



**General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches**

# **Guide to Volunteers**

**wishing to serve on Commissions, Panels and  
Project Working Parties**

**from**

**May 2010 (Commissions)**

**September 2010 (Panels and  
Project Working Parties)**

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Chief Officer  
31 March 2010

## **Recruitment of volunteers for Commissions & Panels**

### **Background:**

Following the Triennial Review initiative, Committees and Panels were replaced by Commissions and Panels. Initially the GA Council elected the members from lists of volunteers. These members were elected for a 3 year term.

Members were asked to serve an extra year during the transition from GA Council and General Secretary to Executive Committee and Chief Executive. A new process of recruitment was developed to offer more opportunities for encouraging fresh volunteers. This process involved research with the then current volunteers on the previous process, a publicity campaign promoted by EC members during their District link visits and through information in Unitarian media and Essex Hall mailings. This culminated in a 'recruitment drive' during the Annual meetings 2006. Membership of the Commissions was agreed by the EC. The Commissions then recommended to the EC the membership of their Panels which took office in September 2007.

This process did have some success in finding new volunteers and in matching skills to tasks appropriately. However, it took a great deal of Staff and EC members' time. Since then membership of many groups has changed with people resigning and new members being proposed to the EC.

The current 3 year term ends in April 2010 and the recruitment process has been reviewed by the EC in the light of changes in the EC's terms of office and awareness that a 'rolling' recruitment would provide more continuity and improve the effectiveness of the Commissions & Panels.

### **The recommended process for future recruitment:**

- Commissions and Panels are requested to review their membership annually taking into account their Action Plans and to recommend to the EC any changes.
- Commissions and Panels are encouraged to establish a 'rolling' programme of membership to ensure continuity and appropriateness of skills and experience.
- Volunteers will normally commit to a 4 year term with a maximum of 2 terms – in line with the Executive Committee membership. Recommended maximum term as Chair is six years.
- The EC establishes a process to set up a database of skills and asks all our communities to encourage individuals to offer their time and skills to the wider movement.
- The EC commissions the Denominational Support Commission to explore issues around working with volunteers and to produce a paper clarifying expectations of and by volunteers.
- It is likely that recommendations for training will emerge from this work.
- The EC promotes 'Valuing and Supporting our Volunteers' as the focus for the 2011 Annual meetings and plans accordingly.
- The EC meets with Chairs of Commissions regularly (annually) to review the recruitment process and their work in relation to the strategic priorities of the GA.

## **The process in 2010:**

As many of our volunteers are anticipating change in membership of Commissions and Panels during 2010, the recommended timeline is as follows:

- ❖ **February-March 2010:** Commissions and Panels are asked to review their details and membership on a pro forma sent from Essex Hall - **actioned**
- ❖ **April 2010:** A revised 'Guidelines for Volunteers' with a volunteer form is available during the Annual Meetings in Nottingham and circulated widely to all Congregations, District Associations and Affiliated Societies. These papers will also be made available on the GA web-site.
- ❖ **May 2010:** The Commission membership is agreed by the Commissions and the EC. The new Commissions take office.
- ❖ **June-July 2010:** Commissions make recommendations to the EC for membership of their Panels. Confirmation by EC follows.
- ❖ **September 2010:** the newly formed Panels take office.

## **Commissions and Panels**

### Executive Committee

Funding Development – purpose under review but expressions of interest requested  
Nightingale Centre Management  
Partnership Support \*

### Communication Commission

Lindsey Press

### Denominational Support Commission

Building Advisory  
Worship  
Youth

### Education and Training Commission

Chalice Award Scheme  
Engagement Support\*  
Hucklow Summer School  
Joined Up Education  
Religious Education Coordinators  
Support for Organisational Leadership  
Groups Working Well\*

### Faith and Public Issues Commission

Penal Affairs

### Ministry Commission

Interview

\*These Panels and the Congregational Assessment Process are in the process of transformation and may re-emerge as 1 core Panel with a developing 'pool of practitioners.'

Details of Commissions and Panel follow. If there are no details provided please speak to the relevant Commission Chair or the General Assembly Chief Officer for further information.

# Nightingale Centre

**Reports to:**

Executive Committee

**Mission Statement:**

To achieve optimum usage of the Centre offering appropriate facilities and generating sufficient cash to secure its future as a Unitarian resource, thus enabling Unitarians to come together to strengthen the Unitarian Community and to encourage personal growth.

**Scope of Remit:**

All member groups of the General Assembly and anyone seeking conference and holiday accommodation to hold organised events for specific groups and holidays for families and individuals.

**Business Priorities**

- a. keep tight control of operating income and expenditure
- b. encourage donations to be used to improve the fabric of the centre
- c. achieve optimum use of the centre
- d. offer facilities that meet the needs of guests now and in the foreseeable future
- e. maintain good relations with the village and Old Chapel, Great Hucklow

**Current Action Plan:**

- a. develop the centre as an eco-centre
- b. convert more bedrooms to en suite rooms
- c. refurbish the toilets and shower rooms
- d. improve the heating system
- e. implement health & safety legal requirements for fire safety and play equipment

**Membership as at January 2010:**

Marion Baker - Chairperson  
Michael Tracey - Secretary, Land and Property matters  
David Dawson - Minutes Secretary  
Gordon Lowthian - Treasurer  
Colin Partington - Accounts  
Richard Merritt - Marketing  
Vanessa Rothwell  
David Copley  
Dot Hewardine - EC link

**Qualities required of its members:**

- Appropriate discretion when dealing with confidential and sensitive issues
- Active hands-on participation in the ongoing management of the centre
- Knowledge and skills needed for running a medium sized catering business  
e.g. finance, marketing, land and property management, personnel management, project management etc.

# Communication Commission

## Mission Statement:

*To encourage the growth and development of the Unitarian community by promoting a clear, contemporary Unitarian message via traditional and innovative means, in accordance with liberal values.*

## Scope of Remit:

**Matters concerning promotion of and publicity about the Unitarian movement, nationally and locally, internal & external communication via a range of media.**

## Current Action Plan:

- Promotional activities:

Production of posters – including new set of Wayside Pulpit posters, Exploit new methods of communication – eg CC blog, Review national advertising, including appropriate media, Review use of/demand for travelling display

- Promote consistent identity and its use

- Review merchandise, and commission new as appropriate, Projects to support local congregations/groups – local promotion activities, notice boards, Sheffield project – review lessons learnt

- Communication expertise and support

- Support and advice for local congregations, Press packs – eg national president, Online worship project, Review internal and external communications strategies

- Leaflet development – review range of leaflets available; reprint/commission new (in liaison with other commissions/panels/societies where appropriate)

- Denominational periodicals – further develop links with periodicals, eg *The Inquirer*, *The Unitarian*, *Yr Ymfynydd*

- Internal communication – optimise messages/content; optimise modes of communication

- National and local websites – liaise with Executive Committee, national website webmaster and the DUWIT group

## Panels/Projects reporting to this Commission:

- Lindsey Press Panel

## Membership as at January 2010:

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

- Yvonne Aburrow \*Marion Baker \* Diane Bennett \* Sheila Culshaw \* Neville Kenyon\*  
Kate Taylor \* John Wilkinson \*

## Qualities required of its members:

- Have an awareness of the structure of the Unitarian movement, and the challenges and opportunities relating to communication and publicity.
- Be able to offer knowledge and/or experience relating to at least one of the areas outlined in the remit and action plan.
- Be prepared to contribute to commission meetings, and to spend time outside meetings progressing issues and tasks, and to take the lead on specific projects/tasks.

# Lindsey Press Panel

**Reports to: The Communications Commission**

**Mission Statement: Aims to publish quality books, whether commissioned or from manuscripts submitted and accepted, that promote Unitarianism.**

## **Scope of Remit:**

Overseeing the publication of books under The Lindsey Press imprint. Commissioning material for publication or determining the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts submitted, liaising with authors, editing, commissioning design, determining size of print-run, ordering printing, seeking publicity for new books.

## **Current Action Plan:**

Pursuing two projects for books for use by or with young Unitarians (the Doodle book and a book on fostering dramatic presentation)

Fostering the creation of a book of individual essays on Unitarian Perspectives on Contemporary Spiritual Practice.

## **Membership as at January 2010:**

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

David Dawson\* Margaret Hamer\* Kay Millard\* Catherine Robinson\* Kate Taylor\*

## **Qualities required of its members:**

- Enthusiasm for generating books that promote Unitarianism
- Creativity
- A high standard of literacy
- Editing skills
- Realism
- Readiness to take a turn in chairing meetings and taking minutes

# Denominational Support Commission

## Mission Statement:

To give practical support, responsive and proactive, to activities which enable our Unitarian communities to flourish in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## Scope of Remit:

Matters concerning the welfare, development and growth of Unitarian Communities, including congregations, fellowships, district associations, affiliated societies and youth work.

## Current Action Plan:

- Continuing support for the work of Panels.
- Continuing support for the 2 special projects; District Support & Fellowships Research.
- Celebrating our Congregations at AGM 2010.
- DSC 'village' display at AGM 2010.
- Support for the Youth Road Show at the 2010 Annual Meetings.
- Support for the Youth Panel to run additional Family events in collaboration with The Nightingale Centre
- Continuing to develop plans for the future of the Welsh Department in collaboration with the Welsh Department Committee and the Executive Committee.
- Developing work on Valuing & Supporting Our Volunteers in readiness for the 2011 Annual Meetings.

## Panels/Projects reporting to this Commission:

- ❖ Buildings Advisory
- ❖ Congregational Assessment Process
- ❖ District Support
- ❖ Fellowships Research
- ❖ Welsh Department
- ❖ Youth Panel

## Membership as at January 2010:

Dot Hewerdine (Chair)

Joyce Ashworth

Lis Dyson-Jones

Rev Celia Midgley

Vanessa Rothwell

Rev Cen LLwyd

### Special projects:

**District Support:** Rev Martin Whitell

**Fellowships Research:** John Greenwood

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

## Qualities required of its members:

1. Good grasp of the structure, workings and history of the movement.
2. Commitment to the development of congregations, fellowships, district associations, affiliated societies and youth work.
3. Willingness to be a member of or link person to one of the Panels reporting to the Commission.
4. Prepared to spend time outside of meetings progressing issues and tasks.



## Buildings Advisory Panel

**Reports to:**

Denominational Support Commission

**Mission Statement:**

To offer clear guidance and practical support on developing, financing, and maintaining congregational buildings and land

**Scope of Remit:**

All member groups of the General Assembly

**Current Action Plan:**

Update of previous plan in preparation

**Membership as at January 2010:**

\*Denotes willing to continue membership ***N.B. This is subject to confirmation***

David Warhurst (Convenor)

Marion Baker \*

Mark Pearce \*

**Qualities required of its members:**

Knowledge and experience of buildings related issues

Good relevant contacts

Appropriate discretion when dealing with confidential and sensitive issues

# Worship Panel

**Reports to: Denominational Support Commission**

## Mission Statement

**Our AIM is to foster worship of the highest quality wherever Unitarians gather:**

- by developing good quality and confidence in worship among all Unitarians through example and education;
- by encouraging tolerance of different forms and traditions of Unitarian worship;
- by being instruments of innovation in Unitarian worship.

## Scope of Remit:

1. Oversight of some worship and the Quiet Room at the Unitarian Annual Meetings;
2. Provision of material for public and private worship in published manuals and on the Web;
3. Raising awareness of our Unitarian heritage by commissioning material to help congregations mark significant anniversaries;
4. Leading workshops and other training events;
5. Encouraging the sharing by congregations of good practice concerning worship.

## Current Action Plan:

Complete arrangements for Annual Meetings 2010; carry through and review Liaise with James Barry to include worship material on the GA website.

Launch and publicize *With Heart and Mind 2*

Launch (electronically and on paper) and publicize Elizabeth Gaskell worship pack

Oversee preparation of Servetus worship pack for early 2011.

Complete worship workshop "tour" to Yorkshire, Western and Eastern Union Districts.

## Membership as at January 2010:

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

Rev. Joy Croft David Dawson\* Martin Gienke\* Rev. Linda Hart Barbara Smith\*  
Adrienne Wilson

## Qualities required of its members:

Good awareness of various worship patterns and innovative thinking

Among the membership there should be administrative, editorial and advanced IT skills and knowledge of music and literature. Members should be familiar with the movement and people suitable to contribute to services and publications. Some ministers/trained worship leaders should be included. The range of religious perspectives should reflect the breadth of the movement as a whole.

The panel's next meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> May at Essex Hall, is open to interested observers. Come and see if you might like to join in its work. Phone Joy Croft or email Adrienne Wilson for details.

# Youth Panel

**Reports to:** Denominational Support Commission

**Mission Statement:** The Youth Panel's aim is to develop and sustain a strong network of young people within our denomination and to ensure an arena for the presentation of the views and opinions of young people with a view to future membership of the denomination.

**Scope of Remit:**  
Young people up to the age of 17 years.

**Current Action Plan:**  
To provide the denomination with a GA to remember. Work hard on the communications side of things to maintain good attendance figures at all our events. Explore finances, as in the present climate we would like to maintain good quality Youth Activities but we have to maintain our budget as well.

**Membership as at January 2010:**

Chair Louise Shatliff

Secretary Andrew Mason

Ella Field, Helen Hooley, Vanessa Rothwell, Howard Wilkins, Eloise Williamson Rev John Harley

**Qualities required of its members:**

- Sense of humour.
- Patience.
- Good Listener (especially to our younger members).
- Hard working.
- Enjoys being part of a fantastic team of volunteers.
- Knowledge of the Unitarian Youth Programme an advantage.

# Education and Training Commission

**Mission Statement:** To provide a framework for education and training within the Unitarian movement which will enhance the development of people of all ages as both individuals and Unitarians.

**Scope of Remit:** Matters concerned with Unitarian religious education/exploration for children and adults in congregations, districts and nationally through the work of the panels within the commission.

## Current Action Plan:

- Continue supporting work of Panels
- Organise a meeting of E+TC to assess progress and plan for the future following GA Meetings 2010
- Plan GA slot –launch of REvolution
- Publicise REvolution and recruit students
- Finalise planning and run REvolution
- Sunday School Income Fund in regular use in congregations
- Promote CRB checking to promote safeguarding awareness for all who work in RE.
- Publish new adult RE Course Aging and Spirituality

## Panels/Projects reporting to this Commission:

Chalice Award Panel  
Engagement Support Panel\*  
Groups Working Well Panel\*  
Hucklow Summer School Panel  
Joined Up Education Panel  
Religious Education Co-ordinators Panel  
Support for Organisational Leadership Panel  
REvolution Steering Group

\*These panels are in the process of transformation into one core panel with a developing pool of practitioners through the PSP.

## Membership as at January 2010:

Dawn Buckle (Chair) Jane Blackall\* Winnie Gordon\* Rev John Harley (ex officio)  
Joan Hill\* Rev Margaret Kirk Jean Mason\* Margaret Robinson\* Mary Wightman\*

\*Denotes willingness to continue membership

## Qualities required of its members:

Good grasp of the structure, workings and history of Unitarianism in the UK  
Good understanding of and commitment to lifelong Unitarian religious education/exploration or to a specific age group  
Commitment to attend Commission meetings (3 per year)  
Willingness to be a member of or link person to one of the Panels reporting to the Commission.  
Prepared to spend time outside of meetings progressing issues and tasks.

# Chalice Award Panel

**Reports to:** Education and Training Commission

**Mission Statement:** To provide a modular award scheme for children in 4 stages Green, Bronze, Silver and Gold.

**Scope of Remit:**

To promote the Chalice Award Scheme as widely as possible by adverts, articles in denominational press.

To provide introductory workshops to districts and groups.

To develop and produce additional modules for the present Scheme.

**Current Action Plan:**

Advertise the Chalice Award Scheme in the national Unitarian papers.

Continue to offer introductory sessions to districts and groups

Add more modules to the Scheme

**Membership as at January 2010:**

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

Joan Hill\*

John Harley\*

Mary Wightman\*

Claire Maddocks\*

**Qualities required of its members:**

# Engagement Support

**Reports to: Education and Training Commission**

## **Mission Statement:**

**To offer ministers and lay persons the skills and practices to enable them to facilitate groups/communities that live out the act of right relationship with each other.**

## **Scope of Remit:**

To provide training and give support to those facilitating Engagement Groups within the Unitarian and Free Christian community and to promote the value of Engagement Groups within congregations and fellowships.

## **Current Action Plan:**

Aim to have 5 intergenerational *Bright Lights* groups by 2011 and continue support for existing ones.

Provide support for participants of 2009 October conference at district level.

Continue regional support for EG facilitators

## **Membership as at January 2010:**

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

Rev. Lindy Latham, Rev. Margaret Kirk, Joyce Ashworth, Dr. Jane Blackall, Rev. Jim Robinson, Karen Hanley

NB. Rev. Jim Robinson returns to the USA in April. The panel has agreed to merge with other groups and panels after April 2010 in accordance with the proposal from Partnership Support Panel. Nonetheless, it is expected that the specialist work of ES will be sustained and developed by a dedicated group

## **Qualities required of its members:**

Understanding and experience of group facilitation and commitment to the principles of Engagement practice.

# Hucklow Summer School Panel

**Reports to:** Education and Training Commission (E&TC)

## Mission Statement:

The core activity of Hucklow Summer School (HSS) is Religious Education.

- By “religious” we mean that our activities are focussed on matters of religion and spirituality. (i.e. we are generally not intending to provide training on matters of leadership/governance or teaching of a sort which is widely available in secular/mainstream educational institutions.)
- By “education” we mean that our activities draw out and develop the potential of all participants. (i.e. our emphasis is generally on activities which encourage participants to take an active part in exploration of religious/spiritual matters rather than providing ‘instruction’ on any given theme.)

We aim to provide a balanced programme, offering a rich mix of core activities for both the “heart” and “head”, and a variety of optional sessions showcasing a range of activities which participants might “take home” and try out in their home congregations. We also ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for relaxed fellowship and fun during the week.

We aim to promote diversity at HSS, representing the breadth within our movement, in terms of our demographics, theologies and varied forms of spiritual practice. Summer School brings fellow Unitarians together and allows them to get to know each other deeply and form lasting and meaningful connections. We have set a target of one-third of participants in each year being newcomers to summer school (particularly reaching out to ministerial students and ministers who might attend as part of their continuing professional development), and have managed to meet that target for some years, yet we also value those returning participants who generously share their skills and enthusiasm to help run HSS and maintain its ethos. (continued overleaf)

## Scope of Remit:

See mission statement.

## Current Action Plan:

Offer a Religious Education Summer School in accordance with our mission statement each August.

Continue increasing the range of staff: aim to recruit at least one entirely new workshop facilitator and one returning leader (someone who has not been involved for a few years) to the staff team each year.

Continue pairing experienced facilitators with new ones.

Continue monitoring and evaluation process.

Continue development of the event in response to 2009/10 evaluation process.

Respond to developments in Religious Education within the Unitarian Movement and beyond (e.g. possible linking with any future accreditation scheme for Unitarian Religious Educators).

## Membership as at January 2010:

*\*Denotes willing to continue membership*

Dr Jane Blackall \* (*convenor*) Caroline Blair \* Rev Lindy Latham \* Dr Mel Prideaux \* Alison Thursfield \*

## Qualities required of its members:

Panel members should ideally have attended at least two previous summer schools and have an appreciation of the summer school ethos. Panel members must have a passion for adult religious education (RE) and best practice in small group work. The panel is formed of 4-6 people with a rolling membership. Typically 1 or 2 members leave/join the panel immediately after summer school each August/September. Appointment is by co-option, to maintain the necessary balance of skills and demographics (as far as possible), subject to ratification by the E&TC.

*Essex Hall Staff receive cheques, handle expenses, and send out promotional information.  
A member of the panel (currently Jane Blackall) represents summer school on the E&TC.*

Continued

Small Group Activities are the central expression of Religious Education at summer school: each person attending HSS is expected to participate in a closed workshop group which meets for twelve hours over the course of the week. This is intended to give each participant a direct experience of a small group run in accordance with best practice. These small groups are at the heart of summer school and provide a safe environment for deep exploration and personal relating.

Morning Theme Talks are another key element of HSS: a series of five talks, each lasting about an hour, relating to the overarching theme of the week. These talks provide a contrast in style to the small group activities, stimulate dialogue on religious and spiritual matters, and allow participants to engage with the topic on an intellectual level.

HSS is also committed to providing opportunities for Daily Spiritual Practice: meditation sessions each morning and worship in the chapel each evening are a vital element of the week. We hope that the depth and integrity of the summer school experience will prove valuable to all participants in their ongoing personal spiritual journeys.

Another essential feature of HSS is the provision of a worthwhile Programme for Children and Young People.

It is our intention that HSS should be organised and run in a professional manner. It is essential that HSS is a safe and caring environment. To this end, we are committed to provision of a named "Minister of the Week" for pastoral care, and to the widespread use of group covenants which help to maintain a safe space during our main small group activities. There are also a number of clear holding structures for the week, including a carefully planned and balanced timetable, and a formal support structure for the supervision of small group facilitators.

It is our hope that participants will be inspired and challenged by their experience of HSS to develop and promote religious education activities back in their own congregations and communities. For this reason, we aim to model best practice in all aspects of HSS, and hope that it will set a good example to those who go on to initiate activities in other settings. We actively encourage participants to offer activities at summer school, in the optional afternoon and evening sessions, and consider this to be an important part of developing our religious educators and community leaders of the future.

We aim to promote diversity at HSS, representing the breadth within our movement, in terms of our demographics, theologies and varied forms of spiritual practice. Summer School brings fellow Unitarians together and allows them to get to know each other deeply and form lasting and meaningful connections. We have set a target of one-third of participants in each year being newcomers to summer school (particularly reaching out to ministerial students and ministers who might attend as part of their continuing professional development), and have managed to meet that target for some years, yet we also value those returning participants who generously share their skills and enthusiasm to help run HSS and maintain its ethos.

Finally, we hope that participants feel a sense of commitment to a very special community of friends for the duration of the week that they are at HSS, and that summer school can serve as a blueprint for a spiritual community.



## Joined Up Education Panel (JUEP)

**Reports to:** Education and Training Commission

**Mission Statement:** To enable Unitarians to become better informed about Unitarian thought and history and to help equip Lay Worship Leaders with the skills and background knowledge they might need for conducting worship and lay preaching. The Worship Studies Course (WSC) can be a preliminary course for Lay Pastor or Ministerial Training. The Unitarian Studies Course (USC) gives students increasing personal knowledge and understanding of the Unitarian and Free Christian movement.

**Scope of Remit:** Matters concerning development and supporting the denomination with regards to Unitarian lay religious education/exploration for adults, in congregations, fellowships, district associations and nationally.

**Current Action Plan:**

- Reassess and evaluate the success of the National Foundation Step in regards to running the course again in the future.
- Continue to promote follow up courses as an addition to the Foundation Step.
- Continue to promote the courses to District Associations who have not yet taken it up.
- Organise meetings of JUEP to assess progress and plan for the future following the GA meeting of 2010.
- Continue to work with the students currently on the National Foundation, Preliminary and Advanced Step of the WSC and USC.

**Membership as at January 2010:**

\*Rev Ernest Baker (Tutor)  
\*Rev Alex Bradley (Tutor)  
\*Dawn Buckle (Convenor)  
\*Winnie Gordon (Administrator)  
\*Richard Lovis  
\*Rev Dr Vernon Marshall (Tutor)  
\*Sue Woolley (UALM Representative)  
Rev Dr Arthur Steward (for information only)

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

**Qualities required of its members:**

Good grasp of the structure, working and history of Unitarianism.  
Good understanding of and commitment to adult Unitarian Religious Education and Worship structure.  
Commitment to attend panel meetings (2 per year).  
Willingness to participate in the promotion of the WSC/USC at GA, UALM and other events.  
Prepared to spend time outside of meetings progressing issues and tasks.

# Religious Education Coordinators Panel

## Reports to:

**Education and Training Commission**

## Mission Statement:

To advance the cause of religious education for children, young people and adults by providing resources, opportunities for sharing insights, and practical training in spiritual growth and renewal.

## Scope of Remit:

- To network with District Religious Education Coordinators
- To receive reports from Districts and congregations of all Religious Education being carried out
- To organise training weekends for RECs and other interested religious educationists

## Current Action Plan:

- To promote Unitarian religious education for all within Districts, congregations and the denomination
- To use the GA religious education list to benefit more people

## Membership as at January 2010:

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

\*Margaret Robinson

\*Jean Mason

\*Rev Dr Vernon Marshall

## Qualities required of its members:

Good grasp of the structure, workings and knowledge of Unitarian Religious Education in the UK

Good understanding of and commitment to lifelong Unitarian religious education/exploration

Commitment to attend Panel meetings and training

Prepared to spend time outside of meetings progressing issues and tasks.

# Support for Organisational Leadership Panel

## Reports to:

Education and Training and Denominational Support Commissions

## Mission Statement:

To enhance and sustain the functioning of our local Unitarian and Free Christian communities by fostering best practice in governance.

## Scope of Remit:

- To update and make additions to the handbook 'Help is at Hand Practical Hints for Church Officers and Treasurers', published September 2007, as governance legislation and advice changes
- To give advice on governance to any Unitarian communities who request it.

## Current Action Plan:

Panel continues as a 'virtual' panel that meets only if absolutely necessary  
Collect together any additions and corrections eg statements on public benefit, food hygiene regulations etc.  
Update Help is at Hand on the GA website and, by request in printed form.  
Advertise the changes on the website so that they can be down loaded.

## Membership as at January 2010:

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

Dawn Buckle (Convenor)\*

Joyce Ashworth\*

Lis Dyson-Jones\*

Peter Hanley\*

Ken Johnson

Barbara Smith\*

## Qualities required of its members:

- A good understanding of the diversity of Unitarian communities
- A good understanding of the General Assembly as a whole
- Experience of serving as a church officer
- A sound understanding of charity legislation
- Ability to talk about charity legislation in an understandable way

## Groups Working Well Panel

**Reports to:** Education and Training Commission

**Mission Statement:** Helping groups to work well is essential if we are to have lively, growing Unitarian communities. The GWW Panel provides training in group facilitation, and support for facilitators.

**Scope of Remit:**

- Open up the possibility of groups working well to more people
- Find ways of working with our 'differences, divergences and dissonances'
- Organise and lead courses for groups requesting training in group facilitation
- Organise and lead Facilitation Skills in Ministry courses for ministers in training
- Offer support to those facilitating groups to work with more confidence, relevance, meaning, purpose, awareness and above all joy

**Current Action Plan:**

Facilitate Facilitation Skills in Ministry courses for students at UCM and HMCO (completed December 09).

Explore how to spread knowledge of the need for training in group facilitation skills further

Respond to requests to provide training from groups in the Unitarian community

**Membership as at January 2010:**

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

Dawn Buckle

Dot Hewerdine

\* (This panel is about to be transformed into the new Partnership Support Panel, along with the Engagement Support Panel and panels from the Denominational Support Commission.)

**Qualities required of its members:**

Knowledge of skills involved in facilitating groups

Practical experience of facilitating groups

A keen understanding of the Unitarian community in all its diversity

Ability to facilitate adult groups in experiential learning situations

# Faith and Public Issues Commission

## **Mission Statement:**

We seek to offer the distinctive Unitarian and Free Christian perspectives on matters relating to the arenas of ecumenical, inter-faith and social action engagement, and in turn, inform and stimulate thought and action on these same subjects within the General Assembly.

## **Scope of Remit:**

Our remit encompasses matters concerning the spheres of ecumenical, inter-faith and social justice activity.

## **Current Action Plan:**

The Commission will have a new Chairperson as from 2010 Annual meetings, so it is not possible to outline at this stage what priorities and future plans the newly-chaired Commission will establish for the coming triennium.

## **Panels/Projects reporting to this Commission:**

Penal Affairs Panel

## **Membership as at January 2010:**

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

Jeff Gould (Chair to April 2010)

- \* Chris Goacher
- \* Karen Hanley (Chair as from April 2010)
- \* Alan Kennedy
- \* Gavin Lloyd
- \* Feargus O'Connor
- \* Tony Rees
- \* Wyn Thomas
- \* Bob Wightman
- \* Jim Corrigall ( EC Link Person)

## **Qualities required of its members:**

1. Willingness to engage with non-Unitarian organisations that are of a religious, charitable, governmental or social justice nature.
2. Ability to travel widely in order to attend meetings and events of non-Unitarian bodies.
3. Commitment to serve as an ambassador of the General Assembly and represent its perspectives on issues within the ecumenical, inter-faith and social justice spheres in non-Unitarian forums.

# Ministry Commission

**Mission Statement:**

To ensure that the GA has good ministerial leadership that works effectively with congregations for the good of all concerned and the development and growth of Unitarian witness.

**Scope of Remit:**

The Commission makes and oversees policy and procedures concerning ministry and relations between congregations and ministers (including lay pastors and lay leaders). This includes, amongst other things, the GA rolls of ministers, lay pastors and lay leaders, the ministerial vacancies list, the provision of the mentoring scheme, the Guidelines for Partnership between Congregations and Ministers.

**Current Action Plan:**

1. Preparation of a section on conflict management for the Guidelines for Partnership
2. Producing a draft terms of appointment for a minister
3. Holding inquiry days for prospective ministers/spiritual leaders
4. Consultation on the present system of ministerial categories

**Panels/Projects reporting to this Commission:**

The Interview Panel

**Membership as at January 2010:**

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

Rev Eric Jones (chair, representing the Welsh Department),  
\*Rev Alex Bradley (representing Unitarian College),  
\*Rev Dr Arthur Stewart (representing Harris Manchester College),  
\*Rev Dr Linda Hart (representing the Ministerial Fellowship),  
\*Joan Cook (Executive Committee link),  
\*Val Worthington,  
\*David Dawson,  
\*Rev Sarah Tinker.

Currently served by a part-time voluntary interim secretary, Rev Dr Ann Peart, to be replaced by the new Director of Ministry (who will be a member of the Commission) in April

**Qualities required of its members:**

A good knowledge of the movement, the work of ministry, the roll of the minister and minister/congregation relationships. Ability to think strategically and work as part of a team, integrity, discretion, sensitivity.

# Interview Panel

**Reports to:** The Ministry Commission

**Mission Statement:**

**Scope of Remit:**

Interviews prospective candidates for Ministry and Lay Training.  
Oversees Mentorship of students & ministers.  
Oversees Roll of Ministers/Lay Pastor etc.  
Oversees the probationary period for Ministers etc and decides when this should end.  
Oversees training for overseas ministers interested in coming onto the British Roll.

**Current Action Plan:**

Relates to above activities.

**Membership as at January 2010:**

- \* Rev Alex Bradley principal UCM
- \* Rev John Clifford representing Ministerial Fellowship
- \* Rev Chris Goacher
- \* Rev Eric Jones - Ministry Commission Chair
- Rev Cliff Reed
- \* Rev Dr Arthur Stewart (Harris Manchester College)
- Dr Jane Williams (Interview Panel Chair)

\*Denotes willing to continue membership

**Qualities required of its members:**

An interest in Training and Education.  
Interviewing skills.  
Respect for confidentiality – discretion.  
Good decision making and judgement.  
Ability to work in a team.  
Open-mindedness.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION FOR CHAIR OF COMMISSION**

1. Chair Commission Meetings during the year (normally 3).
2. With Deputy Chair (if appropriate) and Essex Hall Staff assist in organising the reports, Minutes and Agenda for Commission meetings.
3. Ensures the final Minutes are kept at Essex Hall and included in the EC papers with a summary list (no more than 1 A4 page) of items requiring attention/decision by the EC.
4. Keep up to date with work of Commission Panels through their written reports.
5. It would be helpful, though not essential, for the Chair to be a member of one of the Commission Panels.
6. With the Deputy Chair, Essex Hall staff and Panel leaders assist in the preparation of the Commission Annual Report for the GA Annual Report.
7. Be present at GA Meetings annually and present the Commission Report.
8. Attend meetings of Chairs of Commission with members of the Executive Committee (currently once a year) to agree priorities and budget for the following year.
9. Promote the work of the Commission to GA members.
10. Do any other work that arises from Commission meetings.

It is recommended that the Chair should have served on the Commission for at least 1 year prior to taking office and stand down from the Chair 1 year before retiring from the Commission.



N.B Few, if any, Commissions & Panels have a formal Deputy Chair.

### **JOB DESCRIPTION FOR DEPUTY CHAIR OF COMMISSION**

1. With the Chair and Essex Hall staff organise the Agenda for Commission meetings.
2. With Essex Hall staff arrange for Panel reports to be called in and distributed to Commission members prior to Commission meetings.
3. Liaise with Essex Hall staff to check Commission meeting minutes before distribution.
4. Keep up to date with work of the Commission Panels through their written reports.
5. Be available to assist, if necessary, leaders of Commission & Panels between Commission Meetings.
6. It would be helpful, though not essential, for the Deputy Chair to be a member of one of the Commission Panels.
7. With Essex Hall staff, ensure that Commission minutes are presented to Executive Committee, when requested.
8. With the Chair, Essex Hall staff and Panel leaders prepare the Commission Annual Report for the GA Annual Report.
9. Be present at GA Meetings annually to assist, if necessary, in the presentation of the Commission Report.
10. Assist in any presentations or displays of the Commission's work at GA Meetings.
11. With the Chair promote the work of the Commission to GA members.
12. Do any other work that arises from Commission meetings.