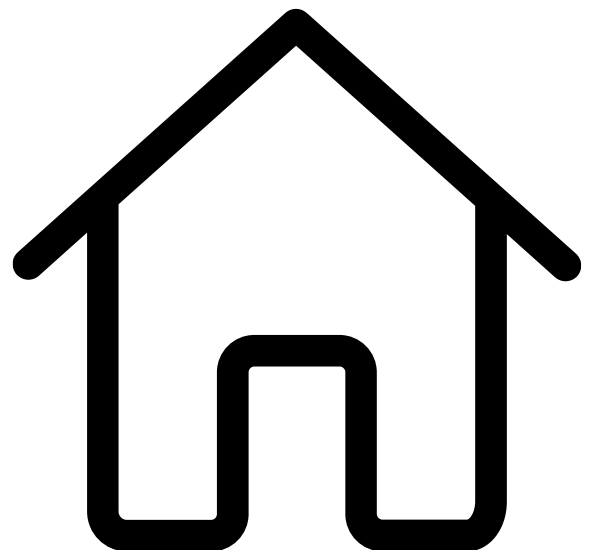


# Synod Manse Scheme

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# The Policy

## 1. Policy Objectives

- 1.1 To ensure the provision of suitable housing in accordance with the Plan for Partnership:  
<https://urc.org.uk/urc-ministries/the-plan-for-partnership/>  
  
Manses are held in trust for the purpose of housing URC 'Church workers' under the terms of the URC Act. Part II of Schedule 2 sets out the Trust provisions. Paragraph 5 relates to the sale of redundant manses and Paragraph 2(e) to lettings.
- 1.2 To enable manses to be provided in suitable locations to meet the needs of current and future pastorates.
- 1.3 The Policy objectives will be met through a Synod Manse Scheme (The Scheme) and a Synod Manse Fund.

## 2. The Synod Manse Scheme

- 2.1 The Scheme is administered by the Synod Resources Committee through the Resources Officer.
- 2.2 The Scheme has been in existence since Oct 2005 and as of 1/1/2024 holds 22 properties.
- 2.3 When a pastoral vacancy is to be declared, the Pastorate and the Synod Resources Committee will agree if an existing manse meets the requirements of the Scheme and the Pastorate, or alternatively agree what measures are required to upgrade an existing manse or provide a new property.
- 2.4 In cases of pastoral necessity, ministers and their families will be permitted to stay in residence in manses, rent-free, for up to three months from the end date of the minister's deployment e.g. retirement or call elsewhere. However, they, or the receiving Synod, would be expected to meet the associated costs relating to Council Tax and utilities. After three months, rent at market rate may become payable depending on individual circumstances. The decision regarding this will be taken by the Synod Officers.
- 2.5 The Pastorate will continue with their responsibilities under the Plan for Partnership, and some general management and maintenance as set out in Schedule 5, through a locally appointed contact.
- 2.6 The Synod Manse Scheme will cover the costs of repairs and capital works as set out in this Policy.
- 2.7 When a manse is vacant it will be let in the name of the Trust Company using an approved Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement with the Synod Manse Scheme taking on the local responsibilities.
- 2.8 Manses no longer needed will be sold, (after consultation with the Synod Pastoral Committee, pastorate and Area Partnership Pastoral Advocate.)

### **3. The Synod Manse Fund**

- 3.1 A designated Synod Manse Fund receives the proceeds from Manse sales, local Church manse funds and income from manses within the Scheme.
- 3.2 The Fund will be administered by the Synod Resources Committee through the Finance Officer and will comprise investments, cash funds and property. A suitable working capital will be held as cash funds.
- 3.3 The Fund will be used to improve, replace maintain or provide manses. Improvements will not normally be made against the wishes of the current occupiers, unless required on Health and Safety grounds or to carry out essential works.
- 3.4 If Synod Resources Committee determines there is a persisting surplus of capital, some may be transferred to the Synod CLMI Fund.

### **4. Joining the Synod Manse Scheme**

- 4.1 When a church wishes to join the Synod Manse Scheme it will be necessary for the church to pass a Church Meeting resolution to that effect. Prior to this, details of the property and funds, timing of the entry into the Scheme and any transfer arrangements would need to have been agreed with the Resources Committee. A Standard Resolution is given in this Policy, which will require approval by the Church Meeting and agreement by the Synod Resources Committee.
- 4.2 Some churches currently rely upon rental income or income from local church manse fund investments. Transfer arrangements will be discussed and agreed with the church and Synod Resources Committee.
- 4.3 When a resolution to join the Scheme is passed, the approval of the Trustees will be required.
- 4.4 The resolution to join the Scheme will entitle the Synod Manse Scheme to receive existing local manse funds, investment or future rental income and any sale proceeds, subject to any transfer arrangements agreed.

## **Schedules**

### **5. Responsibilities of the Pastorate for manses in the Synod Manse Scheme in occupation by Ministers or Church Related Community Workers**

Items in the Plan for Partnership (principally buildings insurance (arranged by Synod and charged to the Pastorate), Council Tax and water rates.)

Provision of a contact person responsible for day-to-day matters pertaining to the manse, including being the local keyholder.

Annual building inspections.

## **6. Shared Responsibilities of the Pastorate and Synod Manse Scheme for manses in the Synod Manse Scheme in occupation by Ministers or Church Related Community Workers**

The local contact person, in consultation with the occupant and Synod, will arrange for the following to happen; with the Synod Manse Fund covering the cost on receipt of invoices:

- Regular servicing of the heating system and the annual testing and certification of gas installations.
- Annual inspection and statutory periodic certification of the electrical installation and actions arising.
- The installation and maintenance of smoke and carbon monoxide detection and alarm equipment.
- The servicing and replacement of fire extinguishers and fire blankets.

The local contact person, in consultation with the occupant, and with agreement of the Synod, will arrange for the following to happen; with the Synod Manse Fund covering the cost on receipt of invoices:

- Repairs to roof and rainwater drainage.
- Internal & external redecoration.
- General repairs (except major structural repairs normally paid for by the Synod, if not covered by its insurance.)
- The replacement of internal floor coverings or finishings.
- Repairs and alterations to existing plumbing and central heating installations.
- Repair and alterations to existing electrical, telephone, computer, security alarm installations, etc.
- Repairs to internal & external windows & doors, including repairs to glazing etc.
- Repairs and alterations to external paths, hard standings, steps, fences, etc.

## **7. Responsibilities of URCEPT for vacant manses in the Synod Manse Scheme**

URCEPT is responsible through the Resources Officer for the letting of vacant Manses within the Scheme along with the associated costs and any maintenance required.

The Synod Manse Fund will receive revenue and bear the cost of capital works required to manses as follows:

- Extensions and alterations required to bring a manse up to the latest recommended National Manse Guidelines.
- Refitting bathrooms and kitchens
- Replacement of central heating boilers.
- Replacement of roof coverings, including the replacement of existing flat roofs (with high performance finish or the installation of sloping roofs).
- The replacement of existing external windows & doors, with new double-glazed units.
- The replacement of existing barge and gutter boards with UPVC if possible.
- Electrical rewiring.
- Installation of safety and security facilities, including where applicable the initial provision of fire extinguishers and fire blankets.

- New fences and/or boundary walls where the replacement is necessary other than by damage covered by insurance.
- The construction of external hard standings to allow or increase off-street parking.
- Major structural repairs not covered by insurance.
- Work required to comply with Health & Safety regulations.
- Any professional, planning, building control fees, etc. in connection with the above items.
- Professional Quinquennial buildings inspections and reports.
- Disabled Access Facilities when required.

## **Arrangements for Transfer of Assets to the Synod Manse Scheme**

### **8. Principles in the matter of the Transfer of Assets**

The priority is to ensure there are sufficient manses, meeting the requirements of Plan for Partnership, for deployment as determined by the Synod Pastoral Committee.

Transfer arrangements will be negotiated between the church and the Synod Resources Committee. (This may involve more than one church when a pastorate, with a surplus of manses, is seeking to join the Scheme. In such cases all parties should endeavour for a fair and equitable result.)

Such negotiations will include:

- Development of an arrangement which will take full account of the needs of the church.
- Assisting the church in a financial review of its income and expenditure.
- Consideration of any loss of rental income.
- Consideration of the current condition of the property.
- Provision of all relevant documentation regarding the legal and physical aspects of the property.

When such arrangements involve a local church manse fund, or the immediate sale of a manse, there shall be a discussion between the relevant local church(es), Resources Committee and Pastoral Committee to establish:

- a) the level of funds required to purchase a replacement manse for the pastorate or Mission Partnership.
- b) the level of funds required to resource capital improvements, emergency repairs or upgrading to an acceptable standard, any manse within the Scheme that serves the pastorate or Mission Partnership.
- c) how any transferred local church manse fund and / sale of proceeds (net of a and b), will then be divided equitably between the Synod and the local church(es).
- d) if any restrictions should apply to the use of monies apportioned under c.

## 9. Draft Church Meeting Resolution

The ..... (name) Church Meeting held on .....  
(date) agrees to place their manse ..... (address),  
into the Eastern Synod Manse Scheme and/or their manse investment fund .....  
(value) into the Synod Manse Fund in accordance with the Eastern Synod Manse Scheme.

This agreement is subject to Transfer Arrangements agreed with the Synod Resources Committee and Pastoral Committee as detailed below:

*(insert agreed Transfer Arrangements)*

It is agreed that the responsibilities for the costs and maintenance, of any manse assigned to the pastorate will be shared between the churches in the pastorate and the Synod as defined in the Synod Manse Scheme.

It is agreed that the Eastern Synod Manse Fund will benefit from any rental income or interest arising from this property/investment. The date for this to become effective shall be ..... (date).

It is agreed that at some future date it may be necessary to sell the Manse (after consultation with the Resources Committee, Pastoral Committee, Pastorate and Area Partnership Pastoral Advocate).

Signed on behalf of the Church Meeting:

Name ..... Signature .....

Date ..... \* Church Secretary / Treasurer / Minister / Interim Moderator

Approved after review by the Synod Resources Committee:

Name ..... Signature .....

Date .....