

- c) To keep a strategic overview of the work of the General Assembly, facilitating the coherence of business across the various committees of the church.
- d) To ensure the coherence of the strategies of the General Assembly, good governance, and the operational work of the Assembly.
- e) When necessary, instigate new business to ensure the wellbeing of the work of the General Assembly.
- f) In urgent circumstances to take any necessary decisions on behalf of the General Assembly in between meetings of the Assembly or Assembly Executive and to report them to the next meeting of the Assembly or Assembly Executive.

Resolution 54

3. General Assembly:

- a) Determines that all Nominations to serve the ongoing work of the General Assembly will be made in accordance with Safer Recruitment policies.
- b) Instructs the Business Committee, in consultation with the officers of the current Nominations Committee, to appoint a Nominations Committee of six members, reflecting the diversity of the Church. Its Terms of Reference will be:
 - i. To adopt and keep up to date processes for Nominations, including proformas for application forms, guidance for interviews, and other resources necessary to facilitate the nominations process.
 - ii. To receive from Committees (on behalf of themselves, or 3210 0¶Jelves, or 3210 0¶Jelvesceipe

names to General Assembly or Assembly Executive to confirm appointment. Committees are responsible for interviewing for any subcommittees or boards/panels that are accountable to them, or representatives to bodies that report to them.

- iv. To maintain a list of those available to serve on recruitment processes for General Assembly ministerial or staff appointments and to forward to the General Assembly or the Assembly Executive the names of those appointed or nominated for appointment.
 - v. External bodies requesting representation from the United Reformed Church as set out in their governing documents will be responsible for role descriptions, and (where appropriate and possible) interviewing, the Nominations Committee will collect references.
 - vi. To support and enable Nominations Advocates to effectively disseminate opportunities for service within their networks.
- c) Instructs each Synod, URC Youth and the Racial Justice Advocates Network (working with the Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries) to each appoint a 'Nominations Champion' to be responsible for assisting with the dissemination of opportunities for service within their respective networks.
 - d) Instructs the Business Committee, in consultation with the Officers of the current Nominations Committee, to bring this new process into being as soon as possible.
 - e) Recognises the need for staff administrative support for the good functioning of this process and instructs the General Secretariat to enable this.

Resolution 55

- 4. General Assembly instructs the Business Committee to appoint an independent external consultant to advise on the range of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work, and a small reference g5(ma)-4(s71 685.!

- b) Engaging with the work of ecumenical partners and others in the charity sector to ascertain best practice which might inform our work.**
- c) Advising on a draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.**
- d) Advising on appropriate structures and mechanisms to enable the delivery of an EDI policy and effective accountability mechanisms.**
- e) The Business Committee should report to General Assembly 2024 on the progress of this work bringing any appropriate resolutions.**

Resolution 56

- 5. General Assembly renames the Faith and Order Committee the 'Worship, Faith and Order Committee' with the following membership:**
 - a) A Convenor**
 - b) The Secretary for Ecumenical Relations**
 - c) The Minister for Digital Worship**
 - d) Five members appointed by the General Assembly**
 - e) The Secretary for Ecumenical Relations or the Minister for Digital worship will normally function as the Secretary for the Committee.**
 - f) General Assembly adopts the following remit for the Worship, Faith and Order Committee**
 - g) to address issues of worship, faith and order on behalf of the URC**
 - h) to participate in and respond to ecumenical and inter-faith discussions on faith and order issues**
 - i) to advise the assembly, its officers and committees on questions of worship, faith and order**
 - j) to listen to concerns raised by Local Churches, Synods and individuals and to advise as appropriate**
 - k) to publish and disseminate occasional materials relating to wor**

10. There has been a general concern, expressed within the Nominations Committee itself, and at Assembly Executive, about its ways of working. They have served us well over many years, but no longer feel fit for purpose. We bring proposal for the formation of a new

Nominations

1. The current Nominations Committee is formed of one representative from each Synod, often the Synod Clerk (but not exclusively). There are a vast number of roles to fill (across our committees and representative to external bodies, some 500). It is often difficult for members of the committee to know exactly what each role entails. Names are often brought of people who are known only to one or a small number of the committee, or who may not directly be known by any of them but are a third-hand recommendation. Invitations are then extended by the Secretary to the Committee. The burden of the work falls on the Officers of the Committee, particularly the volunteer Secretary, who give an extraordinary amount of time to the role, and often feel swamped by it. The General Assembly has placed an unreasonable burden of expectation upon the officers of the committee.
2. It is important that all our appointments are made in accordance with our safer recruitment policies. Good Practice 5 defines Safer Recruitment as involving:
 - providing a job description and a person specification**
 - completing an application form**
 - completing a self-declaration of criminal history**
 - a face-to-face interview**
 - checking references**

7. In the light of the above we bring the following resolution:

General Assembly:

- a) **Determines that all Nominations to serve the ongoing work of the General Assembly will be made in accordance with Safer Recruitment policies.**
- b) **Instructs the Business Committee, in consultation with the officers of the current Nominations Committee, to appoint a Nominations Committee of six members, reflecting the diversity of the Church. Its Terms of Reference will be:**
 - i. **To adopt and keep up to date processes for Nominations, including proformas for application forms, guidance for interviews, and other resources necessary to facilitate the nominations process.**
 - ii.

- d) Instructs the Business Committee, in consultation with the Officers of the current Nominations Committee, to bring this new process into being as soon as possible.**
- e) Recognises the need for staff administrative support for the good functioning of this process and instructs the General Secretariat to enable this.**

Equalities Committee

1. There was considerable concern raised about the proposal to abolish the Equalities Committee and make Equalities part of the remit of every Committee. The point is well made that what is everyone's responsibility quickly becomes no one's responsibility – and that was not the aim of the suggestion at all.
2. Consultation has revealed that there is a general sense that the Equalities Committee has struggled to achieve its purposes. This is perceived as being partly about the lack of authority, and partly about the lack of resources.
3. Consultation has also revealed the fragmentary nature of where the General Assembly addresses Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) issues. They are currently split between a number of key places (recognising others exercise an interest in EDI beyond this core list):
 - a) The Equalities Committee (for overall monitoring)
 - b) The Mission Committee (where the work of the Secretary for Global and Intercultural Ministries is located)

area of work, but there is a lack of co-ordination, and the current Equalities Committee is not currently acting as the organ for co-ordination.

7. We bring the following resolution:

General Assembly instructs the Business Committee to appoint an

General Assembly renames the Faith and Order Committee the 'Worship, Faith and Order Committee' with the following membership:

- a) A Convenor**
- b) The Secretary for Ecumenical Relations**
- c) The Minister for Digital Worship**
- d) Five members appointed by the General Assembly**
- e) The Secretary for Ecumenical Relations or the Minister for Digital worship will normally function as the Secretary for the Committee.**

General Assembly adopts the following remit for the Worship, Faith and Order Committee:

- a) to address issues of worship, faith and order on behalf of the URC**
- b) to participate in and respond to ecumenical and inter-faith discussions on faith and order issues**
- c) to advise the assembly, its officers and committees on questions of worship, faith and order**
- d) to listen to concerns raised by Local Churches, Synods and individuals and to advise as appropriate**
- e) to publish and disseminate occasional materials relating to worship, faith and order**
- f)**

3. There has been significantly more integration of the work of this department in recent years, partly because of excellent working relationships between staff members. For integration to be secure in the long term, it does need embedding structurally, and not be reliant on personalities. The staff members and convenors have been at pains to stress they support further integration and working together but were very concerned that rushing to create one committee would lead to important details being overlooked, and potentially damage the good work of the department.
4. We need to heed these concerns. Integration of work structurally will only be effective if those with detailed knowledge of the areas concerned have brought that knowledge and expertise to the process of determining new structural arrangements. Thus far we've failed to enable that process properly.
5. It should be noted that whilst the Church Life Review Group does continue to favour the creation of one committee, in bringing the resolution below it recognises other solutions may emerge which would more helpfully embed the Principles Assembly has been invited to adopt, and the needs of our Discipleship work. Such consultation that has taken place does suggest that simply remaining exactly as things are now is widely anticipated to be undesirable.
6. It should be noted that there is no proposal to integrate the work of the Safeguarding Committee with any other committee, its work being highly specialist, and the General Assembly being required to have such a committee to oversee its safeguarding responsibilities.
7. In the light of this, we bring the following resolution:

General Assembly instructs the Business Committee to oversee a consultation process, to be led by the Deputy General Secretary for Discipleship, involving representatives of the Children's and Youth Work Committee, the Education and Learning Committee and the Ministries Committee, leading to proposals for the further integration of their work, including proposals for structural integration. These should be in line with the principles adopted in Resolution X.

- a) **If external facilitation is required to achieve a constructive outcome, the Business Committee is empowered, after consultation with those concerned, to appoint an external facilitator to assist the process.**
- b) **Invites the Business Committee to bring back further proposals, emerging from this consultation exercise, to either Assembly Executive or General Assembly 2024.**

The future of the Administration and Resources Committees and the creation of a Resources Committee

1. There is seemingly general agreement that bringing together the Church House Management Group, the Communications Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Human Resource Advisory Group, would be a helpful development. However, this intersects with a separate piece of work which has arisen out of a lack of clarity around the relationship between the Church and the United Reformed Trust (See Report A3). This means that some functions carried out currently by the Church would become the responsibility primarily of the Trust.

- c) **The Chief Operating Officer (who will be the Executive Secretary)**
- d) **The Chief Finance Officer**
- e) **Five further members, reflecting the diversity of the Church, with collective expertise in the areas of: finance, property, human resources and communications.**

General Assembly invites the Nominations Committee to begin to populate a committee to serve from the close of General Assembly 2024.

General Assembly instructs the Business Committee to bring full terms of