



The
United
Reformed
Church

EAST MIDLANDS SYNOD COUNCIL

Synod Trust



Your guide to the role and responsibilities of the Synod Trust

New ways of supporting our Synod Mission in a rapidly changing world

What is the Synod Trust?

The East Midlands Synod Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The Charity's objectives are to advance the Christian religion in accordance with the United Reformed Church Basis of Union and to conduct other ancillary and charitable work in the region of the East Midlands Synod. The Charity administers finances and property for the benefit of the churches in the Synod.

What are its primary responsibilities?

- To hold funds on trust and make investments according to the investment policy agreed by the Trustees
- To administer the Trust accounts
- To approve the Annual Report and Accounts at the AGM and lodge them with Companies House and the Charity Commission
- To meet with the Synod Council for strategic planning meetings and other discussions with financial implications at Synod Council and Finance Group meetings
- To apportion funds according to the strategy and policy agreed by the Synod Council and give final approval to the annual budget
- To receive and approve requests from the URC Trust for additional financial contributions approved by Mission Council e.g. support for the Ministers Pension Fund
- To hold property on trust and arrange for its management
- To undertake legal processes and liaison with the Charity Commission

Who are the members of the Trust?

- The members are Trustees of the Charity and Directors of the Synod Trust.
- The Moderator, Synod Clerk and Synod Treasurer are trustees ex officio and have the same voting rights as the other trustees.

- Six Trustees are appointed at the Annual General Meeting by the recommendation of other trustees for terms of six years with the option of standing again.
- Three Trustees are appointed by the Synod, for terms of six years, on the recommendation of the Synod Council.
- The Trust Officer is currently Trust Secretary and with the agreement of the Charity Commission is also a Trustee.

How will it work with, and support, local churches?

- Through its investments and the administration of the Trust Accounts, the Trust ensures that the Synod is solvent and has adequate resources to conduct its business and give support to the local churches in the Synod.
- Through the Property Officer, property networkers and experts on listed buildings, the Trust advises and supports local churches in property management.
- The Trust allocates money to the Mission Fund and the Church Buildings Repair Fund which make grants to local churches.
- The Trust takes responsibility for, and meets agreed costs of, all legal processes involving local churches, including issues of property and land, and any Safeguarding cases in consultation with the Synod Safeguarding Officer.

What are the key links with other areas of the Synod?

The Synod Council

- For strategic and financial planning
- For final approval of the annual Risk Assessment
- For any legal costs incurred in the management of Synod
- For nominations of people to be invited to serve as Trustees.

The Finance Group

- For budget planning, monitoring income and expenditure, cash flow forecasting
- For approving financial policies and procedures

The Mission Focus Group

- For reporting from the Mission Fund Panel
 - The Synod Property Officer
 - The Synod's Legal Advisor
 - The Synod Safeguarding Officer

How can I get involved?

Although there are a limited number of Trustees, when a Trustee nominated by Synod reaches the end of their six year term of service, or when any of the other Trustees retire, vacancies need to be filled. The experience needed may have come from serving on another charitable trust board, having legal training or having an interest in managing finance. Anyone who is interested will receive induction and be able to attend a Trust meeting as an observer before deciding to become a Trustee. It is essential for the Trust membership to be refreshed regularly and it needs more women and younger people in its membership, so please offer to serve and say 'yes' if invited.

This leaflet is produced by the Synod Structures and Priorities Review Group, who will be providing a series of leaflets about the new Synod Council and its supporting functions to assist you in understanding the changes. September 2018