

## Here to help Unitarian groups in any way we can

All Unitarian Congregations and Fellowships are unique so they have different needs and aspirations. That is why the District Council has to be flexible in its approach to providing support.

Here in the South West, however, there are some common themes. These include the need for active leadership, and the distances between groups along with the sense of isolation this can bring. Resources of both energy and money are often scarce.

Together we can search for ways to address needs and give a sense of common purpose in providing a future for our chosen faith - Unitarianism.

The Western Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches  
Reg charity No 251033

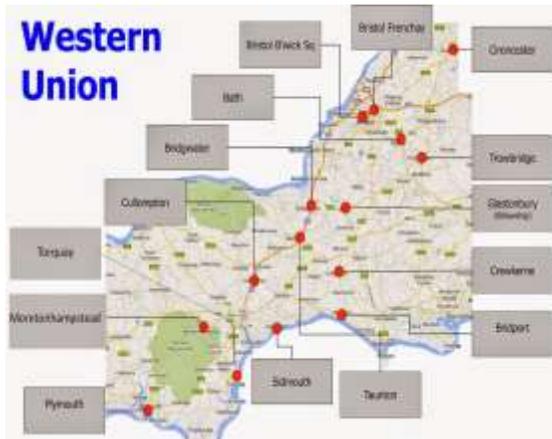
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# The Western Union

A Community of  
Unitarian Communities  
in the South West



*Moretonhampstead Unitarian Chapel  
in Devon, where Unitarians from all  
over the District join together for  
worship once a year, to reaffirm their  
spiritual connection with the town*



## Council

The working heart of the District is its council, composed of representatives from all 13 groups, plus elected officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, RE Coordinator), Ministers, and Honorary Life members. A smaller Executive Committee meets annually to consider grants to congregations.

Council meets four times each year to conduct business and share ideas. As a registered charity it channels income from several Trust Funds to its congregations for supplying ministry, and uses its own smaller revenue to support district-wide initiatives.

Council also organizes an annual assembly including its AGM, held at one of its constituent congregations.

"As a minority faith tradition, Unitarians are less well known than we deserve to be"

- Cliff Reed  
(*Unitarian? What's That?*)

## District Activities

### *Liaison with the National Executive*

Both directly and through the EC liaison person assigned to the WU, there is regular contact and occasional specific issues such as arranging for Safeguarding Training to take place in Bristol, and lobbying for more information from the EC.

### *Training for Lay Leaders*

By organizing a Foundation Course in Leading Worship within the District, no fewer than 17 people were encouraged to participate and all completed. Since then a District Course in Rites of Passage has also taken place, with 8 attendees from the District. A directory of lay people has been compiled and is available to all. A fund has also been established to assist local people to attend training courses nationally. It is now proposed to appoint a minister (or experienced lay leader) to supervise and support lay people who lead.

### *Web Support*

A well-attended meeting resulted in many congregations learning how to have a presence on the Internet – one of the key means of publicizing Unitarianism. The District now has its own website with a webmaster keeping it up-to-date with news.

### *Religious Education*

The Western Union is one of only a few Districts with an RE Coordinator to advise on courses and work with young people.

### *Grants for Ministry*

Although Trust income is limited, it is put to good use by several of our congregations, either to part-fund a professional Minister or Lay Pastor, or to provide help with pulpit fees so that worship can be maintained.

### *Development*

Regular meetings (open to anyone) are held to focus on aspects of development. These may be practical or theoretical; in both cases the aim is to help congregations to move forward.

## Find out more about us

The Western Union of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

[www.westernunion.org.uk](http://www.westernunion.org.uk)