(iii) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church]

**APPENDIX 02**

**Resolution to discontinue worship at its current site and for the congregation to unite with a local church.**

At a meeting of the………………………………….United Reformed Church (“the Church”)

Held…………………… (date, time and place)

With…………………………….in the chair,

It was proposed by……………………………….and seconded by…………………….

And agreed ……………………… (unanimously/ nem.con……votes to……..)

(1) That the United Reformed Church, being the body of people who assemble here for worship, witness and mission,

having asked its provincial Synod, Mersey Synod, for permission to unit with:

………………………………………………………………. Church, located at:

………………………………………………………………..

 in accordance with the provisions of (4)A(iii) of the Structure of the United Reformed Church and having been given such permission to unite, such unification to take effect at the conclusion of this meeting.

1. That the following people:

(being [the] former elders who are hereinafter called “the closing committee”) are appointed to wind up the affairs and assets of United Reformed Church which responsibilities shall include discharging all debts and liabilities and those responsibilities and duties set out in the “Guidance and Action Points for churches which are closing” issued by the synod.

(2)That the members of the closing committee are to be indemnified out of the said assets in respect of all acts and omissions except in the case of malice, recklessness or dishonesty.

(3) That, the said United Reformed Church having asked the said Mersey Synod, for permission to apply the net assets in the following manner (after payment of debts and liabilities as aforesaid and all other expenses) and having been given such permission,

the closing committee apply the net assets as follows –

and the remainder shall be paid to the said [uniting church] [LEP]

Signed, for the Church Meeting:

…………………………………..presiding……………………………Secretary

………………………Date

**APPENDIX 03**

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| **VACATING A MERSEY SYNOD CHURCH or HALL**  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **ADDRESS:** |  |  |   |
| **ELECTRICITY** |  |   |
| Name of supplier |   |  |
| Account Number |   |   |
| Final meter reading |   |   |
| Location of meter |   |   |
| Have you notified the supplier of closure?that you are moving? | **YES / NO** | Date of Closure/sale |   |
| **GAS** |  |   |
| Name of supplier |   |   |
| Account Number |   |   |
| Final meter reading |   |   |
| Location of meter |   |   |
| Have you notified the supplier of closure?that you are moving? | **YES / NO** | Date of Closure/sale |   |
| **LOCAL AUTHORITY** |  |   |
| Local Authority |   |   |
| Have you notified the LA of closure?that you are moving? | **YES / NO** | Date of Closure/sale |   |
| **WATER** |  |   |
| Name of Supplier |   |   |
| Account Number |   |   |
| Final meter reading |   |   |
| Location of meter/stopcock |   |   |
| Have you notified the supplier of closure? | **YES / NO** | Date of Closure/sale |   |
| **SECURITY SYSTEM (if applicable)** |  |  |   |
| Supplier |   |   |   |
| Account Number |   |   |   |
| Alarm code |   |   |   |
| Have you notified the supplier of closure? | **YES / NO** | Date of Closure/sale |   |
| **TELEPHONE** |  |  |   |
| Supplier |   |   |   |
| Account Number |   |   |   |
| Have you notified the supplier of closure? | **YES / NO** | Date of Closure/sale |   |
| **TELEVISION/BROADBAND** |  |  |   |
| Supplier |   |   |   |
| Account Number |   |  |   |
| Supplier notified of closure? | **YES / NO** | Date  |   |
|   |   |   |   |
| **Please provide details of who the keys will be left with, and could you please the label the keys as to which door they open** |
|  |
|   |   |   |   |
| **To the best of your knowledge please provide details of any issues, problems, idiosyncrasies, and details of any other services contracts on these premises.** |
|   |
| **Signed:** | **Print:** |
| **Date** |  |  |
| **Please return this form to:** |
| **Mike Rushton, URC Mersey Synod, 1 Fingall Road, Wavertree, Liverpool, L15 9JE(email: propertyofficer@urcmerseysynod.org.uk)** |

1. I think all marriage registers have now been returned under the new marriage certificate procedure [↑](#footnote-ref-2)