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SECTION I GENERAL REPORT (2)

1.1 Governance responsibilities

In accordance with its governance responsibilities, the Council:

- made appointments and nominations to various bodies and committees;
- on behalf of the Conference, appointed the Connexional Reconciliation Group;
- received a report concerning the governance of Cliff College, and appointed an interim Cliff College Committee under the terms of SO 341;
- received a report from the Methodist-Anglican Panel for Unity in Mission concerning the Anglican-Methodist Covenant and directed the Faith and Order Committee to explore with the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England the most suitable next steps in considering *Mission and Ministry in Covenant* and to work with that Commission to draft such liturgical, legislative and other texts as may be needed;
- directed that a management fee of £0.5m is paid to the Central Finance Board in lieu of an increase in management fees to all Methodist clients and that this fee is funded from the Pension Reserve Fund.

1.2 Other business

The Council, in the context of Sunday worship, heard reflections from the President and Vice-President on their year of office.

Should members of the Conference wish to view them, Council papers and minutes are available on the website at www.methodist.org.uk/council

***RESOLUTION

22/1. The Conference receives the General Report of the Council.

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SECTION J REVIEW OF THE CITY CENTRE LIST

1. The Council received a report concerning the City Centre List (CCL), and noted that there are 33 active members of the City Centre List (CCL).
2. The 2021 Conference agreed to end the exemption CCL properties had hitherto enjoyed from the levy for the Connexional Priority Fund that is charged on all capital money arising from the sale, letting or other disposition of land. Since this change, questions have arisen about the purpose of the List.

Rights and duties

3. The main rights and duties of List members briefly are:
 - a. the opportunity to propose a management committee be formed which is then responsible for the stationing/ re-invitation of ministers;
 - b. to submit to reviews of the mission and ministry of their church, circuit or project, undertaken by the District Synod, in collaboration with the responsible Church Council, Circuit Meeting or management committee every five years.
4. In addition, any funds proceeding from the sale of any CCL property must be used "in continuing the work of God in the relevant city centre", ie the funds cannot be used in another location.
5. This is a summary of Standing Orders 440, 512A and 944.

Feedback from list members

6. In order better to understand the perceived benefits of membership of the List, a questionnaire was distributed to all active members of the List. 29 responses were received, representing 24 of the 33 List members (72%). The majority of respondents (83%) were ordained ministers.
7. Respondents were asked, "What do you think are the advantages and/or disadvantages about being a member of the City Centre List?"
 - The most popular response was a reference to sharing learning and support with others in city centre ministry; 9 out of 29 respondents mentioned this (31%).

- The second-most popular response was a reference to the sense of identity, recognition and/or raised profile of the project, consequent to being on the List; 8 out of 29 respondents mentioned this (28%).
 - The joint-third-most popular responses were the advantage of proceeds of capital sales staying in the city centre and the disadvantage of no longer being exempt from the levy; 4 out of 29 respondents mentioned these (14%).
 - Other responses included reference to reviews (in both positive and negative lights), keeping the emphasis of work on mission, receiving support/ oversight from the district/Connexion, the disadvantages of proceeds of capital sales staying in the city centre, and how different stationing processes can help ensure appropriate/ experienced ministry. 3 respondents or fewer mentioned each of these (3%).
8. Respondents were asked, “How have you found the CCL review process? Did you get enough guidance and support? Is there anything you’d change about the review process?”
- The most popular response was that the respondent wasn’t sure or didn’t have an opinion; 13 out of 29 respondents mentioned this (45%). Many of these said they had not yet been involved in a review since they had been stationed to the circuit relatively recently.
 - The joint-second-most popular responses were a reference to good support from the Connexional Team or District, and the usefulness of the review for reflection and discerning future direction; 5 out of 29 respondents mentioned these (17%).
 - Other responses included both positive and negative references to the review process and level of external support, alongside questions about the purpose, feedback and reporting of reviews. Three respondents or fewer mentioned each of these (3%).

The burden of reviews

9. The obligation to submit to a review is a burdensome process. Reviews are undertaken by Synods in collaboration with church councils/ circuits meetings/ management committees and are also often supported by members of the Connexional Team or District Team (eg a Learning Network Officer or District Missioner). The results must then be reported to the Connexional Team member responsible for maintaining the List, collated, and reported to the Council.
10. In the past three years, 17 CCL members have submitted late reviews, ranging from a couple of months to three years late. This was in part fuelled by the Covid-19 pandemic, but has also been due to the difficulty in engaging

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congregations, navigating Synod/ Council reporting deadlines, and finding time and energy for this work amongst other competing priorities.

Reducing the burden, maintaining the value of the CCL

11. A key part of *God for All: the Connexional Strategy for Evangelism and Growth* is encouraging every church and Circuit to engage in mission planning, a very similar process to the CCL reviews. Instead of being mandated to undergo a review every five years, it is proposed that CCL members be encouraged to engage in mission planning on a regular basis, alongside all other churches in the Connexion. In turn, Synods will take into account the outcome of those reviews in determining whether to retain or remove a CCL member and/or whether to seek a revocation of a Conference direction that a management committee may be established.
12. This preserves the value CCL members see in reviews – discernment, reflection and listening – while allowing Synods discretion in how these should be undertaken in specific cases. It should also free up capacity to focus on the wider benefits of CCL membership: the sense of identity, recognition and/or raised profile of the project, consequent to being on the List, and the advantage of proceeds of capital sales staying in the city centre.

Methodist City Centre Network

13. For completeness, the Methodist City Centre Network (MCCN) is entirely separate to the City Centre List, though with much overlap in membership. It is an informal grassroots group who describe themselves as

“a supportive group of ministers and lay people. We meet for regular online times of prayer and fellowship to share in the strains and delights that are particular to city centre work. We also have a biennial two-day gathering and day visits to see one another’s churches and projects a couple of times a year.”
14. The Connexional Team will continue to signpost and support the work of the MCCN, to enable opportunities for learning, networking, support and fellowship.

***RESOLUTIONS

- 22/2. **The Conference receives the report.**

22/3. The Conference revokes clause (5) of Standing Order 440 and amends Standing Order 512A(5) as follows:

(5) The Conference may at any time revoke such a direction and make transitional and consequential provisions, ~~and each review under Standing Order 440(5) of a Circuit to which this Standing Order applies shall consider whether the direction should be revoked.~~

SECTION K MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE AND DIRECTORY

1. The Council heard that in the light of GDPR legislation and in response to legal advice, the *Minutes and Directory* has been available to a restricted circulation since 2019. Some of the address lists, particularly those relating to lay officers, previously contained therein were removed due to difficulties of obtaining consent and uncertainty about whether they were, strictly, required. Other lists are available on the Methodist Church website, which enables them to be kept up to date during the year, and are accessible to a wider group of people.
2. The effect of this is that those sections of the *Minutes* which report on the proceedings of the Conference are no longer available to those who are not ministers or holders of particular offices.
3. The Council now proposes that the *Minutes and Directory* be split into two publications, one of which would contain those items which constitute the *Minutes* while the other would be the *Directory*, containing the address lists. The *Minutes* would then be on general sale again, while the *Directory* would be restricted to ministers. The Council recommends that the *Minutes* comprises sections Parts I-III of the present *Minutes and Directory*, along with other Conference material such as the Pastoral Address and the Presidential and Vice-Presidential addresses.
4. As planning is already underway for the 2023 editions, the Conference is asked to direct that the changes to the Standing Order take effect from 1 September 2023, with the first editions to be printed under this new arrangement being those which record the decisions of the 2024 Conference. The proposed changes to SO 124 are as follows:

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124 Publication of Proceedings. (1) Subject to clause (9) below the general resolutions and other proceedings of the Conference required by clause 37 of the Deed of Union to be printed and published shall be issued as a book under the title of *The Minutes of the Annual Conference and Directory of the Methodist Church* and the year of the Conference concerned.

(1A) There shall also be published at the same time as the Minutes of Conference a Directory of the Methodist Church containing the contact details of presbyters, presbyteral probationers, deacons and diaconal probationers, and such other lists as are required by Standing Orders or deemed necessary by the Secretary of the Conference.

(2) ~~†~~ **The Minutes of Conference and the Directory of the Methodist Church shall both** be prepared for publication by the Secretary of the Conference.

(3) *[deleted]*

(4) Persons whose names and addresses are listed in the **Minutes of Conference Directory of the Methodist Church** shall be entitled to have printed any degrees, distinctions or professional qualifications, held by them, of which they have given particulars to the Secretary of the Conference. In the case of degrees, the name of the awarding body shall be stated and the prefix 'Hon' shall be added to all honorary degrees.

(5) Every minister in the active work and every probationer shall possess a copy **of both publications**, the cost of which shall be an expense recoverable, in the case of persons in appointments within the control of the Church, from the Circuits or other bodies responsible for provision of their stipends.

(6) A copy **of both publications** shall be presented to every supernumerary, the cost being defrayed by the Methodist Church Fund.

(7) A copy of the memorial service which incorporates that section of the Minutes of Conference containing the obituary notices of those ministers and probationers who have died shall be presented to the nearest relative of every such person whose obituary is printed in the issue of that year, the cost being defrayed by the Methodist Church Fund.

(8) A copy **of both publications** shall be presented **on application** to the spouse or civil partner of any deceased ministers ~~who makes application~~, the cost being defrayed by the Methodist Church Fund.

(9) Those general resolutions of the Conference embodied in Standing Orders shall be published with the Deed of Union, the Model Trusts and other appropriate texts under the title *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*. Amendments or an amended edition shall be published annually and prepared for publication by the officer for legal and constitutional practice. Every minister in the active work and every probationer shall possess a copy and receive annually the amendments or amended edition, the cost of which shall be an expense recoverable, in the case of persons in appointments within the control

of the Church, from the Circuits or other bodies responsible for provision of their stipends.

(10) Ministers without appointment shall each be entitled, if they obtain the publications specified in clauses (1), **(1A)** and (9) above, to recover the cost of one copy of each per annum from the respective Circuits in which they reside.

(11) A brief summary of the transactions of the Conference shall be published annually for wide circulation in the Church. This summary shall highlight possible action points for individuals and Local Churches or questions that could be addressed at local level. The cost of publication shall be a charge on the Methodist Church Fund and arrangements for it shall be made by the Methodist Council. Responsibility for the content of the summary shall lie with the person or persons appointed to edit it, who shall be responsible for taking the following action:

- (i) consulting the Secretary of the Conference on the factual content; and
- (ii) ensuring that the master copy reaches Methodist Publishing so that it can be distributed by the end of August.

(12) Any member of the Conference reporting the public proceedings of the Conference for the news media shall be personally responsible for the information given.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

22/4. The Conference receives the Report.

22/5. The Conference amends SO 124 as shown in the Report with effect from 1 September 2023.

SECTION L CONFERENCE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

1. In adopting Notice of Motion 2021/112 at the 2021 Conference, the Conference directed the Council to establish a framework to analyse the cumulative impact of all resolutions brought to the Conference with regard to resources, time and potential benefits. The Conference also appealed to the Council to recognise the reduced capacity in all parts of the life of the Connexion and therefore to apply the existing mandate the Council has to evaluate the number and cumulative time impact of resolutions presented to all future Conferences.

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2. During the connexional year 2021/2022, the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) and the Council considered how best to address the question of impact and the Council brought a report to the 2022 Conference which proposed the establishment of a Conference Scrutiny Sub-Committee in place of the Conference Financial Committee. It is envisaged that this new Sub-Committee will have a broader remit than the present Financial Committee which, under SO 136A(2), has responsibility to 'identify all resolutions in the Agenda or otherwise circulated to the Conference which would have financial implications, other than those for which provision has already been made in the budget, and [to] notify the Conference accordingly.'
3. The 2022 Conference directed the Methodist Council to carry out further work to determine the details of the Conference Scrutiny Sub-committee (including its membership and its relationship with the Business Committee) and, following collaboration and consultation with the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity Committee and the Law and Polity Committee, to bring Standing Orders for the establishment of the Conference Scrutiny Sub-committee to the Conference of 2023. The Conference further directed that, pending the establishment of the Conference Scrutiny Sub-committee, the Financial Committee, in addition to its responsibilities under Standing Order 136A, shall scrutinise the material coming before it to determine as far as may be its impact on the whole Connexion in terms of resources of finance, personnel and workload and shall advise the Conference of its conclusions. Such advice shall wherever possible be given in writing.
4. The reflections so far have led to the conclusion that the notice of motion form should be adapted to include questions relating to the potential wider impact of the work that is requested within the notice of motion. The proposed questions are:
 - Who will need to undertake this work in whichever context the work is to take place?
 - How is it proposed that the work will be done (including time commitment) and what might be laid aside to create the capacity for the work?
 - How does the work enable to Church to fulfil Our Calling whilst also making the Church more safe, efficient and effective?

These will need to sit alongside the questions about financial implications.

5. It is suggested that the new Committee will comprise members of the Conference who represent among them the key roles who are likely to be most impacted by notices of motion (for example, Synod Secretary, superintendent, District Treasurer, church steward) alongside a member

of the Resourcing Committee or Connexional Council to ensure that there is a strong link to the budgeting process.

6. Work will need to be done to ensure that there is good communication with the Conference Business Committee, to ensure that business is scheduled appropriately and that, where there are major impact considerations, to take those into account, so that the business is undertaken in a way that is most helpful to the Conference.
7. In its discussions the SRC also recognised that a similar approach for evaluating the impact of all areas of work will need to be an ongoing process for the Connexional Council once it is established. The Conference Scrutiny Sub Committee will have sight of all Notices of Motion before the Conference as they are submitted, but both the Memorials Committee and the Connexional Council will need to have a similar (if not identical) process for considering impact in work they intend to take to the Conference.
8. It is recognised that this will be an evolving process, and that the 2023 Conference will be a transitional year and an opportunity to test out the various questions that need asking. This will then be followed up by a fuller report to the Council in October 2023 with recommendations for the Terms of Reference of the new Conference Scrutiny Sub Committee.

***RESOLUTION

22/6. The Conference receives the Report.

SECTION M MISSION COMMITTEE

1. The Mission Committee is appointed by the Methodist Conference and is accountable to the Conference through the Methodist Council.
2. This report aims to enable the Church to develop and maintain a strategic vision for mission, in accordance with Standing Order 1000A1, by outlining the work of the Committee in the connexional year 2022/2023.
3. The Mission Committee has oversight of the missional work of the Church, including the work of the Heritage Committee, the Fellowships Sub-Committee, the Global Relationships Committee, the Methodist Modern Art Collection Management

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Committee and the New Places for New People Guiding Team. In its first year, the Mission Committee has received reports from all these groups, as well as others including the Joint Public Issues Team, and lead staff of the Mission Team.

Children, Youth and Families (CYF) Strategy

4. The Committee presented the 2022-2027 Children, Youth and Family (CYF) Strategy to the Council. This strategy is informed by multiple consultations over two years with children, young people, young adults, youth workers and others connected with CYF ministry in the Methodist Church.
5. The Committee agreed three resolutions relating to this strategy:
 - The Committee received the Children, Youth and Families strategy 2022-2027, acknowledging the focus and orientations as set out in the strategy.
 - The Committee recommended that the work of full participation of children and young people remains the work of every part of church life.
 - The Committee agreed that the Youth Presidents and their Advisory Groups be the primary way in which the collective voices of children and young people are both heard and fed into the governance life of the Church at a macro level.
6. The Council approved the following as the purposes for 3Generate (the Methodist Youth Assembly (SO 250)). 3Generate should be:
 - A place of celebration, inspiration and empowerment for all children and young people associated with the life of the Methodist Church in Britain.
 - A place where dialogue happens across generations.
 - A place for the Christian discipleship of children and young people in the Methodist tradition.
 - A place for the upskilling and inspiring of those with a ministry among children, young people and their households.
 - A place where vocational experiences and opportunities are presented for all attendees

Global Relationships Committee

7. The Committee received a report from the Global Relationships Committee (GRC) on the breadth of ongoing Global Relationships work and discussed the links

between this work and other areas of mission. For more information on Global Relationships, please visit www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-worldwide/global-relationships/

8. The Council agreed the following changes to the mission partner programme:
- The Mission Partner programme should continue for ordained persons of the MCB and MCI.
 - The Mission Partner programme should phase out the employment of lay Mission Partners and explore the potential of other pathways for lay people to serve overseas in the future (see below). All lay MCB and MCI Mission Partners solely employed by MCB should be put at risk of redundancy before August 2024. This should be done in consultation with receiving churches and Mission Partners to provide prayerful and appropriate care.
 - Where we jointly send lay Mission Partners with other Churches or organisations, conversations will be initiated or continued regarding the viability MCB's future support of the role.
 - The GRC will explore pathways for lay people with a vocation as Mission Partners and continue to work with partners to share opportunities that provide pathways for lay people to serve overseas.
 - Mission Partners, as far as is possible, should receive an equal stipend to their colleagues in their placement when in placement. Partner Churches and Organisations should be asked to confirm that someone from outside the country would have the means to live on such an income (without land/family support in the country of placement), and, upon advice from the Partner Church or Organisation, a supplement could be paid. When in Britain or Ireland on furlough, in training, or on authorised leave, Mission Partners should continue to receive the basic MCB ministerial stipend.
 - Partner Churches and Organisations who receive ordained Mission Partners should, where appropriate, be asked if they are prepared to pay for, or contribute towards, the Mission Partner's stipend and other costs when in placement.
 - Mission Partners will continue to receive the benefits that are currently accorded to them, including but not limited to medical costs, authorised flights, and furlough accommodation support.

Other work of the Mission Committee in connexional year 2022/2023

9. The Committee received district and circuit New Places for New People (NPNP) funding submissions. All NPNP funding submissions were approved

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by the Committee; these comprised three district submissions and one circuit submission. For more information on NPNP, please visit <https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-work/our-work-in-britain/evangelism-growth/new-places-for-new-people/>

10. The Committee received a report on the next iteration of the connexional strategy for evangelism and growth and was pleased to note the thorough integration of justice-seeking and evangelism in this vision for the future. The Committee further affirmed the general direction of travel, and in particular the centrality of a Methodist Way of Life. The Council presents the text below, in order to clarify the relationship between Our Calling and a Methodist Way of Life:

The calling of the Methodist Church is to respond to the gospel of God's love in Christ and to live out its discipleship in worship and mission. The Church does this through: Worship, Learning and Caring, Service, and Evangelism.

A Methodist Way of Life provides a further level of detail to the four aspects of *Our Calling* [Worship, Learning and Caring, Service, Evangelism] by elaborating three particular aspects of each. Within the overall primary framework of *Our Calling*, and the Conference statement on the nature of the Church, *Called to Love and Praise*, *A Methodist Way of Life* aims to provide a clear, detailed, and practical common framework for what Methodist discipleship could look like in the 21st century.

As such, the Mission Committee asks the Church to continue to engage with and promote *A Methodist Way of Life*, and asks the Council and Conference to approve it as:

- (1) within the primary framework of *Our Calling* and *Called to Love and Praise*, an expression of our mission together as a Church: to be a movement of disciples who praise the triune God and respond to the Gospel through living out a common way of life in the world;
- (2) a foundation for discipleship journeys and a creative pattern open to all people – Methodist members and spiritual explorers alike – to recognise and express the grace of God at work in their lives, and to hear God's challenge to them and to the entire world to be transformed by God's grace; and
- (3) an effective framework through which to connect the diverse work of the Church in the world and to communicate it clearly to the world.

11. The Committee received a report from the Fellowships Sub-Committee and discussed the potential for mission and evangelism offered by the Fellowship Groups. The Committee noted that Connexional Team staff are working to develop governance options, and that Committee members were invited to engage with this work.
12. The Committee received a report from the Methodist Heritage Committee outlining their work, in particular the work achieved since October 2021 towards delivering the strategic priorities agreed by the Council in April 2019, and work planned for 2022/2023.
13. The Committee received reports from the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) on its work. The Committee commended the work of JPIT on the Cost of Living Crisis and reflected on the breadth of anti-poverty work ongoing within the Church (including Church at the Margins, as a key orientation within the CYF strategy, and within the WWM project). Reflections included:
 - A desire for the narrative to be changed in the UK – the public needed to be informed that people unable properly to feed their children are not irresponsible, but that poverty is the consequence of decisions made in wider society including by the Government.
 - A belief that the time had come for the Methodist Church to stand up together with our ecumenical partners to state that poverty is a moral issue that must be addressed.
 - A belief that taking a stance on anti-poverty was vital to the Church going forward.
14. As a result of these reflections, the Strategy and Resources Committee has agreed that £140,000 from the Mission in Britain Fund be allocated to the JPIT budget in connexional year 2023/2024 to enable an expansion of their work in tackling poverty.
15. Further to the JPIT report, the Committee also reflected on one of JPIT's 'six hopes for society', namely, 'A world which actively works for peace'. This included discussions on the war in Ukraine, disarmament, non-proliferation and the morality of spending on arms during a Cost of Living crisis. The Committee noted that global military spending is now over US\$2 trillion and continues to rise alarmingly, depriving governments of revenue to tackle poverty or invest adequately in addressing the climate crisis. The Committee further noted that partnership working, including with global partners, is key on this issue.

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16. The Committee noted that the context of the war in Ukraine has left many governments less willing to engage in discussions about disarmament, yet believes this is a mistake. Without the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty¹, Russia would have had thousands of more devastating missiles it could have used against Ukraine². Arms control has a rich history of success and protecting civilians – the current situation in Ukraine only illustrates the absolute necessity of going further with disarmament.
17. The Committee encouraged JPIT to continue to work with existing and new partners to call on the UK Government to support the call for a fourth UN Special Session on Disarmament. The Council agreed to put a resolution before the Conference in support of this work.
18. The Committee received a report from the Methodist Modern Art Collection Management Committee (MMACMC) and approved proposed priorities for 2022/2023. They commended the work of the MMACMC, in particular the successful exhibition in Coventry as part of the city's celebration as designated UK City of Culture.
19. The Committee noted that the MMACMC is seeking a new home for the Collection and approved the MMACMC's statement and criteria for a new home. The Mission Committee will receive detailed options for potential new homes for the Collection from the MMACMC in connexional year 2023/2024. The Mission Committee will consider a wide range of new home options and will balance the cost of re-homing the Collection alongside other missional priorities and make recommendation to the Council via the Strategy and Resources Committee.
20. The Committee welcomed the Principal of Cliff College to its January meeting for a presentation on the work of the College. The Committee noted the many areas in which the Committee and College could collaborate and the importance of close working in future. The Committee is taking seriously its need to be as diverse and inclusive as possible, and is continuing to include key partners in meetings and consultations.

1 Although unfortunately this treaty no longer operates following recent US withdrawal

2 Plesch, D 'Zero Missiles: Building On The Precedent That Helps Ukraine Today', www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/zero-missiles-building-on-the-precedent-that-helps-ukrainetoday/

***RESOLUTIONS

- 22/7. The Conference receives the Report.**
- 22/8. The Conference approves *A Methodist Way of Life* as being within the framework of *Our Calling and Called to Love and Praise* as set out in paragraph 10 above.**
- 22/9. The Conference supports the call for a fourth UN Special Session on Disarmament at a future UN General Assembly.**

SECTION N MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

INTRODUCTION

1. The Ministries Committee reports to the Methodist Council to enable the Church to develop and maintain a strategic vision for the use of ordained, accredited, commissioned and informal ministries and offices throughout the Connexion. Many of the pieces of work currently being undertaken are interdependent with each other and with previous decisions of the Church, for example the 2020 Conference Report *Changing Patterns of Ministry* continues to shape the work being undertaken on future candidating processes and on the review of how we go about stationing ministers. The Ministries Committee pays particular attention to the contexts in which ministry takes place, and has spent time and care considering how global factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted upon ministers in terms of their well-being and the nature of their work.
2. The Ministries Committee is accountable through the Methodist Council to the Conference for:
 - (i) developing and supporting the processes relating to the oversight, accountability and professional development of those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
 - (ii) developing and supporting programmes for nourishing, equipping and resourcing those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
 - (iii) developing and supporting the Church's structures and resources for learning, training, scholarship, research and development;
 - (iv) in collaboration with other bodies, supporting the development of structures that enable the use of various forms of ministry as resources for mission within Circuits and Districts;

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- (v) overseeing connexional policy regarding its ordained ministries, including that relating to the processes for offering as a candidate, the oversight of students and probationers, and stationing, but without adjudicating on individual cases, which shall remain the task of the bodies appointed to fulfil that responsibility. (SO 32A1(2))

To that end the Ministries Committee has met three times since the 2022 Conference on 13 September 2022, 4-5 February 2023, and 11 May 2023.

3. The Committee reports on its work in the following sections:
 - The Learning Institutions and Continuing Development in Ministry (CDIM).
 - Lay Ministries
 - Matters relating to Ordained Ministries
 - Student Matters

THE LEARNING INSTITUTIONS AND CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT IN MINISTRY (CDIM)

4. The Committee received annual reports from the Queen's Foundation and Cliff College. Both institutions are working intentionally to incorporate the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) strategy.

The Queen's Foundation

5. The Queen's Foundation has continued, on behalf of the Methodist Church, to receive all candidates accepted by the Methodist Conference for initial ministerial training. The intake for 2022-23 comprised 15 student ministers, eight allocated to the full-time pathway and seven to part-time, with two provisionally allocated to the Circuit-based Learning Pathway (CBLP) for later in their training. Of the new cohort, three are student deacons and twelve student presbyters; nine are women and six men; four are of Global Majority or UK Minority Ethnic Heritage.
6. Most student ministers are studying on accredited programmes from Durham University's Common Awards suite, as part of their overall formational programme. At the beginning of the academic year 2021-22, 44 were working at CertHE or DipHE level in Theology, Ministry and Mission; one was working towards the BA; one was on a Graduate Certificate programme; 13 were studying for Masters degrees; four were working at doctoral level and two were on bespoke non-accredited programmes. During 2021-22, 11 students were being

supported with particular learning needs, or physical health needs, many of them through public DSA (Disabled Students' Allowance) provision. The DSA support for students is one of the main benefits of the Foundation's status as Office for Students Approved Provider.

7. With regard to the Circuit-based Learning Pathway, a review of the pathway conducted during 2021-22 by the Director of Learning for Ministry was extremely positive and resulted in the Ministries Committee affirming that the pathway should continue as a clear third training pathway, beyond its initial five-year pilot phase.
8. In 2021-22, Queen's worked with 40 probationers on the programme of probation studies designed to build on their pre-ordination training. In September 2021, an additional 14 former probationers were working on their studies post-ordination.
9. Methodist staff appointed to Queen's continue to make contributions to the life of the Connexion beyond initial ministerial training and probation studies. During the year three Methodist tutors have also been members of the Faith and Order Committee (including working parties on particular topics), one is on the New Places for New People Guiding Team, and another on the *Holiness* editorial board. Methodist tutors also contribute to societies and conferences and to scholarly research in a range of disciplines. Queen's staff, including Methodists, have contributed significantly to work on diversity and racial justice for the Church of England, for Common Awards (Durham University) and for the Society for the Study of Theology; as well as being part of the Theological Educators' Conference and conferences in specific theological disciplines.
10. The Centre for Black Theology (CBT) continues to go from strength to strength in terms of offering new pathways and attracting student numbers. It respects the need to work alongside Black Majority (usually Pentecostal) churches in both official and unofficial ways, whilst acknowledging that Black experiences of Christianity are broader than this; exploring the extent to which to foster 'Black only' groups within the learning experience and when to encourage or require a diversity on the pathways of study students choose.
11. Queen's is grateful for the generosity of the Methodist Church in enabling it to carry through the ambitious Partnership in Theological Education Project with two partner institutions in Rwanda and Sri Lanka so that students who are working towards their planned doctoral studies on the programme have visited for residential periods.
12. The work which has been undertaken on the Vision Statement and Aims – which has included consultations with students, staff and governors past and

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present – has proved instructive in clarifying what it means to be such a diverse body. The Foundation believes God is wanting it to celebrate and work with diversity without any single group/tradition dominating. In this way it models as a community what it means to be a diverse Church, in an even more diverse society. The new Vision Statement is as follows:

Queen's strives to be a diverse, challenging, Gospel-focused community, shaping people for God's mission in the world.

As a community, gathered and dispersed, Queen's strives to:

- practise deep attentiveness to Jesus Christ
- live by the Holy Spirit's leading
- stimulate joyful, challenging exploration of the riches of the Bible and Christian traditions
- create a lively, extended prophetic community of worship, prayer and action
- provide searching, supportive pathways of formation and training for discipleship and ministry
- listen to voices which are often not heard, to enable the less confident to find their voice and flourish.

Cliff College: A Global Centre for Evangelism and Missiology

13. Cliff College is a Methodist evangelical learning community which is rooted in God's Word and Spirit for the purpose of equipping God's people for practical ministry and cutting-edge missional engagement. The education offered at Cliff is theology for the real world – rooted in practice, forged in community, grounded in the authority of Scripture and consistently prompting us to face outwards.
14. During 2021-2022, the Cliff College Committee, on the request of the College Principal, commissioned the Methodist Church's Head of Mission and the Director of Learning for Ministry to undertake a far-reaching review of its strategy, structure and delivery to effectively serve as a Learning Institution of the Methodist Church. The recommendations include:
 - The College's staffing structure will be amended to ensure a closer working relationship with the Methodist Connexional Team.
 - An annual grant will be paid to Cliff College, from the Methodist Church, that will be linked to the delivery of the Shared Mission Plan. This plan will be reviewed, updated and agreed each year.
 - The development of the new 'Formation in Mission and Ministry' validated diploma will provide a tool for training within the Methodist Church, and the

ongoing work on the new degree will also be a great benefit. The Methodist Church will make available HE awards to doctoral scholarships in the areas of work of the three research centres.

- The current short course programme will be reimagined and will be more fully integrated into the work of the Methodist Learning Network and others within the Connexional Team.
- Cliff College partnerships will be driven by the objectives of the Methodist Council and will be reviewed to bring them in line with those of the Methodist Church. In particular, the College will foster a deeper relationship with The Queen's Foundation and will develop integrated strategies, with the Methodist Church, in its global work, alongside All We Can, and its work with young adults.
- A long-term strategy will be developed for Cliff Festival that creates links with other Methodist events and gatherings. The theme for Festival 2023 will be 'Eden Restored' – this theme will give us opportunities to work closely with our partners to explore issues around creation, redemption and what it means to 'Build the Kingdom here'.

15. Cliff College continues to value its collaborative agreement with the University of Manchester for the validation of programmes. During the year 2021-2022, validated programmes were delivered by Cliff College as follows: BA in Theology and Ministry (28), BA in Ministry and Mission (38), MA in Mission (59), Postgraduate Research: PhD and PhD Missiology (16). 19 students completed their undergraduate awards during the academic year and graduated in autumn 2022. In this year's National Student Survey, which gathered opinions from final year undergraduates on the quality of their courses, Cliff College received 100% overall student satisfaction.
16. During the year, two new programmes have been developed by Cliff College and subsequently validated by the University of Manchester:
 - The Foundations for Mission and Ministry programme, with a related suite of standalone CPD (continuing professional development) units will provide credit-bearing training that has been carefully calibrated to serve the realities of practical mission and ministry as well as the priorities of the Methodist Church. The programme has been identified as the training pathway for Local Lay-Pastor.
 - Cliff College's new undergraduate degree, which will replace the current two undergraduate degrees in September 2023. The new degree, titled BA (Hons) Theology and Mission will be dual delivery, making it an innovative programme that will enable students to study for a HE Certificate, HE Diploma

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or Degree in Theology and Mission both in person at Cliff College and online, using the College's bespoke theological education platform, CliffX.

17. Short Courses continue, including Certificates in Women in Leadership, Men's Ministry, Pastoral Care, Social Activism, Family Ministry, Mentoring, Ministry among Older People, Faith in Change and Conflict, Bereavement Ministry, Parenting for Faith, Bible Engagement, Christian Administrative Ministry, Christian Coaching and Pioneer Ministry. In addition, a number of other Short Courses and retreats have been offered, including Godly Play training.
18. Online learning is a crucial part of Cliff's overall strategy and continues to grow as a valuable part of Cliff's portfolio of training opportunities, enabling people from around the world to study with us, opening up theological education and vocational training beyond traditional routes. 106 students have completed the College's own online courses over the past year, which include Parenting for Faith, Introduction to Christian Holiness, Creative Bible Reading and Introduction to Evangelism.
19. The Samuel Chadwick Centre at Cliff College is an academic research centre that gathers and disseminates the fruits of research in pneumatology, with particular reference to the Wesleyan, Pentecostal and charismatic traditions. The fourth annual Samuel Chadwick Lecture was held on Friday 15 October 2021. Keith Warrington, Reader in Pentecostal Studies at Regents Theological College delivered the lecture on 'The Holy Spirit and the New Testament.' A formal response was given by Dr Andy Boakye, from the University of Manchester.
20. The Bible, Gender and Church (BGC) Research Centre is a collaboration between Cliff College and the University of Manchester, focusing on biblical and practical gender studies, and how these intersect and inform the lives of women and men in the contemporary Church. The Centre hosted an online seminar in November 2021, entitled 'Preaching Problematic Passages: How to Teach Difficult Texts with Sensitivity.' The BGC Research Centre was awarded a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to fund a project entitled 'Abusing God: reading the Bible in the #MeToo Age.' This is an important piece of work, and the award from AHRC is significant for Cliff College's research profile.
21. Cliff College's Centre for the Study of Youth, Children and Families Mission and Ministry, *Generation*, has continued to host online and hybrid forums, with three events exploring the topics of children's spirituality, evangelism to youth and sexual ethics. The forums aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice in children's, youth and families' ministry, and each one brought together practitioners and academics to explore the topics raised.

22. TheologyX, the College's online learning platform, has welcomed a number of other TheologyX partners, including the Methodist Church in Ireland, who worked with the Innovation Team to deliver a course entitled 'Joining with God's Mission.' There are currently 46 active courses on TheologyX, and nearly 5,000 registered users on the platform. In the past year, the Creating Safer Spaces Advanced Module has been completed by 3,516 individuals, representing nearly 14,000 learning hours for this course alone, and highlighting the value and place of online learning within the Methodist Church's work.
23. Cliff College has provided training for nine Mission Partners and Accompanying Volunteers. It continues to support a significant number of partner churches and is developing work in Sierra Leone, Argentina and Cuba.
24. The College is again grateful for the annual grant it receives from the Methodist Church, which not only supports the ongoing work of the College, but also enables us to support the work of the Connexional team in many ways. We will continue to work alongside, and strengthen our relationships with, our partners in the Connexional team and Learning Network to develop a range of opportunities that support the learning needs of the Church in this rapidly changing landscape.

HE Awards

25. The Committee oversees the HE Awards which are given to Methodists, lay and ordained, seeking to pursue higher degrees in a theological or missiological subject. The disbursement of this annual fund is overseen by a HE Awards Panel, working with the Directors of Learning for Ministry, and Research and Scholarship. The Committee was encouraged and excited by the range of subjects being studied, the passion for thinking and learning theologically and how it might impact the life of the Methodist Church. A total of 38 people are being funded by the Church to pursue higher degrees: 26 at Doctoral level and 12 at Masters. For 2nd year funding, 13 students are at doctoral level and 8 at Masters. The range and depth of the scholarship work is impressive and has included enquiry into matters at the heart of current Connexional priorities, such as work on JDS issues, circuit structures, Methodist discipline, and Wesleyan theology and mission. In June 2023 two research conferences will be held in person at Cliff College with a day for MA students and a day for PhD students (not just those receiving HE Awards), resourced by exponents of academic writing. Efforts are also being made to feed the fruits of scholarship back into the Church, with follow up discussions with all those who complete, about how the work can be shared, trying to develop communities of scholarship and help the life of the Church in different ways.

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Methodist-related Education Institutions

26. The Director of Learning for Ministry has continued to work intentionally with Methodist-related institutions to ensure that the Connexional Team is nurturing and promoting their research programmes and encouraging HE Awards applicants wherever possible at least to consider pursuing their study through one of them. The Committee agreed to the establishment of doctoral scholarships at the three Methodist institutions, working with the two Network Centres and the University of Roehampton. At Cliff, this could be for a piece of research connected to one of its three research centres; at the University of Roehampton it will be attached to a place in the DTh programme. The scholarships will be in addition to the current HE Awards programme and will cover tuition fees for the full course of the degree, subject to satisfactory progress, up to a maximum of six years part-time study. It may be possible to consider a full-time programme, with matching funding from the institution, or elsewhere. Applicants will need to demonstrate congruence with the mission and priorities of the Methodist Church in their proposal. Also, in common with recipients of the regular awards, the recipients will be expected to engage with the wider Methodist research community (eg through the annual Research Conference) and participate in an annual review with the Directors of Learning for Ministry, and Research and Scholarship, as well as to offer annual progress reports from their supervisors. It is hoped that this scheme will be a helpful way to strengthen the connections between the Church and its theological institutions, as well as to demonstrate and deepen the Church's commitment to higher learning and research, *both* as a missional presence within the academic sphere and also as a stimulus which informs and inspires its witness, mission and common life.

LAY MINISTRY

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders

27. The Ministries Committee encourages and supports local preachers and worship leaders, who have a vital role to play in the regeneration of the life and mission of the Church. The statistics below show a continuing decline in the number of active preachers, broadly in line with previous trends and demographic reality. There is however no sign of any reduction in the number of active or trainee Worship Leaders, perhaps reflecting increasing opportunities for participation in worship, and the prevalence of Local Arrangements. New guidance on the possibilities presented by Local Arrangements is proposed to encourage churches to see these as opportunities for developing the whole Church as a worshipping community.

- 28.** It is ten years since development of the Worship: Leading and Preaching (WLP) course commenced. The online resources have been updated and simplified and all students are now using version 3 (WLP3). This marks a significant milestone in a continuing process of simplifying access to training and removing obstacles to learning for local preachers and worship leaders. 50 portfolios have now been completed in WLP3 and feedback continues to be positive from both students and tutors. Work is now focused on refreshing the content of the course.
- 29.** In collaboration with the Learning Network, the portfolio of online training opportunities for local preachers and worship leaders has been expanded, and now consists of:
- Online Inductions for all newly enrolled students, tutors and mentors. These seek to orientate people to the course and address anxieties about online study.
 - Explore Online, which now provides quarterly online group learning opportunities especially for those with no local tutor group. Worship Leaders can complete their four modules in a year, Local Preachers can complete their eight modules in two years.
 - WLP for Tutors, Mentors and Local Preachers' Secretaries, enabling a rapid introduction for those taking on these roles or considering doing so.
 - Study Skills for Students. A series of six online webinars. This programme emerged from work conducted by the Board of Studies and the JDS Strategy team.
 - Further Skills for Tutors - an online series tackling specific topics such as theological reflection, culture and language in educational practice. This was produced in response to requests from Tutors and Mentors in consultation with the JDS Strategy team.
- 30.** Other programmes seeking to improve access to training for local preachers and worship leaders include:
- Summer School at Cliff College, which allows students to participate in group work for two modules in an intensive week at Cliff College.
 - The WLP in a Year programme, which provides a blend of residential weekends and online learning with the needs of potential ordination candidates in mind. A cohort of 12 students are enrolled for 2022-23. Demand will be monitored closely as the new process for candidating becomes established.
 - With the support of the Forces Board, a training pathway for those in the Armed Forces. The East Solent and Downs Circuit acts as the host circuit and their Tutor provides remote support to students, with Army chaplains acting as Mentors.

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31. A silent retreat for local preachers was held at Launde Abbey, Leicestershire in May 2022, which was fully subscribed. A second event is being held at Whalley Abbey, Lancashire in March 2023. The intention is for this to be held annually for the spiritual refreshment of local preachers and worship leaders. Work continues to encourage Local Preachers' Meetings to make maximum use of these vital gatherings as places of encouragement and growth. A major focus for 2023, in collaboration with the Evangelism and Growth Team will be on developing the depth and quality of public worship in changing times. The library of session plans for the Continuing Local Preacher Development (CLPD) use in Local Preachers' Meetings continues to expand and further resources are planned.
32. As of January 2023, there were 5,477 active local preachers recorded on the connexional database, a decline of 4% from 5,698 the previous year. Of those in training, 375 had a Note to Preach (2021: 376), and there were 483 persons On Trial (2021: 492) as local preachers.
- 140 portfolios were successfully completed on the Worship: Leading and Preaching course in 2022, compared with 156 the previous year. Of these, 16 were from worship leaders (2021: 10), who have successfully completed modules 1-4. 63 were Portfolio LPA, (2021: 75), and 61 were Portfolio LPB, (2021: 71) indicating completion of LP training. A total of 42 portfolios were completed on the new WLP3 version of the course, the remaining 98 being on the WLP2 version, which has now closed.
 - During the year, 54 new students enrolled for WLP as worship leaders and 152 as local preachers.
 - The number of new local preachers admitted during 2022 was 83. This compares with 219 in 2021 but is comparable with typical numbers from previous years. The high number in 2021 was skewed by factors such as opportunities to complete studies during lockdowns, the end of the Faith and Worship course and a backlog of Recognition Services due to COVID.
 - The number of local preachers who died and were included in the Remembrance Book in 2021 was 281. The list for 2022 is in preparation and will be presented at the 2023 Conference.
33. The Ministries Committee approved a Guidance Note for Welcoming Lay Preachers from Other Traditions. Standing Order 566A makes provision for Lay Preachers or Readers from "Other Churches" who have become members, to be recognised as local preachers. The responsibility for discerning the call of a local preacher lies with the Local Preachers' Meeting, on behalf of the Circuit Meeting. The new guidance should make a significant difference in enabling circuits to make fair and equitable decisions.

34. The Ministries Committee approved an outline proposal for the provision of local preacher and worship leader training materials in Chinese languages (Mandarin and Cantonese) suitable for use in the current context.
35. The provision of materials in Welsh remains a Conference commitment and the Ministries Committee endorsed a proposal for continuing provision of local preacher and worship leader training in Welsh language, based on a phased approach taking account of available resources and likely demand.

Local Lay-Pastors

36. Competencies for the role of local lay-pastor were adopted by the Conference. The Ministries team with colleagues in the wider team have worked hard to provide guidance to circuits on the Methodist Church Website.

VOCATIONS

Developing Vocations

37. In 2019-20 developing vocations was identified as an urgent and important piece of work for the Church by the Ministries Committee and the Methodist Council. Since then, there has been a number of strategic steps to prioritise vocations within the workplan of the Connexional Team, and to build confidence in the Church to encourage vocational exploration, and to keep this as a priority for both the Ministries Committee and the Methodist Council. These have included:
 - Appointing a member of the Connexional Team to coordinate the work across the Connexional Team, keep the brief high on the Church's agenda, and ensure there is space for creative response to the Church's needs.
 - Research about barriers which prevent people from candidating; and a subsequent review of candidating.
 - Using the concern about candidate numbers to pay attention to underlying issues within church life, especially ministerial wellbeing.
 - Love This Calling campaign;
 - Creation of resources to equip church leaders, individuals and groups to create a culture of celebrating vocations, identifying church vocations and teaching methods of discernment.
38. Over the past 3 years the approach to Developing Vocations has changed and developed. Our key strategy now is to embed a cohesive approach to developing vocations within the breadth of the Connexional Team. There is now

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a Connexional Team Developing Vocations Community of Practice. This is a meeting where colleagues, with a significant part of their workplan which focuses on vocations, meet together. They inform strategy and share updates so that no one works in silos. Developing vocations is also in workplans for the Learning Network and Children Youth and Families (CYF). Less formally it weaves through the work of Evangelism and Growth, Global Relationships and JDS teams.

- 39.** Key actions which are operating across the Connexional Team include:
- A piece of work exploring the Church's response to the very low numbers of British people of global majority heritage offering for ordained and lay ministries.
 - The new candidating process element, Explore, which is about vocational exploration and will be open to anyone wishing to reflect on their calling. The work will include producing the vocational exploration resources, recruitment and training of accompanists, setting up the new systems for candidates, and communicating the new processes to the Church.
 - The Leadership year led by Children Youth and Families is now open to all young people, and not just Youth Reps.
 - The Evangelism and Growth team is working with those exploring a vocation as evangelist, young evangelist, pioneer and New Places for New People leadership. The Ministries team will work with them to see if any of these people who have a call to ordained ministry are able to candidate now that some restrictions have been removed.
- 40.** This work is evolving in many different ways and the Ministries Committee recently received a paper giving a snapshot of some activities which are developing the confidence of our disciples, both lay and ordained, in scattered settings as well as gathered churches.

Discernment Process for Senior Posts

- 41.** The 2022 Conference directed the Ministries Committee to continue its work on discernment for senior roles and to report to the 2023 Conference, to consider how vocations for leadership in the Church can be appropriately, identified, fostered and coordinated with processes of appointment. In September 2022 the Ministries Committee appointed a sub-group to take this work forward. The Group looked at two areas for consideration by the Committee, one is a broad overview of the background and issues in leadership development for senior posts facing the Church in these times, the other are specific proposals for the discernment and support of those who feel called to this work.

42. It was felt important that some description of “senior posts” was attempted and they are identified as leadership roles in *Districts* (Chairs, Deputy / Assistant Chairs, Synod secretaries / senior lay roles in District leadership teams) and *Connexion* (Chairs / Deputy Chairs of Committees, Secretariat of the Conference, senior leadership roles in the Connexional Team). Discussion took place as to whether Superintendents and Circuit Stewards should be included. This would widen the scope of the work considerably, and resources for these groups are available via superintendents’ conferences and circuit stewards’ development
43. The discernment required in our current context of uncertainty and complexity (what some writers call “liminality”: the times between something ended and something not yet ready to begin) is no longer best served by being based simply on competencies but rather attention needs to be given to individuals’ strengths. The group defined strengths as a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of thinking, feeling or behaving that is authentic and energising. Such key strengths might include:
- mental, people and change agility
 - thriving in situations of complexity, uncertainty and expanding horizons of knowledge and wisdom
 - those who relish working with others, and have a proven record as team builders
 - those who are effective at learning from experience

Some in the Group talked about these as “lead” indicators of suitability for senior posts (pointing to what the person might become) rather than “lag indicators” (drawing predominantly on what the person has already done in other roles).

44. It is critical that the diversity and experience of persons identified in ordained and lay roles should be given greater attention. Success in any process supporting discernment will lead to a Church with a diverse senior leadership.
45. The group felt strongly that the discernment and support of those called to these roles, as indeed to any leadership within the Church, is a long-term commitment. It is a process that stretches for the ordained from initial formation in ministry, through training, probation and continued development and, for lay persons, an ongoing review of those identified say as circuit stewards and synod officers. The question was asked as to whether the Explore programme being developed for the new candidating process might be a good model but acknowledge that there is little capacity to develop this currently.

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46. The group felt it important to offer some resources for those who are identified as called to roles or who have been appointed. The group recommends two leadership-learning resources:
- a development of an existing pilot programme, the Leadership Learning Space (LLS). This programme, developed by Loraine Mellor and Nigel Pimlott has worked with two cohorts of people from a wide range of roles, lay and ordained. The group first meet in person onsite and then commit to meeting online once a month – there is input via reading sources and presentations by those in leadership inside and outside the Church. The group also pray together and share their leadership journeys. There is a high premium placed on applying learning to the working context of participants and on learning from shared experience. The programme is currently on its second cohort, so there is learning to be gathered from its work. This could become a ‘rolling programme’ rather than separate cohorts so that people might dip into it at various points in ministry, allowing them to respond to leadership opportunities as they arise.
 - an Open Access resource which could be provided at modest cost by The Queen’s Foundation and Cliff College. This would enable further learning, and accountability for the learning process by participants within a flexible and adaptable format. Areas covered might include competency and confidence in technical and adaptive leadership, building and leading teams, leading in times of crisis, building teams, handling risk and failure, feminist and black theology approaches to leadership.
47. There should be an expectation that those appointed to senior roles would engage with these resources and that feedback be offered on their learning (much as is currently offered to those in supervision training). Mandatory leadership training will enable the senior leadership in the Church to be formed and fitted in a consistent way for the emerging challenges and opportunities of our current and future context.
48. At this stage the group is uncertain about the value of identifying a senior leadership cohort in advance (eg a list of approved candidates for nomination). It felt that identifying such a cohort might be resource intensive and impractical, and wondered if it would not be more effective to see this work as an “offer” to those considering senior leadership and an expectation on those appointed. It is possible to identify those with the needed gifts and graces from those in formation, those who engage with leadership learning (and events such as the May Conference at Cliff), those who apply for posts and those identified by district leadership teams.

Implementing the new Candidating Scheme

49. A new candidating process is being implemented following the decision of the 2022 Conference. This has started with applicants applying between January and April 2023 for 'Discerning Ordained Vocation 1' (DOV1). The 'Explore' programme will be launched in September 2023. There is now an implementation plan, with the work scoped out. Candidating is no longer envisaged as a three-stage process as Explore is to be a stand-alone discernment process for people seeking to explore vocation in as wide a way as possible, not just in the context of candidating for ordained ministry. Explore is being tied in with the Vocations strategy. Ongoing work includes the recruitment and training of accompanists, including a number from existing District Candidates Committee membership. All who wish to explore ordained ministry will carry out DOV1 and then DOV2 (which is the candidating element) The Ministries Committee noted that this is a significant piece of work for the Connexional Team within a tight timeframe. The Chair additionally notes that there are significant capacity issues, especially given that there are a number of other significant pieces of work to be done by the same Officers within the Team. This piece of work needs to be done with attention and care so that candidates are served well by the Church. The review of candidating had been a root and branch process and it was recognised that the 2022 Conference resolutions would have a far-reaching impact on other parts of the processes of the Church. There would be a particular impact on the role of local preacher which can now be fully valued as a lay office within the Church rather than being regarded by some as a stepping stone to ordained ministry.

Implications of the New Candidating Process on Student Training and Probation

50. Following consultations with MCPOC, the Ministries Committee and the Stationing Committee, the Ministries Committee directed the Connexional Team to do further work on adapting profiles for probationer presbyter appointments and diaconal appointments in order to take note of the fact that not all probationers will have previous experience of preaching, proclaiming and worship leading. The Ministries Committee directed that connexional training be developed for worship development groups, and that this is taken forward by the Ministerial Coordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministry, in conjunction with the Ministries Team. The Ministries Committee referred the issue around authorisations to preside for probationers to the Faith and Order Committee as part of its wider work in reviewing authorisations.

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Candidating Numbers

51. The Ministries Team is keeping these numbers under regular review.

Criteria and Competencies for Ministry

52. The Ministries Committee examined the revised criteria and competencies for Ministry which reflect the impact of various Conference decisions and the priorities of the Church in recent years, notably the Justice Dignity and Solidarity strategy, Changing Patterns of Ministry and the Review of Candidating, and recommended changes to the Council. The Ministries Team also checked that safeguarding was appropriately included. Further consultations have also been held with the Queen's Foundation.
53. The Council appointed the Revd Dr Joanne Cox-Darling and Dr Hellen Okello with the Warden of the MDO to work with the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee, the Chair or Deputy Chair of the Ministries Committee or their representative, and the appropriate member(s) of the Connexional Team to revise the wording of the Criteria for Selection for presentation to the Conference for adoption and publication.

MATTERS RELATING TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

Stationing Review Group

54. The remit of the Stationing Review Group is to carry out a root and branch review of all processes related to the stationing of ministers (presbyters and deacons) in the Methodist Church in Britain. The Group will present a final report to the 2024 Conference with recommendations for changes to those processes. The first meeting of the group was held in January 2023 and the group plans to meet approximately every two months. The Group will consult widely with both lay and ordained Methodists alongside input from ecumenical partners.

Initial Stationing Appointments and Local Specific Contexts (Limited Deployability)

55. The Ministries Committee addressed some complex questions raised about initial stationing in local or specific contexts. The Committee appointed a task group comprising members of MCPOC, the Queen's Foundation, and the Ministries Committee to review the emerging wider issues around the offer of candidates for local or specific contexts, consulting with others as necessary, and reporting back to the Ministries Committee in September 2023.

Candidates and Occupational Health Assessment Reports

56. All recommended candidates from 2024 onwards will have an Occupational Health assessment. Where any adjustments are needed for that candidate to be able to study and to minister, these will be outlined in the assessment. External legal advice has been received, and a policy is being prepared by the Legal Counsel to establish clearly what adjustments are reasonable and what are not, to include cost implications. The Ministries Committee requested that members of the Well-being team, the Law and Polity Committee and MCPOC agree the policy that clearly identifies which adjustments are reasonable for a candidate for ordained ministry to be able to study and to minister. The Ministries Committee directed MCPOC to set up a standing sub-committee to apply the policy commencing 2023-2024. The Ministries Committee directed that guidance on this process be added to the candidates' guidance documents for 2023-2024.

Flourishing / Well-being in Ordained Ministry

57. The Ministries Committee received a further report and noted the implications of this work for the ongoing work of the Committee and the Ministries Team. The Committee was pleased to see how much had been implemented by the team on behalf of the Church, whilst recognising this is always a work in progress.

Voices of Identity

58. There is ongoing work around the "voices of identity" project which has gathered the voices of ministers in specific contexts and situations and learning for the Church continues. There are some ministers noting isolation in their work and the project has been started to draw those groups together. The project was established so that participants might continue to run the groups if they think it might be helpful. The Committee noted the fruits borne to date, the main themes emerging, and the places of cross over and intersection with other aspects of its work, in particular that of ministerial wellbeing and the stationing process.

Handbook for Methodist Ministers in Circuit Appointments

59. The Ministries Committee scrutinised and gave its approval in principle to the issuing of a Ministers' Handbook, pending review by various stakeholders. This completely redrafted handbook was overseen by the Director of the Ministries Team, who is charged with the responsibility for editing and keeping the handbook up to date. The Committee directed that the Ministers' handbook

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should be updated on an annual basis and published in an electronic format. The content of the updated handbook would be presented to the committee for review every five years.

Guidance for Superintendents

60. The Ministries Committee adopted a guidance note to Superintendents and District Chairs about appropriate ways to encourage ministers in addition to the circuit staff to offer their gifts within Circuits, and for Circuits to receive those gifts and to be enriched by them. This guidance is self-explanatory and is a revision of a guidance note issued in 2016. It relates to ordained ministers who, although often stationed to a Circuit, are not members of the staff appointed to exercise pastoral responsibility in that Circuit. The Committee directed that the guidance be circulated to Superintendents and District Chairs.
61. The Ministries Committee also adopted a guidance note on the preaching ministry of ministers who have resigned from Full Connexion and directed that it be circulated to Superintendents and District Chairs.

Appeals Review Group

62. The Appeals Review Group of the Ministries Committee has been looking to make the Appeal processes relating to decisions about what might be termed initial ministry (ie the acceptance or not of candidates; the continuance or discontinuance of students; the continuance or discontinuance of probationers; and decisions about the transfer or granting of "recognised and regarded" status to ministers of other churches) as coherent and consistent as possible.
63. Amongst those cases, decisions about the discontinuance of students or probationers are very similar to decisions to remove people from Full Connexion after they have been ordained. The latter is one of the possible outcomes of discipline cases and is analogous in many cases to what in employment terms would be described as deprivation of livelihood.
64. There are therefore grounds for arguing that there should be coherence and consistency between the appeals which the Conference is charged to consider and those in discipline cases which lead to removal from Full Connexion. This is particularly the case with regard to the grounds for any appeal, and the status of any report to the Conference (eg is the Conference able to rehear an individual case?). Coherence and consistency do not require absolute similarity between all appeals, but any divergences should be rationally defensible as due to the requirements of particular contexts.

65. However there is a review of the discipline processes underway at the behest of the Conference, and it is making very slow progress. That means that the progress of the Review Group has been stalled, and the group was too short of time to bring fully worked out proposals to the 2024 Conference. The Ministries Committee agreed that the Review Group should delay its report to the Conference for a year and wait to obtain information from the Discipline Review.
66. The Ministries Committee also recommended that the final sentence of Standing Order 715(1) which reads "For (iii) above" be removed reflecting the changes made by the 2022 Conference.

Future of Processes for Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches (MOCCs)

67. The pause on the MOCC processes has been in place since January 2022 pending a review of the application, discernment, stationing and induction processes for MOCCs. It is expected that MOCC applicants will be able to apply again from January 2024, which, if they are recommended, could lead to them being stationed in appointments starting September 2025.
68. There are 15 ministers living in Britain with British passports or a current visa who potentially wish to apply to transfer as R&R or into Full Connexion. It has been suggested that this might be the time to consider whether we could process these MOCC applicants who are already in Britain because the process will be more straightforward and economical than for other MOCC applicants. If we permitted these 15 ministers to apply, we would need to extend the application period to the end of March (instead of the end of February) and continue the process as it is designed currently. That could lead to them being matched to appointments in February 2024 and starting their stations in September 2024.
69. There is a considerable challenge for subsequent years with a further 57 ministers who are interested in applying plus any others who might make contact during the forthcoming year. The proposal is that they will all be contacted once the decision has been made to reopen the process in January 2024. They will be told that there are limited appointments available, so they are advised only to apply if they feel strongly called to serve in Britain. Home churches from where there are a number of applicants would also be asked if they could work with the ministers so that they are absolutely sure this is the right step to take.
70. The Ministries Committee directed that MOCC applicants currently resident in Britain, who do not need a visa sponsored by the Methodist Church in Britain, be permitted to apply in February - March 2023, with a view to those recommended starting appointments in September 2024.

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71. The Ministries Committee recommended that the other potential MOCC applicants who have enquired since the start of the pause on MOCC processes will be contacted in Autumn 2023 as outlined above.
72. The Ministries Committee affirmed that the work of the Section 73 review group is to cease and be subsumed into the Stationing Review.

Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches (MOCCs) – General

73. Due to the various complexities arising with MOCCs applications, the Ministries Committee directed that, for MOCC ministers applying to extend their R&R status, that R&R status is granted for five years subject to the minister being in an appointment, and that this does not have to be extended whenever a minister changes appointments within that five-year period. This is being reported to the Law and Polity Committee.

Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC)

74. There has been a high number of issues for MCPOC to address concerning candidates, students and probationers. Issues have included: changes in personal circumstances, changes in training pathway or probation studies, changes to supervision arrangements, concerns around the impact of itinerancy, length of probation for those in part time appointments, inhabiting the particular order of ministry, challenges in appointments, changes within probation appointments, eligibility issues for candidates, applications for local context appointments for candidates.
75. The Council recommends to the Conference that from 2023 onwards the length of probation for all probationers in part time appointments shall normally be three years and proposes changes to Standing Order 721(2).

Supervision Research

76. In 2021 the Methodist Conference adopted the Reflective Supervision Policy and agreed it would be next reviewed in 2026. To inform any changes to that policy it has been agreed that a new piece of research will be commissioned. This research will seek to give a clear picture of where the Methodist Church now stands in terms of offering reflective supervision to those involved in ordained and lay ministry and offer both quantitative and qualitative evidence around that. It is anticipated that it will also lead recommendations for next steps in

the development of the policy. The Ministries Committee approved an outline proposal for this research and directed the Ministries Team to proceed with this work under the oversight of the Supervision Reference Group. The Committee directed that the outcomes of discussions are embedded within the research scoping process and considered alongside others as they become clear.

***RESOLUTIONS

22/10. The Conference receives the Report.

22/11. The Conference amends SO 715(1) as follows.

715 Appeals. (1) The candidate or a Connexional Secretary, or with the candidate's consent the candidate's Superintendent or Chair, may, by notice given in writing to the secretary of the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee within fourteen days of notification to the candidate in writing of the decision of the committee and specifying the ground(s) of appeal, apply for a review of the recommendation of the committee, on one or more of the following grounds:

- (i) that the procedural provisions of this Section have not been correctly followed;
- (ii) that there are facts which were not available to the committee and which are such as to make its recommendation inappropriate;
- (iii) that the judgment of the committee, as conveyed to the candidate in the official letter informing the candidate that his or her offer has been declined, is questioned in writing by both the Superintendent and the Chair of the candidate.

A reasoned statement to support the appeal shall be supplied by the appellant(s). ~~For (iii) above to be a ground of appeal, the district Candidates Committee must have recorded a majority in favour of the candidate of 75% of those present and entitled to vote.~~

22/12. The Conference amends SO 721(2) as follows:

(2) ... Such period shall **normally** include ~~at least~~ two years on probation **on a full-time basis** after the completion of pre-ordination training, **three years on probation on a part-time basis**, or, where such training has been undertaken concurrently with probation, ~~at least one further year after its completion~~ **of such training**.

22. Methodist Council, part 2

SECTION O STANDING ORDER 793

The Council received a report concerning SO 793 which lays out the process by which supernumerary ministers are able to return to the active work. The process as laid out in the Standing Order is for any applications to be made to the Stationing Advisory Committee, which in turn makes a recommendation to the Conference.

However, there are situations that arise unexpectedly and can cause urgent needs within Circuits. In some cases supernumerary ministers are able to support the additional needs of a Circuit. In such cases, for a supernumerary to have pastoral charge of a church, then they need to return to the active work. As stated, SO 793 reserves this decision for the Conference. However, SO 774(8) sets out how ministers without appointment may apply for permission to return to the active work, and includes provision for the President or the Vice-President on the President's behalf to grant permission between meetings of the Conference in exceptional circumstances. While Standing Order 793 sets out analogous procedures for those returning to the active work from being a supernumerary, it does not include a similar provision for doing so between meetings of the Conference. The proposed amendment is designed to rectify that.

The President (or, on their behalf, the Vice-President) has the authority in certain circumstances to grant ill health retirement on the recommendation of the medical committee (SO 790(2)(f)). It would be beneficial to circuits with urgent stationing needs were the President (or, on their behalf, the Vice-President) also able to grant permission for a supernumerary to return to the active work between meetings of the Conference.

The Council therefore recommends that SO 793 should be amended to include provision for the President to grant permission for a supernumerary to return to the active work in case of emergencies.

In the light of this, the proposed amendments set out below to SO 700(3) and 701(4) make explicit the principle that this is not linked to whether they are receiving a pension from the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme. The rules of the scheme set their own criteria, which can allow a pension to be received whilst a stipend is being paid.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

22/13. The Conference receives the Report.

22/14. The Conference amends Standing Orders as follows:

700 Presbyteral Ministry

(3) Presbyters in the active work exercise their ministry, including pastoral responsibility, primarily in the setting in which they are stationed, whether ***the appointment is*** full-time or part-time, and whether or not the appointment is directly within the control of the Church ***or some other body, and whether or not they are in receipt of a stipend or pension.***

701 Diaconal Ministry

(4) Deacons in the active work exercise their diaconal ministry primarily in the setting to which they are appointed, whether ***the appointment is*** full-time or part-time, and whether or not the appointment is directly within the control of the Church ***or some other body, and whether or not they are in receipt of a stipend or pension.***

793 Return to the Active Work. (1) Subject to clause (2) below any application by a supernumerary presbyter or deacon in Full Connexion for permission to return to the active work shall be made to the Stationing Advisory Committee. The application shall be referred to the chair of the medical committee of the Methodist Council who shall arrange for a medical report and make a recommendation to the Advisory Committee and, where application has been made to become a member of the Methodist Ministers' Pension Scheme, to the Trustee of the scheme. The Advisory Committee shall consult the Chair and Superintendent of the supernumerary concerned, and, where the supernumerary is a deacon, the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order, and make a recommendation to the Stationing Committee, which shall in turn make a recommendation to the Conference. ***In the case of urgent stationing needs or other emergency the President or the Vice-President on the President's behalf may consider the recommendation from the Advisory Committee, grant immediate permission and report to the Conference.***

SECTION P

JUSTICE, DIGNITY AND SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

Quotes from people who are seeing change as a result of implementing the JDS Strategy

"My church are amazing. I love them to pieces, and I think every church could be like this if there was a sense of openness and a willingness to hear stories."

"I must admit I was dreading the training as I thought it was going to have only one agenda, to change my mind. Actually I found it helpful and I learned a lot."

22. Methodist Council, part 2

"The thing I love about the Methodist church is that it is willing to listen, and I think you know that's not shouted about enough. The Methodist Church is one of the only churches I know that is willing to do that, to make good."

"The Justice, Dignity, and Solidarity strategy is about a church that's working towards a change of culture. So kind of recognizing that the rudder has been turned..."

Quotes from people who still see that there is much work to be done

"You see, in the church, as long as you dot the i's and cross the t's and follow the procedures...what you do to the human being and the emotions...that's irrelevant, in my opinion. It's completely irrelevant. It's not about human beings...it's about 'Oh, follow the procedure! Make sure that it's done by this date and that date, you've got to fill in this form and that form, and you know...and the human being in the process does not actually count for very much"

"I don't think the church is raw enough. I think it's too idealistic sometimes..."

"When people are confronted with pain and suffering, they react in 2 ways: either they take the knee, or they walk away, slamming a door. And it's really interesting if you are prepared for those extremes – both need to be met with grace, and comfort, and compassion."

How has the Strategy been taken forward?

The Committee believes there has been a significant change in the level of awareness and understanding of the importance of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion work across many parts of the Connexion. While there is still much to be done, and there are some parts of the Connexion where awareness of Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity is still low or non-existent, there has nevertheless been a positive start to the implementation of the Strategy.

While particular actions can make clear difference to the lives of particular people and their participation within the life of the Church, this strategy aims for systemic, cultural and attitudinal change. These deeper changes will depend on continuing conversations, opening up to one another, willingness to listen and to learn from one another, and to finding fully collaborative ways of shaping our communal life as Methodists, open to the Spirit of God as we meet, fully ourselves, together. We have seen that God is at work where this happens and we testify that God is good.

At the same time we are acutely aware that there is still much change that God needs to work in us and the resolutions which the Council brings to the Conference are intended to continue this work into its next phase of development.

Milestones in brief

- **Resources for the work:** a 'User Guide' to the strategy, an Inclusive Language Guide and an Equality Impact Assessment tool have been published and are now reviewed regularly
- **Training:** streamlining of the Unconscious Bias training, EDI module on MCBX and a Personal Responsibility Commitment form. Revisions have been made following much constructive feedback. Circuits are now being asked to record the mandatory undertaking of this training. A FAQs sheet is available on the link EDI mandatory training. At the time of writing, 848 people have engaged with the online training and many of them have begun to share the training with others, via in person methods, using the online training materials in groups.
- **The Discrimination and Abuse Response Service** is now moving into phase 2 and will be reviewed in March-April 2023
- Commissioned work from University of Winchester which sets out the framework for a response to the request for a "**Truth and Reconciliation**" process
- Establishment of **the first Solidarity Circles...** for Disability, LGBT+, Racial Justice and Women. Four Co-ordinators have been appointed during February 2023 and members for the circles are being recruited during March 2023 ready to begin meeting in May 2023.
- The first phase of a **longitudinal study**, by the Susanna Wesley Foundation, into the effect of this strategy across the Connexion, has begun. Two researchers (one internal and one external) will explore the progress made in the implementation of the Methodist Church's strategy for a fully inclusive church by conducting interviews with randomly selected EDI Officers and District Chairs. The aim is to understand in more detail what drives and hinders the implementation of the JDS strategy.
- **Transformational change** - there is a deep and clearer understanding that transformational change is acutely necessary and that it needs to begin within ourselves as God changes us, as individuals and in our relationship with each other. This is the only way that we can enter a well-balanced and informed change for the emerging future of the collective church. There is ongoing commitment to implementing this but it is beginning to be evident that where conversation is iterative, transformation occurs. This reflects the story of the Road to Emmaus.

22. Methodist Council, part 2

Many parts of the Connexional Team have been taking this work into their own areas of work and the examples below are just a few of the pieces of work to have come from this:

- the Local Preachers and Worship Leaders team (including some Learning Network colleagues) have revised much of their work in the light of the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity including guidance around SO 566A Welcoming Preachers from Other Traditions, which can be found on the website;
- competencies about intercultural skills have been added into the Framework of Competencies for Ministry;
- a new 'Accessibility Pathway' will be launched by the Property Team, in collaboration with the Solidarity Circle for Disability, with a target date of May 2023.

The Connexional Guidance about the appointment of EDI Officers is now online under this link: <https://www.methodist.org.uk/media/27851/connexional-guidance-on-edi-officers-oct-2022.pdf>

Further to the decisions of the 2021 Conference in relation to the use of preferred pronouns, the Council agreed that pronouns be asked for, and included where people choose this, in all Methodist work (eg on social media, electronic signatures, all connexional meetings, reports and Conference business). The Council also directed that as far as possible, and with consideration of the addressee's preference, gendered titles which disclose the marital status of a woman should be avoided in all connexional meetings and correspondence.

Substantive items

a. EDI training

The Council has agreed to add Worship Leaders be added to the list of mandatory roles. Worship Leaders' responsibility for leading worship needs this training as much as Local Preachers, and it seems that the omission was an error.

The 2022 Conference agreed that further annual learning (beyond the initial EDI module) should be undertaken in a form, and with the content, to be determined by the person finishing the initial module. The Personal Responsibility Commitment is to support with this further learning with the intention that it be reviewed at each MDR conversation (for ministers), in annual appraisal (for employees) and annually for all preachers and worship leaders on the Local Preachers and Worship Leaders meeting agenda.

b. Solidarity Circle for Disability

The Solidarity Circle for Disability (pilot) members have worked with the Implementation Officer to agree some guidance for supporting those living with disability within the

Church. The Council agreed that the “Accessibility Support Needs: Guidance” document should be made available to all appointing and employing bodies to accompany the Volunteer Agreement process, in supporting disabled people called to serve in the Church’s life.

c. Solidarity Circles

Solidarity Circles have been established for Disability, LGBT+, Racial Justice and Women. These will only work as the Strategy for Justice, Dignity and Solidarity agreed if those representing the Church are prepared to listen and respond to what comes from these Solidarity Circles. Anonymised notes will be prepared by the Co-ordinators and communicated through the JDS Committee in order to support the transformation needed in the Church.

d. A Proposal for the next phase of the Truth and Reconciliation Process (TRP)

The first (pilot) phase of the Truth and Reconciliation process, commissioned by the JDS Committee, and conducted by Katie Deadman-Vernall at the University of Winchester, was completed in December 2022. The Council agreed the principles for the next phase of the Truth & Reconciliation Process, which is set out below, and asked the JDS Committee to initiate a task-group which will bring to the Council a budgeted plan for this work. This plan will form part of the budgeting process for the next connexional year.

An outline of the process follows:

Beyond Phase 1...

i) Acknowledge, Apologise and Initiate

Acknowledge people who have been discriminated against by the Church through an institutional apology. It should be made by a person or body that can clearly represent the MCB and be offered in way that can be heard by and beyond the whole Church. It should clearly represent the weight and depth of people’s hurts now and those received in the past, and be set against a systemic, global backdrop. The apology should not encourage acceptance but should invite response and should be about accountability, not blame. Its content and form should be clearly and widely discerned, born from an inclusive theology and directly linked to people’s lived experiences of discrimination. Critically, it should reflect clear commitments to action.

One of the actions from the apology should be the ‘formal’ initiation of the TRP. There should be an invitation to form a group in local contexts; with the ongoing guarantee of collaborative support from the system of the MCB. Within this could be a [re] commitment to ‘listening’ as a Church, in order to re-construct the story of the MCB, to reflect an openness for a new story, that everyone features in.

22. Methodist Council, part 2

Such acknowledgement, apology and initiation should also be reflected and reiterated at the District, Circuit and local level, by the relevant, representative leaders, to ensure that it is widely heard and engaged with.

The TRP could be also be initiated through encouraging a Church-wide period of mourning and deep reflection, of processing the past, which might also invite psychological preparation for people to consider what their own stories of discrimination are; the (beyond binary) roles they and others have had.

ii) **Public and Private Storytelling**

The invitation to people to share their story, their truth of lived experience of discrimination, should be made loudly, continually and shared widely so that people outside of the MCB can hear it. Public and private spaces should be made available at the local level for people to tell their stories. These spaces could be developed locally and should be relevant and accessible to all, reflective of an inclusive invitation. They should offer options for people to tell their story in their own way, whether that be through non-verbal creative means, or verbalised. Online spaces could also be utilised.

Resources will be needed to help people to tell their stories, and to help people deeply listen to them.

If the spaces are designed to host conversations, whether public or private, experienced facilitators might be useful to support the process.

iii) **Memorialise**

Create opportunities for people's stories to hold long-term resonance, so they can be remembered and honoured. These opportunities should have the capacity to reflect the individual stories as connected together, as part of a bigger MCB story. They should be hosted at the local and structural level. This might be the creation of a physical space in a local church, it might be online on a church's website, it might be a memorial service or an object like a stained glass window, or many such options simultaneously. The memorialisation should be collaboratively designed by those whose stories it will represent; this might involve a variety of congregations and local communities.

Centralised opportunities for memorialisation will also be needed, in order to draw together the individual narratives from around the Connexion, to encourage engagement with the wider story of the Church, and to continue to reflect the process as being structurally and locally held. Methodist Church House might be an example of a central space; the Inclusive Church area on the Methodist Church's central website might be another.

iv) Respond to the Future that Emerges

The process should foster an openness and willingness to change, and the acceptance that attitudinal, cultural and structural change will be needed. The wisdom, and crucially, the needs within people's stories, should be responded to with action-for-change. There should not be a particular point in the process for this, it should be continual. In listening deeply to each other and developing forms of relational, co-inquiry, the action that is needed will be heard and understood; transparency and collaboration will bring an appropriate response; not negotiated, but new and relative to the means and resources available. Build into the process an encouragement to recognise and celebrate these changes, that will likely be seen in 'shifts' rather than seismic events: name them and give thanks for them.

f) Reparations Group Report

Throughout the connexional year 2021/22 the Reparations group continued to meet to consider the full scope of work required to address Memorial M22 brought to the 2021 Conference:

- 1) To report on the direct/indirect involvement of the Methodist Church in the transatlantic slave trade.
- 2) To recommend the full breadth of reparations required for the injustices suffered by enslaved people, the scope of any public statements including and associated apology.
- 3) To explore the need for further education and training on the relationship between contemporary racism, identity, colonialism and the slave trade.

A significant part of this work has focused on identifying potential financial links between the Methodist Church and profits from the enslaved people and the Transatlantic slave trade. Dr Clive Norris was commissioned under the auspices of the Heritage team to research the evidence of financial links between the Methodist movement, focusing on the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His report concludes that although the Methodist Church at that time was rarely directly linked to the trade of enslaved people, it did probably benefit indirectly, as did British society at the time.

The Reparations group recognises that further research is required to ascertain a more comprehensive understanding of benefits to the Church from the Transatlantic slave trade. As a result the group will explore opportunities to identify potential links in the earlier period of Wesley's Ministry.

22. Methodist Council, part 2

As part of this work the Revd Arlington Trotman has been in conversation with the University of the West Indies and the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas, who the group believe have an important role to play in this area of exploration. As a result, it would be beneficial for the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and Americas in association with the University of the West Indies to be included in conversation at the next stage of this work. The Revd Arlington Trotman has agreed to coordinate this aspect.

Through 2023/24 the group will explore ways in which local circuits and districts can self-audit, identify and document artefacts, paintings and other iconography obtained or created during Britain's colonial past which may prove offensive and which may need a new narrative to explain context and history of the item. Through the audit and under the guidance of the connexional Heritage Committee it is hoped to identify artefacts that had been obtained from other countries during the transatlantic slave trade or British colonial period which may have to be returned to their original place of origin.

In taking this work forward the group adopted 'A five Cs framework' suggested by the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal. The framework provides a structure for taking the work of the group forward. It encapsulates some of the challenges and opportunities that considered.

Five Cs framework:

- Contested histories – different memories and challenges in considering reparations.
- Case studies for consideration, from different parts of the world in considering reparation and not to be restricted to a Eurocentric perspective.
- Confession /acknowledgement of histories of hurt and trauma arising from the explorations above.
- Conversations and consultations, including the Caribbean region which, would further illuminate matters for research and consideration.
- Conciliation as an ongoing process (of conciliatory conversation), the end goal is not reconciliation (reconciliation is the framework and the pathway)

As part of an ongoing conciliatory conversation, the group will seek to explore the feasibility of holding a major conference in 2025, on the issues of reparations and associated links to the Methodist Church in Britain in terms of the Transatlantic Slave trade. The conference would help to address ignorance and find pathways and languages and prophetic theologies to envision new futures.

*****RESOLUTION**

22/15. The Conference receives the Report.

SECTION Q FORCES BOARD

The Council heard that the last twelve months have been a period of uncertainty for the Methodist Forces Board (MFB). The absence of the Secretary of the Forces Board (SFB) has highlighted the need for the proposed changes to ensure a robustness that could cope with key personnel missing.

The Council agreed the following recommendations:

Original recommendation	Comment	Revised recommendation
The ex-President chairs the MFB for the year following their presidency.	No longer to be taken forward. It is recommended that a named Officer of Conference or a senior manager in the Connexional Team chairs the MFB, as appropriate. This is intended to provide greater continuity to the Board. To have an ever-changing Chair would not have provided the ability for anyone to step into the work with any level of knowledge or experience.	Named Officer of Conference or a senior manager in the Connexional Team chairs the MFB, as appropriate. This remains the Connexional Secretary for the remainder of this connexional year.
The work of the SFB transfers to the oversight of the Conference Office under the Assistant Secretary of the Conference (ASC).	Discussions with ASC have highlighted capacity issues. It is now proposed that the work of the MFB moves to the oversight of the Head of Ministries, where chaplaincy sits. Links to the wider chaplaincy work are critical. The Ministries Team has now moved to sitting under the Connexional Secretary.	The work of the SFB transfers to the oversight of the Head of Ministries, to more closely align it with work with other forms of chaplaincy.

22. Methodist Council, part 2

Original recommendation	Comment	Revised recommendation
<p>The Chair designated to represent returning mission partners in stationing also represents Forces Chaplains returning to circuit ministry.</p>	<p>Further clarified to: a District Chair designated for a number of years to sit on the MFB to represent the Forces Chaplains in the stationing process. Suggested this Chair be drawn from the South West, given their proximity to both Navy Command and Army Headquarters. This is essentially maintaining the status quo, which was found to be critical to the MFB in the absence of a Secretary.</p>	<p>A District Chair designated for a number of years to sits on the MFB to represent the Forces Chaplains in the stationing process. This remains the Chair of the Southampton District for the time being.</p>
<p>That the MFB comprises the Chair, Secretary, the Secretary of the Conference or her/ his nominee, the three Principal Chaplains, a Forces Chaplain (for a two-year period, rotating through the three Services), a Cadet Force Chaplain (for a one-year period, rotating through the cadet forces), at least two lay Methodist members (one of whom will have responsibility for W:L&P within the Services).</p>	<p>As previously, plus a District Chair from the South West region</p>	<p>That the MFB comprises the Chair, Secretary, the Secretary of the Conference or her/ his nominee, the three Principal Chaplains, a Forces Chaplain (for a two-year period, rotating through the three Services), a Cadet Force Chaplain (for a one-year period, rotating through the cadet forces), a District Chair from the South West region, at least two lay Methodist members (one of whom will have responsibility for W:L&P within the Services).</p>
<p>Twice yearly meetings will be held with Cadet Force Chaplains.</p>	<p>No change</p>	<p>Twice yearly meetings will be held with Cadet Force Chaplains.</p>

Original recommendation	Comment	Revised recommendation
<p>Chaplains are encouraged to attend the District synod where they are posted, and the District Chair is encouraged to invite these chaplains (where advised) to attend their local synod. (Where chaplains are serving overseas they are encouraged, where possible, to attend the synod of the District where they last resided.) It is hoped that this will enable the sharing of knowledge, understanding, and mutual support within the life of the Church.</p>	<p>No change</p>	<p>Chaplains are encouraged to attend the District synod where they are posted, and the District Chair is encouraged to invite these chaplains (where advised) to attend their local synod. (Where chaplains are serving overseas they are encouraged, where possible, to attend the synod of the District where they last resided.) It is hoped that this will enable the sharing of knowledge, understanding, and mutual support within the life of the Church.</p>

The Council also reports to the Conference that the work directed by resolution 11/2 of the 2021 Conference has not proved possible for a number of reasons. The Council therefore approved that it be removed from the workplan.

11/2. The Conference directs the Methodist Forces Board and Aldershot Methodist Military Trust to continue their conversations and bring a proposal for a unified body for Methodist engagement with the Armed Forces to the 2022 Conference.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

22/16. The Conference receives the Report.

22/17. The Conference amends Standing Orders as follows:

22. Methodist Council, part 2

322 Stationing. (1) There shall be a connexional Stationing Committee appointed annually by the Conference, on the nomination of the Methodist Council, which shall consist of:

- (i) a lay chair, being the person for the time being appointed to that office in accordance with clause (1A) below;
- (ii) the Secretary of the Conference who shall act as convener, and the assistant secretary of the Conference;
- (iii) seven district Chairs, ***one of whom shall be the district Chair appointed under Standing Order 1007 to be a member of the Forces Board***, and seven district Lay Stationing Representatives appointed with a view to the representation of suitable regional groupings of Districts;
- (iv) no more than two Team members with responsibility for presbyteral and diaconal selection and training and for the stationing of probationers;
- (v) *[deleted]*
- (vi) *[deleted]*
- (vii) the chair of the Stationing Advisory Committee;
- (viii) the Warden or deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order;
- (ix) the chair and a lay member of the Diaconal Stationing Subcommittee;
- (x) the chair of the group responsible on behalf of the Stationing Committee for overseeing the matching of particular presbyters to appointments;
- (xi) the convener of the Stationing Action Group appointed in accordance with clause (8) below.
- (xii) *[deleted]*

1007 The Forces. (1) The Methodist Council shall annually appoint a Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force Board, ('the Forces Board') through which it shall exercise general oversight of:

- (i) the work of all ministers who are set apart to serve under the direction of the council as chaplains to the forces;
- (ii) the work of all deacons serving in support of chaplains;
- (iii) all lay workers employed by the council to serve in support of chaplains;
- (iv) declared Methodists in the forces.

(1A) The Forces Board shall also exercise a general oversight of the work of ministers appointed to serve as Reserve Chaplains, Officiating Chaplains and Cadet Force Chaplains.

- (1B) The Forces Board shall consist of a chair and:**
- (i) the secretary of the Forces Board, who shall be appointed in accordance with Standing Order 313 or 314, and be a member of the connexional Team;**
 - (ii) the Secretary of the Conference or a senior member of the connexional Team to represent them;**
 - (iii) the principal chaplains appointed and serving under clause (3);**
 - (iv) two chaplains, other than a principal chaplain, appointed and serving under clause (3), one of whom shall be serving as a chaplain to the cadet force;**
 - (v) a District Chair, who shall have responsibility for chaplains in stationing;**
 - (vi) two or more lay persons, one of whom shall oversee the provision in the forces of the training programmes prescribed by the Methodist Council under Standing Orders 565 and 680(1)(ii).**

SECTION R LEARNING NETWORK AND SO 340

The Council received a report from the Strategy and Resources Committee concerning the future of the Learning Network (LN). Having heard reflections on the experience of those delivering programmes for the LN, and particularly in the light of the move to online during the pandemic, the Committee agreed to the proposal that the Learning Network moves from being organised in individual regions to being structured as a single team working across the Connexion. The effect of this is that there will no longer be regional learning and development fora, freeing districts or groups of districts to engage in ways appropriate to their missional context with members of the Connexional Team; instead there will be a Connexional Learning and Development Forum. Each District will continue to have an aligned officer. The Council therefore recommends that SO 340 is revoked, which will enable flexibility as the work moves forward.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

22/18. The Conference receives the Report.

22/19. The Conference revokes SO 340.

22. Methodist Council, part 2

SECTION S

MEMORIAL M15 (2022)

1. **Memorial M15 – Positive Working Together:**

The Birmingham (5/1) Circuit Meeting (Present: 60; Voting: unanimous), draws the Conference's attention to both Positive Working Together and the 2015 Methodist Conference Report to Conference 40. Positive Working Together and asks the Conference to take the following action:

- a. To signpost people to the anti-bullying policy in the current Safeguarding policy.
- b. To ensure there is work done to include anti-harassment in Policy (as indicated in Positive Working Together and in the Conference 2015 Report).
- c. To revisit the layout of Positive Working Together and make clearer the Shared Commitment to ensure it is distinct and easy to access and use (it is currently among other text on pages 11-12 of the Positive Working Together booklet).
- d. To change the status of The Shared Commitment from being 'guidance' to being the expected behaviour of every person in Methodist Church life.
- e. To make accessible resources more easily available and for it to be clear that every person in church life can be enabled to use Positive Working Together to help create a safe and more inclusive church community.
- f. For the Shared Commitment to be recognised by every Church Council, to be part of Role Descriptions, and used alongside/integrated with Safeguarding training and documentation.
- g. To integrate the Shared Commitment from Positive Working Together into other Conflict Resolution courses being used in the Methodist Church.
- h. To include Positive Working Together in the Standing Orders of the Methodist Church.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Birmingham Circuit Meeting for drawing attention to the work on Positive Working Together and the 2015 Methodist Conference Report Positive Working Together (Agenda Item 40).

The memorial highlights the need for ongoing work as the church continues to encourage and develop engagement with Positive Working Together so as to enable all those who are part of the church community to live well with difference.

The Birmingham Circuit is thanked for its support and its local implementation of Positive Working Together and in particular commends its work around The Shared Commitment.

The Conference is aware that work is already underway within the Learning Network to offer a regular pattern of Positive Working Together training opportunities, across the Connexion, through Growing through Change and Conflict, Responding to Bullying and Harassment and Spirituality, Scripture and Conflict alongside Faith in Change and Conflict, which is run in partnership with Place for Hope and Cliff College and offered as a Cliff Certificate course. It is believed that this approach will offer greater accessibility to resources. The Shared Commitment will be produced as a standalone document, from the full report, made available on the Methodist Church website and directly referred to within these training resources.

The Conference believes that the work of the group reviewing Section 11 Complaints and Discipline of CPD will be able to incorporate the inclusion of Positive Working Together within Standing Orders as part of its ongoing work. The Conference believes that the incorporation of Positive Working Together in Standing Orders together with the Commitments and Expectations proposed in Agenda Item 19 of the 2022 Conference, The Covenant Relationship between the Church and its Ministers: Commitments and Expectations, will change the status of The Shared Commitment from 'guidance' to being the expected behaviour of every person in Methodist Church life.

The Conference strongly encourages Churches and Circuits to adopt The Shared Commitment and to consider inclusion within Role Descriptions and its use alongside Safeguarding training and documentation.

The Conference recognises the existing work undertaken by the Safeguarding team to incorporate the anti-bullying policy within the overall Safeguarding Policy. The Safeguarding team is due to review the policy later this year and at that point will seek to include anti-harassment within the overall Policy.

The Conference recognises that further work is required to enable a greater engagement with Positive Working Together and therefore accepts the overall direction of the memorial and directs the Methodist Council to arrange how best to take this work forward.

2. The Council has agreed the following way forward for this work:
 - The Learning Network is continuing to develop the work of Positive Working Together. It therefore is recommended that the Learning Network takes forward the following aspects for the memorial: M15 a, c, e, f (working with the Safeguarding team) and g. The Learning Network will update the Positive Working Together pages of the Methodist Church website to reflect the work undertaken.

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- The response to the memorial indicates that the Safeguarding team will be able to undertake the work involved to include 'anti-harassment policy' (M15 b) as part of the overall review of the Safeguarding Policy during 2022-23. The revised policy will be presented to the Safeguarding Committee, Methodist Council and Methodist Conference for approval.
- M15 d and h will be taken forward by the Conference Office as part of the ongoing Part 11 review enabling the relevant aspects of Positive Working Together Guidelines to be incorporated into Standing Orders.

***RESOLUTIONS

22/20. The Conference receives the Report.

22/21. The Conference adopts the Report as its further reply to M15 (2022).

SECTION T

NOTICE OF MOTION 2022/205: SUPPORT FOR DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY

The 2022 Conference adopted the following notice of motion:

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic along with other factors, the volume of properties for Circuits to dispose of is increasing. This is already creating a significant burden on ministers and lay officers. Relieving the circuits of the need to action this would enable missional activity to continue uninterrupted and would significantly improve well-being for many. Not taking significant action quickly will lead to further stress on ministers and lay officers and at some point may make circuit activity and development unviable.

Consequently the Conference asks the Methodist Council to explore the feasibility of establishing a small team of suitably qualified and experienced people to take on the role of disposing of closed churches, manses and other church property, the costs of the team being recouped from the proceeds of sale. Circuits would not be required to use this service, but demand for such a service would be expected to be significant.

The Strategy and Resources Committee and the Council considered the feasibility of this proposal as directed. Although the Council could see some benefits to this proposal, it was unsure how to measure the demand for it and how to manage it. The Council

therefore wishes instead to emphasise the Strategic Guidance for Property which helps Circuits to consider the different options that might be available to them. Overall, the Council did not feel that there would be sufficient appetite for this to be established and then managed.

***RESOLUTION

22/22. The Conference receives the Report.

SECTION U HOPE IN GOD'S FUTURE

As part of the Council's report to the 2022 Conference, the Conference received a report from Action for Hope. One of the aims of that project indicated a need for revisions to be considered to *Hope in God's Future*, which was adopted as a Statement of the Judgment of the Conference in 2011.

Hope in God's Future is a helpful, urgent and wide-ranging document, and one that it is hoped will continue to receive attention and promote action. It is recommended that any revisions to the Conference Statement should include ongoing reflection with global, ecumenical and interfaith partner, perhaps especially among the Abrahamic faiths, from whom we have much to learn and whose wisdom should be brought to bear on our conversations.

As this is a Statement of the Judgment of the Conference, the Conference is asked to direct that this work be done. It is proposed that the names for a new Resource Group to review and update *Hope in God's Future* should be offered to the Council in October 2023 and the Resource Group will then report to the Conference no later than 2025.

***RESOLUTION

22/23. The Conference receives the Report.

22/24. The Conference directs the Council to appoint a Resource Group to undertake a review of the Conference Statement, *Hope in God's Future*, and to report to the Conference no later than 2025.

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SECTION V CHAIR OF THE CONFERENCE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

Under SO 136, the Business Committee is chaired by a past President or Vice-President appointed by the Conference on the nomination of the Council for a term of three years. The Revd Loraine Mellor is due to complete her period as Chair after the 2023 Conference, and the Council therefore brings a nomination to the Conference for the succeeding three years. Past Presidents and Vice-Presidents were contacted and invited to consider whether they wished to express interest in the role.

Following a discernment process, the Council nominates Mr Dudley Coates to serve as Chair of the Conference Business Committee for the Conferences of 2024, 2025 and 2026. Dudley Coates was Vice-President of the Conference for 2006/07 and has experience of participating in debates and addressing the Conference. Dudley has considerable experience in chairing a variety of meetings and committees and as a former Vice-President has chaired and contributed to a number of connexional panels and working parties. Dudley is also a member of the Business Committee and has an understanding of the importance of the Business Committee's work and responsibilities.

*****RESOLUTION**

22/25. The Conference appoints Mr Dudley Coates as Chair of the Conference Business Committee for the Conferences of 2024, 2025 and 2026.