

MOTIONS FOR THE 2021 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please note: as there are more than four regular motions, there will be a vote early in the Meeting as to which four motions to accept for debate. The vote will take place without discussion and voting delegates will be able to vote for up to four of the motions. We would remind delegates that this will be a vote to decide whether to accept the motions for debate, so we would encourage people to vote for motions which would benefit the GA to debate, rather than necessarily just motions you would choose to support.

1. FROM KENDAL UNITARIANS

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian churches has deep concerns regarding the misuse of alcohol in society and the consequent diminution in the quality of life for all of those affected.

We request the Executive Committee of the General Assembly to itemise this as a priority for our national movement and to take measures to advise congregations on viable ways by which they may offer support to affected individuals known to them, and/or co-operate with specialist organisations dedicated to helping reduce the problem of alcohol addiction in the UK.

2. FROM CARDIFF UNITARIANS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, mindful of the climate crisis, and of its object to “promote... the service of humanity and respect for all creation” requests that the Executive Committee:

- a) not invest General Assembly funds in companies whose total turnover is more than 10% derived from the extraction and/or supply of fossil fuels, including thermal coal, natural gas and oil;
- b) complete the divestment required to fulfil this decision by the time of the General Assembly Annual Meetings in 2025 at the latest;
- c) strongly encourage and support all Unitarian congregations and funds to do the same.

3. FROM STOCKTON UNITARIANS

This General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches

- a) Reaffirms its strong support for an inspiring and innovative Unitarian Youth Programme for young Unitarians in the United Kingdom.
- b) Recognises that a thorough review of the Programme will be necessary ‘post-pandemic’, in full consultation with churches, districts, previous participants and other interested parties.
- c) Commends the work the Youth Officer, Gavin Howell, is already carrying out to explore new ways of linking Young Unitarians together in the modern world.
- d) Urges the Executive Committee to ensure that a programme of Youth events at the Nightingale Centre is put in place as soon as permitted by Covid-19 regulations, with particular emphasis on provision for 7 to 11 year olds, which has been the much-valued bedrock of the Unitarian Youth programme for over 50 years.

4. FROM THE FOY SOCIETY

The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

- a) Affirms with joy that each person's understanding and statement of their own gender identity is a matter of conscience;
- b) Affirms that transgender rights are human rights;
- c) Joins the British Medical Association, the Trades Union Congress and others in civil society in urging the adoption of a self-declaration model for gender recognition by the UK and devolved governments; and
- d) Requests that the Chief Officer lobby for this model in response to UK or devolved government consultations and on any other suitable occasion.

5. FROM THE FINDHORN UNITARIAN NETWORK

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches requests the Executive Committee (EC) to prepare and present a Code of Ethics for consideration by the 2022 Annual Meetings. This Code would be applicable to all who are recognised on the Roll of Ministers and Lay Pastors; to the GA Roll of Lay Leaders; and to those employed by the General Assembly. Once the code is adopted, the EC is further asked to consider recommending adoption of the Code by all Congregations, Affiliated Societies and Districts. To enable this outcome, the EC is asked to:

- a) appoint an ad hoc committee to prepare a Code of Ethics;
- b) call for submissions from member congregations, affiliated societies, districts, Ministers, Lay Leaders and others employed or engaged in the Unitarian movement to support this work; and
- c) ensure the Code contains appropriate mechanisms for addressing complaints, grievances and disciplinary matters.

Further, as the adoption and implementation of a Code of Ethics with a disciplinary mechanism will need to be consistent with established employment practices, the EC is asked to obtain a legal review to this end before presenting the Code of Ethics for adoption by the General Assembly.

6. FROM THE LONDON DISTRICT & PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY (LDPA), THE PEACE FELLOWSHIP, AND TWELVE FULL MEMBERS

That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches:

welcomes the foundation of the interfaith Red Cross Memorial Peace Appeal in aid of the Global Coronavirus Emergency Appeal, the Yemen Crisis Appeal and other urgent humanitarian and medical appeals in the spirit of the Charter for Compassion and relevant GA resolutions;

and, as one immediate and direct way to be a force for good in the world, urges Unitarian congregations, Districts and individuals to support this interfaith initiative and so work with the Religious Society of Friends and other faith communities in taking timely action to aid victims of this global Covid-19 pandemic and of wars, conflicts and natural disasters and to act decisively to help save human lives worldwide.

As per the Resolution at the 2018 Annual Meetings, the following administrative motions are not considered to be part of the maximum 4 ordinary motions.

ADMINISTRATIVE MOTIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 7.** That the Report of the General Assembly Executive Committee and the Accounts of the General Assembly be received and adopted.
- 8.** That James Cowper Kreston LLP be appointed as Auditors.
- 9.** That Peter Hanley be appointed Honorary Treasurer for the year 2021-2022.
- 10.** That the thanks of the Assembly be given to Peter Hanley for his service as Treasurer during the year 2020-2021, and to district association and local officers for their invaluable services.
- 11.** That greetings be sent to kindred churches and societies abroad.
- 12.** That the thanks of the Assembly be given to the members of the General Assembly staff and to all volunteers for their inestimable help in organising the Meetings.
- 13.** That Anne Mills be appointed President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2021-2022.
- 14.** That Rev Sue Woolley be appointed Vice-President of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches for the year 2021-2022.
- 15.** That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Rev Celia Cartwright as President during the years 2019-2021.
- 16.** That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its gratitude for the services provided by Anne Mills and Rev Sue Woolley as part of the Presidential Team during the year 2020-2021.
- 17.** That this General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches expresses its empathy to all churches and members for the loss of loved ones during the pandemic.