

Minutes of the Joint Church Meeting between Cheshunt URC and Broxbourne URC

Held at Broxbourne at 10.30am on Sunday 30th November 2025

1. Opening and Prayer: led by Revd. Mark Robinson (MR) holding this turning point for our two churches in prayer with care, honesty and hope.

2. Purpose of the Meeting: To formally agree to the amalgamation of the two churches previously agreed in principle and to seek direction and openness in moving forwards.

3. Apologies for Absence: Received from Helen Knight, Diane Price, Dorothy Blatcher, Don Wratten, Brenda McAuliffe, Alan Earl and Teresa Morton

4. Present: There were 23 members and 2 adherents present. 6 members and 1 adherent from Cheshunt 17 members and 1 adherent from Broxbourne

5. Recap of Decisions Already Made:

21st September 2025: Cheshunt Church Meeting bravely recognised their concern regarding their sustainability and voted in favour of pursuing amalgamation with Broxbourne URC.

12th November 2025: Pastorate Elders met with David Skipp (Synod) and Martin Legg (Local Area Group) to discuss the parameters of amalgamation as directed by the Broxbourne Church in their Extraordinary Church Meeting on 12th October.

23rd November: Broxbourne Church Meeting voted in favour to proceed in principle with amalgamation with Cheshunt, with the proviso that the church building and manse be sold so that the new church does not have responsibility for these buildings.

30th November: Today both churches have come together in order to confirm their mutual commitment to the process of amalgamation and to go forward together.

6. Support from Synod, Synod Trust, and the Local Area Group: the roles each will play **Synod** approval is required for the amalgamation. They are already aware and the Moderator (George Watt) awaits our decision. Synod will oversee the process and work with us in areas such as governance, safeguarding, charity law, legalities and all the documentation necessary. They will assist with matters of finance and the combination of the finances of the two churches.

The Synod trust will help with buildings and will handle all property matters on behalf of the church; the safeguarding and selling of the buildings and any transition in order to ensure that all URC processes and property arrangements are correctly followed and adhered to.

The Local Area Group will commit to fairness and transparency and will support us on every step. We will not be handling this on our own.

7. Amalgamation in Practice:

All members of the two churches will become members of the one new church.

The worship life and pastoral care of both congregations will be combined. We will worship together in Broxbourne in the Broxbourne church building.

Elders of both churches will be joined to form the eldership of the new church.

Transport will be hired to convey members from Cheshunt to and from church – and indeed any along the way from Broxbourne. MR will look into this as a priority. There will be no charge to members. It will be financed from Cheshunt's existing funds.

8. Discussion and Questions:

Transport: Discussion followed regarding relative merits/problems related to hiring, leasing or even buying a vehicle; regarding possible car sharing and lifts to church; as well as special adaptations, insurances and licences.

This is a complex area and, in the short term at least, hiring should be pursued. We will not leave anyone that wants to attend behind in Cheshunt.

A team should be created to explore practicalities and possibilities.

Buildings: The Cheshunt Church and Manse will be sold. The Cheshunt building is part of the Countess of Huntingdon's estate and legacy and there may be things to sort out around this. Cheshunt is also associated with Westminster college and there may be links to investigate. David Skipp (Synod Property Officer) will be asked to look into this.

Synod Trust: A member (David Davies - DD) asked for clarification as to the role of the URC Trust? They are a separate company to Synod and deal with governance, finance and legal issues. Memuna LevanHarris is a legal officer of the Trust that we have worked with before. There are other Trust officers known to us through the Local Area Group. DD would like to know who these are.

9. Key Decisions to Be Made:

a) formal date of amalgamation. This can be done at any time.

b) date and arrangements for final service at Cheshunt. Dignitaries (e.g. members of the Synod and Trust), past members, past ministers and indeed anyone interested should be invited. Either the Moderator or the Convenor of the Local Area Group may want to lead the service.

It will be a Service of Thanksgiving.

It could be held in the afternoon to enable as many as possible to attend.

This can be before or after formal amalgamation.

Cheshunt members felt that they would not be able to provide refreshments after the service, however it was suggested that Broxbourne members could cater as Cheshunt are becoming part of the family!

c) A Welcome Service at Broxbourne – again with dignitaries and followed by refreshments. A service of welcome and new beginnings.

Proposal: (Proposed: Eunice Asiedu – Cheshunt Seconded: David Davies – Broxbourne)
The Thanksgiving Service at Cheshunt should be held on Sunday 22nd March 2026. The Welcome Service at Broxbourne should take place on Easter Sunday 5th April 2026.

All in agreement. No abstentions and none against. Passed unanimously.

After Easter we will go forward together officially. Services are planned at Cheshunt until March however in the interim Cheshunt has an open invitation to worship at Broxbourne.

d) Concerns regarding the process of closure: We will need a lot of guidance (Gordon Kelso - GK). There will be hoops to jump through that may take time. It would be good to have a rough guide of timings. Even after amalgamation Cheshunt will still need to be administered. It would be good to have the building empty for as short a time as possible. Although a sale may take some time, warning must be given to hirers. Some are already aware e.g. the church worshipping there on Sunday afternoons who, with two weeks' notice will move their meeting. Hiring notice is usually 2 weeks.

There are many things to organise at Cheshunt – properties, cleaning etc. There need to be lists of things to do e.g. dealing with/selling assets. There is a lot to do at the busiest time of the year and those that need to do the work are in employment. Time is needed. This is a bereavement and cannot be rushed.

10. Next Steps: The Minister promised transparency and detail at every stage; to include David Skipp and Martin Legg in all discussions; and to encourage David Skipp to answer our questions as quickly as possible now that we have a timeline.

11. Any Other Relevant Business: None was raised.

12. Closing Prayer: The Minister thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions and closed the meeting with prayer and invited all to bless each other with The Grace.

RW: 3.12.25