Rodborough Tabernacle URC Vision 2030

Introduction 2

Context 2

Mission statement 3

Specific objectives

- Worship and Training 4
- Mission and Outreach 4
- Pastoral 5
- Children and Youth 6
- Property, Finance and Administration 6

Summary 7

Introduction

This church is ambitious in its plans for its future. Although we have a long heritage, we know that action and change are necessary in response to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

We welcome people from all ages and backgrounds to join us on our journey.

Context

The church is in national decline, and few have time or interest in the Christian faith. Many are suspicious of authority and organised religion. Many have been alienated by the Church's stance on women in leadership and gay marriage. Church attendance on a Sunday is no longer the norm; instead, there are many other family, social and work commitments.

Covid caused many to feel isolated and very vulnerable. As a church, we survived the pandemic, through the development of new ways of worship with online services and an active telephone ministry to provide pastoral support. However, as the threat from Covid receded, people were less keen to start up activities that were running before 2020. The need to increase the breadth of activities remains in the church, just as it does in the community as a whole.

Stroud is a place that attracts creative, independent-thinking people who are open to spirituality. In 2022, this congregation took the decision to register for the celebration of same sex marriages. For many years, women have been encouraged to join in leadership. The church is known for its warm welcome and its acceptance of people from all backgrounds.

We are aiming for growth in our church, and we seek spiritual as well as numerical growth, building up disciples from the existing congregation as well as supporting and nurturing people who wish to join us.

We have appointed a Church Development Leader, Kim Baker who works with our minister, Simon Helme to lead the church through her new ideas and the investment of time to reach new people.

Alongside this, we have plans to renovate the sanctuary to make it more attractive, flexible, and cost effective to run and accessible for all to attend.

In this document, we have set achievable goals that show our love for Jesus, our care for the local community and our willingness to welcome all. Rodborough Tab is, and we hope will continue to be, an affirming church, embracing individuality and diversity.

Our new mission statement

Inspired by Jesus, serving the community, welcoming all.

This simple statement is the essence of what we believe we have been called to do as a church. It puts Jesus at the heart of our church life, and we follow his commandment to take his word to all people.

There are many practical issues that we have to address, but wherever there are difficulties, questions or decisions we turn back to this statement.

Specific Objectives

Worship and Training

Aim: To equip and grow confident leaders of worship

- To invigorate our worship, exploring new styles of worship and developing a music group.
- To maintain our ability to respond to the church's worship needs, adapting to the availability of the minister and the Church Development Leader.
- To extend opportunity for worship, prayer and bible study beyond Sunday morning through further services, house groups and meetings.
- To adapt our premises to accommodate different styles of worship.
- To develop our technical capabilities using audio-visual equipment and streaming to enhance our worship and reach a new audience. Train new people to use the equipment.
- To introduce styles of service that talk to people outside the traditional church community, e.g. young people, the LGBTQ+ community, Biker Church, and quiet, reflective services.
- To begin and develop a prayer ministry team available at the end of services.
- To identify, train and support a team of new leaders of worship.
- To identify and develop a range of training opportunities, courses, retreats and quiet days to help members to deepen their faith and develop confidence.

Mission and Outreach

Aim: To encourage and enable existing Church members, new Christians and enquirers to live out the Gospel with confidence

- To train and empower people in mission, and to actively invite others.
- To deliver a regular programme of enquirers' courses.
- To be more visible in the community beyond the church.
- To organise or encourage community events in the church, church halls and Little Chapel.

- To develop our technical capabilities using audio-visual equipment, streaming, social media, website and other opportunities to convey who we are and what we do and reach a new audience.
- To establish a Tab Eco Policy which recognises the urgent need to tackle climate change and includes targets such as aiming for an Eco Church award and hosting Green Christian meetings.
- To work with Remembering Rodborough to maintain a defined part of the graveyard to enhance our knowledge of the history of the community, leaving some areas for nature, possibly working with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.
- To support charities whose aims include action on justice, poverty and environmental issues.
- Seek to offer engagement with contemporary issues of justice and peace.
- To support Stroud Churches Together and the global Church.
- To play our part in Synod and the wider United Reformed Church.
- To raise the profile of the church, increasing its presence in the wider community, though poetry, nature, history and other events with press releases, posters, media interviews and online publicity.
- To explore church outside of "church", e.g. fresh expressions, outdoor church, messy church, Biker Church.
- For the Church Development Leader to engage the community in a community audit to see what they feel is lacking, exploring what the Tab can do for the local community; we need to confirm the need before projects are started, e.g. in the case of a community café .

Pastoral

Aim: To nurture our church family through friendship and practical and spiritual support inspired by the love of Jesus

- To train and equip members for pastoral support and prayer ministry.
- To continue weekly prayer meetings (currently on zoom) and the email prayer chain.
- To offer pastoral care to our members and friends and foster an environment of mutual support.

- To reject discrimination and be explicitly affirming of LGBTQ+ people and anyone who may feel excluded by the wider Church
- To consider joining Inclusive Church and Open Table.
- To broaden the pastoral ministry team to meet the increasing need as our members grow older.
- To coordinate social events and fellowship meals after worship.
- To begin house groups to foster fellowship, friendship and faith.

Children and Youth

Aim: To create a vibrant ministry for children and young people

- To restart our work with children and young people.
- To nurture and support children and their families.
- To provide fun and engaging services for families and Live Wires.
- To strengthen and maintain our links with Rodborough Playgroup, Scouts, Cubs and Beavers.
- To develop new links with Gastrells School and Rodborough School and work with them on joint projects and offer our support.

Property, Finance and Administration

Aim: To maintain a safe and welcoming building and provide resources to support the mission of the church

- To continue to improve our property, reducing where possible its environmental impact.
- To complete the weatherproofing of the roof of our main building and other elements essential for its continued effective use.
- To redecorate the sanctuary, removing the pews and making the space more flexible, facilitating an amplified music group.
- To improve the accessibility of the building with level, safe access from the road.
- To further develop more sustainable ways of managing our property to ensure full compliance with legal, regulatory and moral duties.
- To establish a balanced policy for the use of our rooms between church users and external hirers.

- To advertise space for hiring and enhance our systems for booking and to improve our engagement with hirers.
- To maintain the Little Chapel site and find new ways of using the space.
- To discuss a long-term plan for the use of the Manse.
- To establish an affordable plan for the future of the graveyard, bearing in mind the cost of its maintenance, and its value to the community and the environment.
- To revamp our website and develop our social media presence.
- To maintain the church's financial sustainability and good stewardship of its finances.
- To develop an effective fundraising strategy.
- To examine ways of improving participation in leadership and communication.

Summary

In 2030 Rodborough Tabernacle will still be an active church engaged in the worship of God and serving its local community. It will be known for its love and acceptance.

We will be a church where people feel comfortable to question and explore faith, where people can find and meet with God and seek to follow Jesus.

Members will have become confident in their faith, leading more people to Jesus and seeking ways in which the church can further serve the community.

Our membership will span an increasingly wide range of people of all ages and backgrounds. We will be an attractive church to younger adults, families and children.

The church buildings will be accessible and flexible for use and a place of hospitality, welcome and love, open to all, especially those who have been marginalised and hurt by the church.

This document will be reviewed in April 2027.