

2. First Report of the Conference Business Committee

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1. Membership of the Conference Business Committee

The Conference Business Committee for 2015 comprises the Revds Ashley Cooper and Sylvester Deigh, Deacon Jane Gibson, Mr Rodney Betts, Mr Stephen Cooper, Dr Stephen Leah and Mrs Ruth Pickles (Chair). As all members have been elected as Conference representatives, there is no anticipated requirement for any substitutes under Standing Order 136(1C).

2. Meetings and reports

- The Business Committee will meet on Saturday 27 June at the close of business, following the Scrutineers' briefing.
- The Scrutineers are asked to meet for a briefing on Saturday 27 June immediately at the close of business.
- The Business Committee will report each day in the Order Paper. It will indicate any variations to the outline schedule printed in the Agenda.

3. Length of speeches

It is recommended that presenters of business have four minutes and speakers three minutes. In exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the President and Vice-President, these allocations may be changed.

4. Use of time

4.1 Members of the Conference will want to ensure that their time is spent wisely and effectively. To this end, the Business Committee will endeavour to ensure that as far as possible business follows the schedule published in the Agenda. As well as those who visit the Conference for particular debates, increasing numbers of people watch its proceedings on the Internet, especially items on specific matters of interest, and rely on the published schedule being observed. Therefore, without wishing to deny opportunity to speak or to curtail debate unhelpfully, the Business Committee strongly urges members of the Conference to maintain the discipline of keeping to its schedule. It is unfair to have to foreshorten business scheduled for later in the week because earlier items have overrun.

4.2 With this in mind, the Business Committee asks that:

- speeches are not made unnecessarily when it is evident that the outcome is clear;
- representatives refrain from making speeches or comments that have already been made and from repeating what has been said and heard;
- representatives bear in mind that the proceedings of the Conference are web streamed and heard by many who are not present in the Conference hall;

- the Conference focuses on reaching decisions with the minimum necessary debate that does the subject justice.

5. Notices of Motion

Standing Order 132 reads as follows:

132 Notices of Motion. (1) Subject to Standing Order 131(4) any two members may upon notice of motion complying with this Standing Order bring before the Conference any lawful resolution within the competence of the Conference.

(1A) Every notice of motion shall be handed to the Secretary in written form and signed by the following persons:

- (i) where the proposal is to amend a resolution and those responsible for presenting that business to the Conference are prepared to accept it, the proposer and seconder of the motion;
- (ii) where such a proposal to amend is not accepted by those responsible, the proposer and seconder and four other persons;
- (iii) in all other cases, the proposer and seconder and eight other persons.

(2) Only on matters of urgency, so judged by the President after consultation with the Vice-President, shall notices of motion in the Representative Session be accepted after 4.30 pm on the third day of the session, except that a notice of motion proposing to amend a resolution circulated or materially altered on or after the first day of the session shall be accepted if lodged before the close of business on the day before the resolution is to be dealt with.

- 5.1 The 2013 Conference agreed that it should be mandatory for proposers of Notices of Motion to complete a 'Submission of a Notice of Motion' form, including information about budgetary implications. The form is available for download from the website, and from the Assistant Secretary (email asc@methodistchurch.org.uk) prior to the Conference or the Help Desk at the Conference.
- 5.2 In order that Notices of Motion which are unrelated to existing Agenda business can be dealt with effectively and efficiently by the Conference, proposers are requested to ensure that they include sufficient but succinct information to ensure that all Conference members may understand what is being proposed and why. This will enable members to reflect on the merit of these Notices of Motion beforehand and speakers to focus on key issues.
- 5.3 In enabling Conference members to submit Notices of Motion related to business scheduled for the afternoon and evening of Saturday 27 June, the Business Committee requests that these be submitted either (1) by post to the Assistant Secretary of the Conference at Methodist Church House to arrive not later than Thursday 25 June or (2) by email to asc@methodistchurch.org.uk to arrive not later than Friday 26 June at 2.00 pm. The Committee has determined that it will only require the names (which will be printed on the Order Paper) of a proposer and a seconder to be supplied at this stage: the four further signatories, should the Notice of Motion be resisted by the proposer of the resolution (as per SO 132(1A)(ii)), may therefore be acquired after arrival at the Conference on Saturday 27 June but must be handed to the Assistant Secretary of the Conference by 1.00 pm on that day.
- 5.4 Further, for the Business Committee to prepare the business to be conducted on Monday 29 June, members of the Conference who wish to submit Notices of Motion relating to the business to be taken on Monday, or amended replies to any Memorials to be taken with it, are requested to hand them to the Assistant Secretary of the Conference by 12.30 pm on Sunday 28 June.

- 5.5 Similarly, Notices of Motion relating to items of business to be taken on Tuesday 30 June should be submitted by 12.30 pm on Monday. This, and the deadlines in the previous paragraphs, will enable the Business Committee to prepare full and informed Order Papers for the smooth transaction of business.
- 5.6 Having set out in the preceding paragraphs the proposed timings for Notices of Motion in general, the Business Committee wishes to make provision for dealing with any which impact the connexional budget and proposes a specific timetable to that end. Its purpose is to ensure that the Conference is able to take decisions about the budget when all the relevant information is to hand and to avoid the pitfall of making choices or judgements based on partial information. It is therefore recommended that:
- The budget will be formally presented and explained on Saturday afternoon, with responses only to questions of fact and for clarification.
 - Any Notices of Motion proposing amendments to the budget shall be submitted by 12.30 pm on Monday through the usual channels.
 - The Conference Financial Committee will consider the implications of the amendments at the close of Monday's session and present a report in Tuesday's Order Paper.
 - The Conference will then consider the budget, including any proposed amendments, on Tuesday morning.
 - The budget will still be formally confirmed and adopted on Thursday morning after all resolutions have been processed and decisions taken.

In summary, the deadlines for submitting notices of motion are as follows:

Relating to	Submit by
Monday's business	Sunday 12:30 pm
Tuesday's business	Monday 12:30 pm
Wednesday/Thursday's business	Monday 4:30 pm
Unrelated to business	Monday 4:30 pm

- 5.7 Those proposing a Notice of Motion should consult with those presenting the business to ascertain whether the Notice of Motion will be accepted or resisted. Lists of those responsible for presenting each item of business are available from the Assistant Secretary of the Conference or the Chair of the Business Committee. If a notice of motion that relates to an item of business is not resisted by the person moving the resolution, it only requires the signature of the proposer and seconder (see SO 132(1A)(i)). If a notice of motion proposes to amend an item of business and it is not accepted by those responsible for the business, signatures are required of the proposer, seconder and four other persons. In all other cases (ie for all notices of motion which do not seek to amend an item of business which is before the Conference), signatures are required of the proposer, seconder and eight other persons.
- 5.8 The 2011 Conference approved the principle of enabling those Notices of Motion that do not relate to business already in the Agenda to be prioritised, by means of a ballot, should time not permit all such Notices of Motion to be considered. Should such a ballot be required, it will be held on Tuesday 30 June. Any such Notices of Motion which are not considered during the Conference will be dealt with as in the next paragraph.
- 5.9 The Business Committee may recommend that a particular Notice of Motion is not considered by the Conference but is referred to the Methodist Council in the coming year. The Council is required to report back to the following Conference its judgement on that Notice of Motion.
- 5.10 In order for the Business Committee to test, on the floor of the Conference, its own judgements about which Notices of Motion to refer to the Council without debate, on

Wednesday 1 July the Chair of the Business Committee will move that the Conference adopts that section of the Committee’s report (which will be printed on the day’s Order Paper) which lists those Notices of Motion recommended to be referred to the Council. The Conference will be able to amend the list without the need of a written Notice of Motion.

6. Memorials

It is anticipated that all memorials will be dealt with during the Conference, ie taken with existing business to which they relate, debated separately or the replies adopted *en bloc*, based on the recommendations of the Memorials Committee. However, the Conference is reminded that the same principle and procedure, as for Notices of Motion, for selecting those for debate was agreed in 2011 and can be applied if necessary.

7. Nominations

All nominees for President-Designate, Vice-President-Designate and Conference-elected representatives are to be photographed and their details displayed on a screen. The arrangements for this will be notified on Saturday’s Order Paper at the Conference.

Nominations for designation of **President and Vice-President of the Conference** of 2016 must be placed in ballot boxes by **5.30 pm on Monday 29 June**. They will be displayed on Tuesday; voting will close at 6.00 pm on Tuesday; the results will be announced on Wednesday morning.

Nominations for **Conference-elected representatives**: you are asked to note the requirements of Standing Order 103 and to follow **strictly** the instructions on the nomination form. Please ensure that you seek the consent of persons nominated and complete the forms fully and clearly for display. Nomination forms must be placed in the ballot boxes by **2.00 pm on Tuesday 30 June**; voting will close at 5.00 pm on Wednesday; the results will be announced on Thursday morning.

This year, of the three Conference-elected representatives to serve from 2016 to 2018, two will be lay and one will be diaconal, thus fulfilling SO 103(2A).

Nominations for **Conference Business Committee members**: you are asked to note the requirements of Standing Order 136 and to follow strictly the instructions on the nomination form. Please ensure that you seek the consent of persons nominated and complete the forms fully and clearly for display. The election timetable will be the same as for Conference-elected representatives, as above. It should be noted that election to the Business Committee does not carry a right to membership of succeeding Conferences.

This year, one Business Committee member, a minister, is required to be elected and may serve for the three years 2016 to 2018.

In summary, the deadlines for nominations and elections are as follows:

Election	Nominations close	Voting closes
President of the Conference	Monday 5:30 pm	Tuesday 6:00 pm
Vice-President of the Conference	Monday 5:30 pm	Tuesday 6:00 pm
Conference-elected representatives	Tuesday 2:00 pm	Wednesday 5:00 pm
Conference Business Committee: Representative Session	Tuesday 2:00 pm	Wednesday 5:00 pm

8. Provisional legislation

Under Standing Order 122, any two members, by Notice of Motion, may propose that an item agreed by the Conference be referred to the Synods as a **provisional resolution** before being proposed for final adoption by the Conference next year.

9. Letter-writing

Any member of the Conference requesting that a letter be sent on behalf of the Conference should note the following criteria and procedure:

- a. The Conference writes automatically to those who have served in ordained ministry for 70 or more years, and those celebrating 50th or 60th anniversaries of their ordinations; their names to be prepared in advance.
- b. The Conference will write, for a specific reason, to those who have a direct link with the Conference, or represent the World Church, or have an ecumenical relationship with the Methodist Church, or have a claim to achievements that are outstanding in the life of the Church or on its behalf.
- c. The letter-writer, with consultation as necessary, will be the appropriate person to give guidance to Conference members as to whether a proposed letter is within the criteria.
- d. Requests for letters to be sent must be submitted on a standard form, giving all the required details, to the letter-writer who shall advise of acceptance or otherwise. The letter-writer will have a seat at an outside end of the front row in the Conference hall and standard forms are available there.
- e. The recipients of letters will be listed in the Daily Record for the information of the Conference.

10. En bloc items

The Business Committee proposes that the items of business listed below be voted en bloc. Under the terms of SO 134A, if Notices of Motion are received about items in the en bloc list those items will automatically be removed from the list. In addition, by giving notice to the Assistant Secretary of the Conference, any six members of the Conference may, without proposing an amendment, require that an item be removed from the list and debated.

The preliminary list of proposed *en bloc* business is as follows:

Action for Children

Guernsey

Jersey

Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment general report

Methodist Diaconal Order general report

Westminster College

Methodist Homes

Forces Board

Ecumenical report

Stationing Committee

Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes

New Room Bristol

Methodist Ministers Pension Scheme

Methodist Independent Schools Trust

Relief and Extension Fund for Methodism in Scotland

Managing Trustees of Central Hall Westminster

Central Finance Board

Sharing agreements and ecumenical partnerships

Referred memorials and notices of motion

World Methodist Council - exchanges

Wesley House

11. Format of the Conference Agenda

The Business Committee reported to the 2014 Conference that it was evaluating the provision of the *Conference Agenda* as an ebook. The Committee received responses from representatives to the 2014 Conference who were asked, through the registration system,

whether they would be willing to receive the *Agenda* in ebook form only in future years. The majority response was that representatives would prefer still to receive the *Agenda* in printed copy. The Committee has therefore decided that the 2015 *Conference Agenda* will be available in printed copy, and as downloadable pdfs (but not in ebook format).

*****RESOLUTION**

2/1. The Conference adopted the Report of the Business Committee.