

# URC THAMES NORTH TRUST

(A company limited by guarantee and having no share capital)

## ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

*Year ended 31 December 2020*

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## URC Thames North Trust

### REPORT OF THE DIRECTORS AND TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

The Directors have pleasure in presenting their report and the financial statements of URC Thames North Trust ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2020.

The report incorporates information complying with the Charities SORP, and complies generally with statutory requirements and the Trust's Articles of Association.

#### Structure, governance and management

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. It is registered in England under number 75432. It is registered as a charity under Charity Commission number 1022551. It is approved by the Lord Chancellor as a trust corporation.

The Trust was originally incorporated in 1902 under the name of London Congregational Union Incorporated. Its present name was adopted in 1984. The Articles of Association were completely rewritten in June 2013, to modernize the Trust's constitution and procedures and take account of changes in company and charity law.

The management of the Trust is the responsibility of the Board of Directors. The Directors are appointed by Thames North Synod of the United Reformed Church, pursuant to the Articles of Association. The Directors are the charity trustees for the purposes of the Charities Act 2011.

The Articles of Association provide for the appointment of a Secretary, Treasurer and Trust Officer. These officers undertake the day to day work of the Trust including the keeping of the financial records and preparation of the annual accounts. They report to the regular meetings of Directors and consult Directors between meetings as necessary.

Directors are kept informed of developments in charity and general law relevant to the operation of the Trust. As occasion arises consideration is given to the induction of and training for new directors.

#### Reference and administrative information

##### Directors

Mr I M Anderson  
Mr I Critchley  
Mr S Fairington  
Mr M J Gould (chairman)  
Mr B M Hosier  
Mr B W Moere  
Mr A A West (to 11.9.21)  
Mrs J Wyber  
Mrs K Yates (from 25.7.20)

##### Officers

Secretary:	Mr K R Berry
Acting Treasurer	Mr K R Berry
Legal and Trust Officer:	Mrs M Levan-Harris

##### Bankers

National Westminster Bank Plc, Fleet Street Branch  
PO Box 281, 156 Fleet Street, London, EC4A 2DX.

##### Solicitors

Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP,  
134 Edmund Street, Birmingham, B3 2ES.

Cripps Pemberton Greenish LLP,  
22 Mount Ephraim Road, Tunbridge Wells,  
Kent, TN4 8AS

##### Independent Examiners

Haysmacintyre LLP  
10 Queen Street Place, London, EC4R 1AG.

## **URC Thames North Trust**

### **Objectives and activities**

The Trust's main objective is to assist the churches of the Thames North Synod of the United Reformed Church, and the Synod itself, by holding properties and investments on behalf of those bodies and by ensuring that all transactions affecting those properties and investments are carried out in ways that satisfy all the legal requirements.

In pursuance of this objective, the Trust acts:

- (a) as trustee owner of properties (mostly church buildings and manses held on the standard trusts for United Reformed Church properties) on behalf of 109 local churches within the area of Thames North Synod of the United Reformed Church;
- (b) as custodian trustee owner of properties held for Thames North Synod (mostly closed churches, housing for ministers and housing for retired ministers);
- (c) as trustee and custodian trustee of investments and deposits held on behalf of, or for the benefit of, Thames North Synod or individual United Reformed churches (73 churches) within the area of the Thames North Synod or persons associated with the Synod or those churches.

The Trust also acts as trustee of a small grant-making charity not associated exclusively with Thames North Synod or individual churches.

### **Public Benefit**

The Directors' Meeting is aware of the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in the "Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit" and has regard to it in pursuing the objectives of and in the activities of the Trust.

### **Achievements and performance**

During the year the Trust has:

- (a) dealt with the sale and lease of properties vested in the Trust on behalf of local churches and Thames North Synod;
- (b) dealt with the acquisition of properties on behalf of Thames North Synod and local churches;
- (c) negotiated and advised on a wide variety of other property related issues, including land disputes and development schemes;
- (d) carried out investment transactions on instructions from churches and Thames North Synod;
- (e) carried out banking transactions in respect of funds held on behalf of local churches, Thames North Synod and the grant-making charity.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has affected many areas of life in the course of the last year, including restrictions placed on travelling and place of work. Due to these restrictions the officers of the Trust have, on the whole, been unable to work from the office in Bayswater and have adjusted to working from home. It was fortunate that officers were already used to doing some of their work remotely so was not as great a problem as it might have been. Telephone calls and emails can both be accessed remotely and, as such, the adjustment was not as problematic as it might have been. Telephone calls and emails can both be accessed remotely and Synod staff, including the Legal and Trust Officer, have visited the offices periodically to collect and forward post etc.

Despite the pandemic, the volume of property work has continued at a substantial level in 2020, albeit in a slightly different form to previous years, with many more churches seeking the advice of the Trust over a wide range of property related issues. Some lease negotiations have been placed on hold until the various pandemic restrictions are lifted. Inevitably, there have been less property sales and purchases during 2020 than usual although there is a possibility we will see a significant increase in the rate of church closures and, consequently, property sales in the coming years.

### **Plans for future periods**

The possibility of digitalizing all deeds and relevant historical documents, such as Declarations of Trusts and Sharing Agreements, so they can be accessed electronically, will be looked into. This measure will help mitigate against delays in responding to some enquiries from local churches where reference to deeds or historical documents is necessary.

A new database has been adopted and it is planned to continue with the inputting of data so that the database can be fully commissioned in due course.

## **URC Thames North Trust**

### **Financial review**

The results for the year are set out on page 8 in the form of a Statement of Financial Activities complying with the accounting requirements for charities. There was a deficit for the year of £9,918 (2019: £36,156 surplus).

The Trust applies a range of charges for specific services provided to the charities of which it is trustee. However, it is impracticable to set these at a level which would meet the full costs of the Trust. Thames North Synod has therefore been meeting some of the staffing costs.

The directors decided in 2011 to exercise the right within company law to dispense with an audit of the accounts and instead to opt for an independent examination of the accounts.

### **Charities' accounts and reports**

Having regard to the Charities SORP and the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, the Trust's report and accounts distinguish between assets and liabilities of the Trust as provider of trustee services, and assets and liabilities of charities for which the Trust acts as charity trustee or custodian trustee.

The Balance Sheet on page 9 and the Statement of Financial Activities on page 8 deal with the Trust's own activities in providing trustee services.

Information about assets held by the Trust as trustee for other charities is given in a separate statement on pages 11-13. Information about investments held for charities of which the Trust is trustee is provided to these charities annually and as transactions are carried out. Statements about transactions on current and deposit accounts are also supplied annually and when income is remitted and on request from churches.

### **Reserves Policy**

The Trust had reserves of £75,659 at the end of 2020 (2019: £85,577). This represents approximately 12 months of expenditure and is considered adequate for the Trust to maintain a positive cash flow throughout the year. A general assurance has been given on behalf of Synod that, if the Trust's resources become insufficient to meet its costs, any shortfall will be met from Synod's funds.

### **Transactions**

The Trust has few assets of its own. The costs of providing its services are analysed in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 8. These costs are met from interest on bank balances and charges to the charities for which services are provided.

All banking transactions on behalf of individual charities are carried on through the bank account of the Trust, with appropriate identification in the accounting records.

Professional fees incurred in property and other transactions are met out of the capital received or paid direct by the local church or Thames North Synod as the case may be. The costs of general legal advice are borne by the Trust.

Investments are made and realised for individual charities in response to instructions from the local church or Thames North Synod where applicable. Investments are recorded with individual designations for ease of identification.

Investment income received for individual charities is mostly remitted to those entitled to it or responsible for its subsequent distribution according to the relevant trusts. Retained income is held for the relevant charities and remitted to them when required.

Uninvested balances for individual charities are mostly placed in interest bearing deposit accounts open to charities.

## URC Thames North Trust

### Funds held on behalf of others

Investments are registered in the name of the Trust with a designation identifying the particular charity with the beneficial interest. Title documents are held at the Trust's registered office.

Information about the Trust's holdings as trustee for others is given on pages 11-13.

### Statement of Directors' Responsibilities

The Directors are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to accord with the accounting records of the Trust and to show the surplus or deficit for the period concerned. In preparing these financial statements the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- observe methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the Trust will continue in operation.

The Directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Trust and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Trust and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the directors are aware:

- there is no relevant information needed for the accounts examination of which the charitable company's independent examiner is unaware; and
- the Directors are responsible for taking all steps necessary to ensure that they are aware of all relevant information needed for the Trust's independent examiners examination of the accounts, and they have ensured that the independent examiners are aware of all such information.

### Independent Examiners

The reappointment of Haysmacintyre, who have indicated their willingness to act as Independent Examiners, will be the subject of resolutions at the next meeting of the Directors.

### Special Exemption and Approval

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for smaller companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006. The Annual Report and Accounts were circulated to the Directors, by email and approved by them in September 2021 and the Chairman was authorised to sign the report. It is signed on behalf of the Directors by

  
M J Gould  
Director

23 September 2021

**URC Thames North Trust**

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF URC THAMES NORTH TRUST**

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I report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31 December 2020 which are set out on pages 8 to 13.

• **RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEE AND EXAMINER**

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

• **BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

• **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
  - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
  - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and which are consistent with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities.have not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Adam Halsey  
Haysmacintyre LLP  
Chartered Accountants  
10 Queen Street Place  
London  
EC4R 1AG

.....30 September 2021



URC Thames North Trust


BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

	Note	2020 £	2019 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>	1	-	-
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Debtors		14,791	28,663
Prepayments		1,089	1,089
Cash on short term deposit	1	62,899	61,939
		<u>78,779</u>	<u>91,691</u>
<b>Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year</b>			
Accruals		(3,120)	(6,114)
		<u>75,659</u>	<u>85,577</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>			
		<u>75,659</u>	<u>85,577</u>
<b>Net assets</b>			
		<u>75,659</u>	<u>85,577</u>
<b>Reserves</b>			
General funds		75,659	85,577
		<u>75,659</u>	<u>85,577</u>

The directors consider that the company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to have an audit under the provisions of section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ("the Act") and members have not required the company to obtain an audit for the period in question in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which accord with the accounting records of the company as at 31 December 2020 and of its profit or loss for the period then ended in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 of the Act and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to the financial statements so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to small entities within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and with FRS 102 Section 1A – small entities. The accounts were approved by the Directors, by email in September 2021. The Chairman was authorised to sign and issue the accounts. They are signed on behalf of the directors by

  
M J Gould  
Director  
23 September 2021

Company No 75432

**ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

**1 Convention**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, the Statement of Recommended Practice for Charities (SORP 2019), Companies Act 2006 and Financial Reporting Standards applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland. The accounts have also been prepared in accordance with the FRS102 Section 1A – small entities. They are prepared on the historical cost basis. Figures are presented in sterling and rounded to the nearest pound.

URC Thames North Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102.

The particular accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:-

**General information**

The Trust is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated in England and Wales (company number: 75432) and a charity registered in England and Wales (charity number: 1022551). The registered office is St Paul's URC, Newton Road, London, W2 5LS.

**Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis.**

The directors consider that there are no material uncertainties which would cast doubt on the Trust's ability to continue as a going concern.

**Fund Accounting**

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the directors in furtherance of the general objectives of the Trust and which have not been designated for other purposes. The Trust has no restricted or designated funds.

**Income**

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the Trust is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

**Expenditure**

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with use of the resources.

**Properties and investments held on behalf of others**

The Trust has no property or investments in which it is the beneficial interest. The properties and investments which stand in its name are held for the benefit of other charities of which it is trustee or custodian trustee. Such properties and investments are not assets of the Trust and are not included in these accounts.

**Cash in hand**

All banking transactions on behalf of charities of which the Trust is trustee or custodian trustee pass through the Trust's bank account. The balance in hand held on behalf of others is shown on page 12.

**Creditors**

Short term creditors are measured at the transaction price. Other financial liabilities, including bank loans, are measured initially at fair value, net of transaction costs, and are measured subsequently at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

## URC Thames North Trust

### NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

#### 2 Directors' emoluments

The Trust does not have power to remunerate its directors. No expenses were paid to directors in 2020. ( 2019 - £46)

#### 3 Limitation of guarantee

In the event of the Trust being wound up, each member has undertaken to contribute to the assets of the Trust such amounts as required not exceeding £1.

The Trust has no power to pay dividends etc to its members, and in the event of its dissolution its property is to be paid to another appropriate charitable body and not to its members.

### ASSETS HELD AS TRUSTEE OR CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

The information given on this and the two following pages is reviewed by the Trust's independent examiner and covered by the report on page 7.

#### Properties

Freehold and leasehold properties are vested in the Trust as trustee on behalf of United Reformed Churches or on behalf of Thames North Synod of the United Reformed Church. The cost or value of most of these properties at the date of original purchase or transfer to the Trust is not known. They are not therefore included in the Statement of Assets Held As Trustee on page 12.

#### Investments

Investments are held on behalf of 54 churches, Thames North Synod and other trusts associated with the United Reformed Church in Thames North Synod. They are shown at market value in the Statement of Assets Held as Trustee on page 12. The analysis in Note B on page 13 shows these investments at cost or, in the case of some investments transferred to the Trust where the original cost is not known, at market value on the date of transfer.

#### Cash on short term deposit and at bank

Some moneys held on behalf of churches, trusts and Thames North Synod are held in interest bearing deposit accounts maintained by the Trust with individual designations. The Trust's bank balance includes amounts held on behalf of churches, trusts and Thames North Synod, in both current and interest bearing accounts. These holdings are summarised in Note A on page 12.

#### Income from investments and cash deposits

Investment income received for individual charities is mostly remitted to those entitled to it or responsible for its subsequent distribution according to the relevant trusts. Retained income is held for the relevant charity and remitted to them when required.

#### Information for charity trustees

The Trust provides annual financial information about investments held for the charities of which it is trustee or custodian trustee. Interim information is provided as required. The Trust also provides statements about transactions on current and deposit accounts annually and when income is remitted.

URC Thames North Trust

STATEMENT OF ASSETS HELD AS TRUSTEE OR CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE AS AT 31 DECEMBER  
2020

	Note	2020 £	2019 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>			
Investments at market value	B	29,281,972	27,967,657
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash on short term deposit	A	12,251,141	10,960,346
Cash at bank	A	183,763	2,133,016
		<u>12,434,904</u>	<u>13,093,362</u>
<b>Total assets</b>		<u>41,716,876</u>	<u>41,061,019</u>

NOTES TO THE STATEMENT OF ASSETS HELD AS TRUSTEE OR CUSTODIAN TRUSTEE

A. CASH ON SHORT TERM DEPOSIT OR AT BANK

	2020 £	2019 £
Short term deposits held on behalf of:-		
Thames North Synod	1,880,360	427,122
Others	10,370,781	10,533,224
	<u>12,251,141</u>	<u>10,960,346</u>
Cash at bank held on behalf of:-		
Thames North Synod	(34,984)	1,886,682
Others	218,747	246,334
	<u>183,763</u>	<u>2,133,016</u>

URC Thames North Trust

B. INVESTMENTS

Summary by Beneficiary	Thames North Synod £	Churches £	Others £	Total £
<b>At cost</b>				
At 31 December 2019	10,603,910	7,531,657	460,026	18,595,593
Transfer	0	0	0	0
<b>Additions:-</b>				
New funds	116,706	47,045	0	163,751
Reinvestment	0	30,376	12,858	43,234
<b>Disposals</b>	(0)	(194,439)	(44,113)	(238,552)
At 31 December 2020	<u>10,720,616</u>	<u>7,414,639</u>	<u>428,771</u>	<u>18,564,026</u>
<b>At market value</b>				
At 31 December 2019	<u>14,616,444</u>	<u>12,619,190</u>	<u>732,023</u>	<u>27,967,657</u>
At 31 December 2020	<u>15,661,100</u>	<u>12,898,278</u>	<u>722,594</u>	<u>29,281,972</u>

Summary by Type	Unit Trusts, Common Investment Funds £	Government Stocks £	Listed Investments £	Total £
<b>At cost</b>				
At 31 December 2019	18,592,111	0	3,482	18,595,593
<b>Additions:-</b>				
New funds	163,751	0	0	163,751
Reinvestment	43,234	0	0	43,234
<b>Disposals</b>	(238,552)	(0)	(0)	(238,552)
At 31 December 2020	<u>18,560,544</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3,482</u>	<u>18,564,026</u>
<b>At market value</b>				
At 31 December 2019	<u>27,924,906</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>42,751</u>	<u>27,967,657</u>
At 31 December 2020	<u>29,240,811</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>41,161</u>	<u>29,281,972</u>