**Support Structure for Mersey Synod 2023**

1. Committees:
2. Synod Executive
   1. Role
      1. Vision/strategy/culture
         * Oversight of current strategies and future vision
         * Oversight of culture *(of creativity, mission, growth)*
      2. Communications
         * Oversight of communication across the Synod
         * Synod Meetings
      3. Governance
         * Developing recommendations for Synod Meetings
         * Ensuring responses as appropriate to concerns from churches
         * Oversight of implementation of Synod decisions
         * Oversight of interaction with the Trust & legal obligations
         * Urgent decisions when appropriate and by exception
      4. Oversight & coordination
         * Coordination and oversight of all committees and officers
         * Problem solving issues within/across committees
         * Co-operation with the rest of the URC including the Northerly Synods
         * Oversite of nominations
   2. Membership:
      * + Moderator
        + Clerk
        + Treasurer
        + Resources Convenor
        + Pastoral Convenor
        + Mission and Discipleship Convenor
        + Mission Council representatives
        + Four others - nominations from churches, executive, officers Agreed by Synod meeting

*The membership needs to include ministers in pastoral charge*

1. Resources Committee
   1. Role
      1. Property:
         * supporting churches in maintaining or developing their buildings;
         * provision and care of manses;
         * managing property surveys;
         * liaising with the M&D/ Pastoral Committees on mission initiatives, building work and development;
         * advisory role on listed buildings (via sub-committee)
         * buying, renting and selling property as necessary in conjunction with the Trust, and local churches as appropriate;
         * maintenance of the Synod Office.
      2. Finance:
         * maintain Synod accounts and budgets;
         * resourcing the Mersey Synod’s work;
         * Managing grants in consultation with PS and M&D;
         * monitoring local church accounts;
         * compliance with charity law;
         * setting and monitoring Ministry and Mission contributions;
         * providing payroll support.
      3. Other:
         * Providing legal, financial and other advice to local Churches;
         * Human Resources –
           1. overseeing the employment of Synod staff
           2. providing advice to local Churches.
   2. Membership:
      * + Convenor\*
        + Synod Property Officer (Secretary)
        + Moderator\*
        + Synod Clerk
        + Mersey Province Trust Officer\*
        + Synod Treasurer
        + Finance Officer
        + Up to 3 co-opted members \*

*(who will vary according to the needs of the committee)*

\*Trustees

1. Pastoral Support Committee
   1. Role
      1. to be responsible for deployment of ministry taking into account SCM, NSM and CRCW posts and lay leadership whether voluntary or paid
      2. to consider the scoping of churches, grouping, amalgamation or dissolution of local churches and declarations of vacancies;
      3. to give or withhold concurrence of calls to ministers and CRCWs;
      4. to receive the resignation of Ordained Ministers and CRCWs;
      5. to be responsible for ensuring that correct procedure is carried out in the appointment process and oversight of ministers of other churches in charge of a United Reformed Church or in an ecumenical group which includes United Reformed Church interests;
      6. to oversee the appointment of Non-Stipendiary Ministers and to review their posts;
      7. to have appropriate responsibility for all Ordained, Commissioned, or lay ministers except the Moderator, including the provision of mentoring and support as necessary; (including lay preaching meeting, update of lay preachers’ fees)
      8. to negotiate and review all Terms of Settlement.
      9. to appoint and support interim moderators and to support churches in ministerial vacancy;
      10. to give, in consultation with the Moderator and local churches, authority for lay presidency at the sacraments;
      11. to be responsible for caring for local churches including through the Being Church process including Ministerial Accompanied Self Appraisal and Self Appraisal for lay preachers liaising with D&M over vision days & follow up to Being Church
      12. other pastoral matters laid upon Synod by General Assembly.
   2. Membership
      * + Convenor
        + Secretary
        + Moderator
        + Up to 8 pastoral officers, with up to two relating particularly to each area
        + Attendance by officers as requested
2. Mission and Discipleship Committee
   1. Role *NB This includes all ages and stages*
      1. Creating a culture of creativity, mission, growth
      2. Modelling & advocacy of mission including:
      3. Oversite of Synod led mission activities
      4. Leading vision days – for Being Church and otherwise
      5. Action to follow up Being Church reports *(may involve other groups)*
      6. Modelling & advocacy of new ways of leading worship
      7. Modelling & advocacy of new ways of being church
      8. Continuing development of all lay and ordained ministries
      9. Oversite of Alternative Ministries Pilot & similar Synod funded roles
      10. Support and oversight of ecumenical projects e.g. MiTE
      11. Church and Society/Justice and Peace
          * enabling churches and individuals to make a difference
          * support of enthusiasts in the field including helping them to network
          * recruiting for national advocate schemes eg green apostles
          * Synod action on National Mission Committee output
   2. Membership
      * + Convenor
        + Moderator
        + Synod Clerk
        + TDO
        + MDE
        + CYDO
        + Mersey rep on national Mission Committee
        + Up to 4 further members with nominations from churches, officers, exec., agreed by Synod Meeting
3. Synod Ministries

(NB – TDO is Training and Development Officer; LPC is Lay Preaching Commissioner; CS is Candidating Secretary)

* 1. Role
     1. **Lay Preacher**

Appoints a Lay Preaching Commissioner.

Monitor the budget that Training and Development Officer has allocated to fund training. (TDO)

Ensure a suitable training programme is in place for the training of Lay Preachers that aligns with Stepwise. (TDO)

Encourage people to consider lay forms of ministry by using promotional material e.g., Synod Lay Preachers Sunday. (TDO)

Promoting Lay Preacher support from their local church/minister

Ensure that there is a process in place to enable recognition of Lay Preachers from other Synods and Denominations. (TDO/LPC)

Ensure an annual conference for Lay Preachers is held with opportunities to discuss issues around their role. (TDO/LPC)

Ensure appropriate placements and mentors are found for students in their final year. (TDO/LPC)

Ensure Lay Preachers DBS are up to date. (LPC)

Ensure Lay Preachers attend appropriate safeguarding training.

* + 1. **Preaching assessments** •

Arrange Synod assessment panel to conduct

Assessed service for candidates seeking to train for MWS, CRCW and NSM1-4 (CS)

Lay Preachers (LPC/TDO)

Those seeking URC Lay Preacher recognition (LPC/TDO)

* + 1. **Local Church Leaders**

To concur the role description of LCLs with guidance from the Training and Development Officer. (TDO)

Agree final role description after training completed successfully. (TDO)

Issue a Synod Commissioning Certificate. (TDO)

Appoint a representative to attend the Synod Commissioning of LCLs. (TDO)

Receive feedback from the Training and Development Officer of any items of significance occurring from LCL reviews (3 yearly). (TDO)

Receive feedback from the Training and Development Officer from training days and consider recommendations as appropriate. (TDO)

Concur with the continuation of LCLs under guidance of the Training and Development Officer. (TDO)

* + 1. **Elders**

To accept the plan for the annual Elders conference. (TDO)

* + 1. **Candidates for Ministry of Word & Sacrament/Non Stipendiary Ministry Models 1-4/Church Related Community Worker**  
       Receive reports on candidates and potential candidates whilst being alert to areas that need further development or support. (CS)

Arrange pre-selection of ordinands shadowing of ministers/CRCWs (TDO)

Arrange Assessed Service (CS)

Arrange Local Interview (CS)

Arrange Synod Interview (CS)

Offer pastoral support throughout the candidating process (CS)

* + 1. **Ordinands**

Appoint a representative to attend Resource Centre for Learning annual student review for Mersey Synod ordinands.

* + 1. **General**

Vocations Sunday – promote the event annually and assist in providing the materials for Vocations Sunday when Mersey Synod is responsible for producing such. (TDO)

Liaise with colleges, national Ministries and Education & Learning colleagues as necessary and report back to the Committee.

Review all feedback from training courses run by the Training and Development Officer.

Agree importance for future training events based on Synod / National priorities.

* 1. Membership
     + - Convenor
       - Moderator
       - Synod Clerk
       - TDO
       - Lay Preaching Commissioner
       - Candidating Secretary
       - Northern College Representative
       - Secretary/Notetaker
       - Up to 4 further members with nominations from churches, officers, exec., agreed by Synod Meeting

1. Smaller Groups
2. Listed Buildings sub-Committee of Resources Committee
   1. Role
   2. Membership
      * + Convenor
        + Experts as needed and available
3. HR sub-Committee of Resources Committee
   1. Role
      1. Oversight of HR covering both staff and volunteers
      2. Support of line mangers in managing the employment of Synod staff
      3. providing advice to local Churches
      4. Confidential decisions including pay levels, in consultation with Treasurer and Resources Committee
   2. Membership
      1. Synod Clerk
      2. Moderator
      3. Experts as needed and available
4. Safeguarding Reference Group *covers both Mersey and NW Synods*
   1. Role
      1. Promote good safeguarding practice across Mersey and North Western Synods
      2. Advise on the implementation of the General Assembly’s strategic safeguarding plan
      3. Contribute to the development and implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures across the Synods
      4. Support the provision of safeguarding training across the Synods
      5. Maintain an overview of cases and safeguarding incidents
      6. Work with the Safeguarding advisor to monitor issues
      7. Review the role of the group and the Safeguarding Advisor annually
      8. Receive complex and critical cases for discussion and recommendations.
   2. Membership
      1. The group shall have power to propose its own membership, with the approval of the respective Synod executives.
      2. Membership will include, as a minimum,
         * both Moderators, one of whom will chair the meeting,
         * an independent member,
         * the Synod Safeguarding Advisor
         * a local church safeguarding coordinator.
      3. Members should have suitable skills and experience and in safeguarding matters, relating to children and adults. Each member of the group should have had at least intermediate level training within the last three years. There should be appropriate representation from both Synods. For reasons of confidentiality, the group should be kept as small as possible. The group shall appoint a minute taker. This should not normally be the Safeguarding Advisor.
5. Nominations Committee *task group of the Executive*
   1. Role
      1. Seek nominations from churches, committees, officers, ministers and others both for specific Synod posts and more generally
      2. Propose names to committees, Synod meeting etc., as appropriate
      3. Approach individuals as appropriate
      4. Create a culture of “willingness to nominate”
   2. Membership
      1. Moderator, as convenor
      2. Clerk, as secretary
      3. Others with an emphasis on as wide a spread of knowledge of fellowships as possible
6. Ways of Working
   1. Inter-committee liaison
      1. Convenors to be proactive in liaison with other committees
      2. Executive to oversee co-ordination
      3. Specific Areas
         * Grants
           1. Resources will receive applications
           2. For mission grants M&D will be consulted via convenor who can allocate investigation
           3. For building grants Pastoral will be consulted via convenor who can allocate investigation
         * Being Church
           1. Vision days to be organised via Pastoral Committee
           2. Follow up to be agreed between convenors of Pastoral and M&D and shared out accordingly
   2. Running the business
      1. All committees to get out minutes within two weeks if at all possible (Possibly contemporaneously)
      2. All decisions to note who will take it forward and within what time scale plus who needs to know eg individuals, committees, churches and who will communicate it.
      3. Use of facilitators/alternating or dedicated chairs and different forms of meeting/discussion
      4. Convenors may allocate work between meetings and to ensure
         * timely responses
         * optimal use of committee time, with correct information available
      5. Nominations to be included in committee remits with convenors and officers covered by Exec
      6. Where individuals are not full members of committees, they may be asked to attend particular meetings, or parts of meetings in person or electronically
      7. Agendas should be well prepared including:
         * Allocating time to particular topics appropriately
         * Ensuring that all paperwork is sent out in good time
         * Updates should be supplied in writing before the meeting, if at all possible
   3. Synod Team
      1. Both paid staff and volunteers need to be supported and accountable. Depending on roles this may involve:
         * Line Managers (Line Managers need training and support too)
         * Annual Personal Development Review etc.
         * Role description kept under review
         * 5 year plan (overseen by Committee)
         * More detailed 6/12 month work plan (agreed by Committee)
         * Contact facilitation including Synod e-mail address (for GDPR this may extend to convenors etc.), mobile and electronic diary
         * Mentors for volunteer officers
      2. Formal budgets and spending remits to be agreed for:
         * All officers and staff who need them
         * Groups such as Café Jam
      3. Support from and accountability to Committees will be as follows:
         * Treasurer and Property Officer Resources
         * Pastoral Officers and Ecumenical Officers Pastoral Support
         * TDO, MDE, & CYDO Mission and Discipleship
         * Moderator and Clerk Exec
         * Lay Preaching Commissioner Pastoral Support
         * Safeguarding Advisor Safeguarding
         * Communications Officer Exec
         * JPIT rep, MiTE Directors etc. Mission and Discipleship
         * Inclusion Advocate/Racial Justice rep. Exec
   4. Focus Groups and Task Groups
      1. Any committee or officer can set one up
      2. Clear remit and time scale
      3. Need to co-ordinate far enough so that folk are not asked to do multiple tasks at the same time
      4. Examples:
         * Festival of worship working group
         * Focus group to look at house style for communications
   5. Membership of Committees
      1. Fixed, renewable terms, unless ex officio
      2. Normally three years with initial tapering to ensure some continuity where appropriate. ‘Expert’ committees may be an exception.
      3. Churches, Synod meeting, officers, pastoral, exec can be consulted and nominations encouraged from within committees
      4. Churches to be asked particularly for nominations for Executive and M&D
      5. Convenors appointed by exec – again wide nominations
      6. Synod Meeting to agree representatives on Executive and M&D