

32. Methodist Council

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SECTION A

GENERAL REPORT

The Methodist Council is charged under SO 211(2) with responsibility to keep in constant review the life of the Methodist Church, to study its work and witness throughout the Connexion, to indicate what changes are necessary or what steps could be taken to make the work of the Church more effective, to give spiritual leadership to the Church and to report annually to the Conference, bringing to the notice of the Conference matters to which it believes the Conference ought to give urgent attention.

The full range of papers presented to the Council and the outcomes of the Council's deliberations on them are available on the Methodist Church website at www.methodist.org.uk/council

This report contains those items considered by the Council and not reported elsewhere in the Agenda.

1.1 Governance Responsibilities

In accordance with its governance responsibilities, the Council:

- approved the Special Resolutions referred to it by the Conference;
- noted the work plan for the Connexional Team during 2013/14, and encouraged the Senior Leadership Group and the Strategy and Resources Committee to continue to develop a strategy for the Connexional Team and its work;
- appointed connexional committees, trusts and representatives for the year 2013/14;
- received reports from a number of committees and trustee bodies;
- made decisions about the raising and administering of the Fund for Training, delegating its responsibility to the Network Committee;
- directed that a small group be appointed to set criteria, provide expert advice, allocate funds and administer the budget for scholarship, research and innovation;
- approved, on behalf of the Conference, amendments to the charitable objects of Wesley House Cambridge;
- delegated its responsibilities for the oversight and approval of pathways for local preachers and worship leaders to the Ministries Committee, and directed the Ministries Committee to undertake these responsibilities in consultation with the Faith and Order Committee;
- made recommendations to the President and the Conference in relation to the appointment of ministers to appointments in the Learning Network;
- approved principles in relation to the standard lease terms and the application of standing orders to investment property;
- approved the sale at an undervalue of the surplus land at Keswick Methodist Church to Keswick Community Housing Trust;
- approved the terms of reference for the Methodist-United Reformed Church Liaison Group and appointed additional members to it;
- agreed that there should be a review of the restrictions on the use of investment property;

- under Standing Order 136(1C), appointed Deacon Eunice Attwood to the Conference Business Committee for the 2014 Conference;
- on behalf of the Conference, appointed the Revd Margaret P Jones as oversight tutor for the Southern Theological Education and Training Scheme;
- appointed additional signatories for Methodist Church bank accounts;
- approved the list of authorisations and delegations;
- approved the terms of reference for the group reviewing the role of District Chairs;
- delegated its functions under Trust 17A, the Extraordinary Property Fund, to the Connexional Grants Committee;
- approved the nomination of Mrs Susan Howdle as a director of Westminster College Oxford Trust Ltd;
- approved the acceptance of costs in settlement of the Supreme Court hearing;
- adopted managerial, governance and financial arrangements for a revised agreement with St John's College Durham;
- delegated its responsibilities under SO 342(1) to the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust;
- approved the principle that all leases of Methodist premises should be excluded from the protection of security of tenure;
- approved the principle that no lease of Methodist premises which are within the curtilage of the church site should include a requirement that the premises be reinstated if they are damaged or destroyed by an insured risk;
- approved the principle of allowing Sunday trading on Methodist premises which are investment property under SO 908 or premises outside the curtilage of the church site;
- approved the terms of reference for the new Grading and Remuneration Sub-Committee, and appointed the Sub-Committee;
- appointed a working party to consider Accessibility to the Conference (following the adoption of NM 208 by the 2013 Conference);
- agreed that the Methodist Diaconal Order office should move to Methodist Church House, and that 26 St James Road, Birmingham should be sold, with the proceeds being designated to provide funding for the Order;
- made appointments and nominations for the 2014 Conference;
- noted the outcomes of a review of insurance arrangements for staff, office holders and volunteers travelling overseas;
- appointed a working group to consider Releasing Money for God's Mission;
- agreed to the sale of 24 Long Acre, Murton, Swansea, delegating responsibility for the arrangements to the Connexional Allowances Committee;
- received an update concerning the Methodist Ministers Pension Scheme and the Pension and Assurance Scheme for Lay Employees of the Methodist Church;
- consented, on behalf of the Conference, to the sale of the Wesley House site and the leaseback of part of the site upon the terms and conditions approved by the Council;
- approved, on behalf of the Conference, proposed amendments to the Foundation Deed of Wesley House;
- appointed Deacon Karen McBride as the key point of contact within the Methodist Diaconal Order for practical matters relating to diaconal oversight;
- adopted a whistleblowing policy for Methodist Council staff members;
- approved the proposals of the Methodist Heritage Committee in relation to a connexional policy on managing historic artefacts, and delegated responsibility for finalising guidance documents in relation to the policy to the Heritage Committee;

- endorsed the creation of annual grants from the Connexional Priority Fund to fund manager/curator posts at each of the four core heritage sites, directing that such grants should be administered by the Connexional Grants Committee;
- adopted reserves levels, over and above grant commitments, of £1m for the Mission and Britain Fund and Fund for Property, and of £5m for the Connexional Priority Fund;
- co-opted the Revd John N Bates to serve on the Presbyteral Candidates Selection Committee.

1.2 Other Business

The Council also:

- received information about proposals to mark the 40th anniversary of the ordination of women to the presbyterate in the Methodist Church;
- made a response to the Joint Implementation Commission's draft report;
- appointed a working party to review the role of the Secretary of the Conference/General Secretary of the Methodist Church [the report is contained elsewhere in the Agenda];
- considered the briefing on the Boycott, Divestments and Sanctions movement [the report is contained elsewhere in the Agenda];
- engaged in discussion relating to Releasing Buildings for Mission [see the General Secretary's Report];
- heard reflections from the President and Vice-President of the Conference on their year of office;
- received reports from the Connexional Secretary on the work of the Team;
- received reports from the Strategy and Resources Committee on that Committee's oversight of the Team. (SO 213(5A));
- witnessed the attestation of the Journal of the 2013 Conference.

The Council received annual reports from:

- the management committee for Methodist Church House;
- the Connexional Grants Committee;
- the Heritage Committee;
- the World Methodist Committee;
- Methodist Academies and Schools Trust;
- the Ministries Committee.

1.3 Appointments to the membership of the Council

The 2013 Conference delegated to the Council responsibility for the appointment under SO 210(1)(iv) of the two vacant District representatives to the Council. [DR 8/31/14]

The Council duly appointed:

Mrs Anita Nicholson nominated by the Cornwall District

Mrs Joy Blake nominated by the Sheffield District.

In the absence of the Chair through illness the January and April meetings of the Council were chaired by the President, the Vice-President and the ex Vice-President. The President and the Vice-President undertook some of the representative tasks usually undertaken by the Chair of the Council during his period of illness.

***RESOLUTION

32/1. The Conference received the General Report of the Council.

SECTION B

WARDEN OF THE METHODIST DIACONAL ORDER

Report

1. The Council reported to the 2013 Conference that it had considered a series of recommendations made by a working party established to review the role of the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order (*Agenda 2013* p506). The Conference accepted the two recommendations of the Council. First it directed the Faith and Order Committee, in consultation with the Diaconal Order, to undertake work on the theology and ecclesiology underpinning the diaconate in Methodism. Secondly, provision was made for the Warden to undertake Ministerial Development Review.
2. In the course of the last year the Council, having directed the working party to undertake further consultation on others of its initial recommendations, has given consideration to the role of the Warden and makes a number of recommendations to the Conference.
3. In considering the role of the Warden over the last two years the Council concurred with the view of the working party that the present role of the Warden of the Order is far too big a job for any one person. This is not simply a matter of workload. It is also about the whole Connexion respecting the decisions taken over the last twenty years about the Methodist Diaconal Order and its place within our ecclesiology. The Methodist Church understands oversight as a shared responsibility, not an individual one. Part of the reason that the role of the Warden of the Order is so big is because the responsibilities that are held corporately elsewhere in the Methodist Church are in this instance focused in one person. The Council therefore recommends that a full time post of Deputy Warden be created.
4. The Council noted that whilst the post of Warden is clearly accountable to the Conference, there is at present no way in which the Warden's work is either supported or challenged by a group representative of the whole Church. To ensure that the Warden is accountable to the whole Church and not simply a religious order the Council concluded that what is needed is a group representative of the whole Church which can offer real support to the Warden as she or he both exercises oversight of the Order and advocates diaconal ministry widely. Amongst the immediate tasks would be ongoing monitoring of the Warden's workload, advice to the Warden on how the responsibilities can sensibly be shared with others, recommendations on how the remaining specific funds of the Order should be managed and disbursed, advising on when and how the MDO is (or should be) consulted on wider developments and assisting the Warden in her or his tasks of oversight and advocacy.
5. The Council therefore recommends the creation of a Methodist Diaconal Order Leadership Group representing the whole Church who share leadership collaboratively with and offer support, oversight and accountability to the Warden, and that a new Standing Order be approved to give effect to this.
6. Recognising that there are some common features between the role of the Warden and that of District Chairs the Council judges that there should be regular conversation within the Chairs' Meeting about the Order to ensure that there is good understanding amongst the Chairs of the nature of the Order and the responsibility of Chairs with regard to deacons stationed within a District. To enable this to take place the Council recommends that conversations take place between the Warden and those responsible for planning the Chairs' Meeting both about the shape of the Warden's involvement and about shared oversight and

connexional responsibilities. The Council further recognises the importance of the Warden remaining a member of the Connexional Leaders' Forum and of the Stationing Committee.

7. The Council further directed that an application should be made to widen the terms of the Aspinall Robinson Trust to enable it to provide support to all deacons and to include the support of a Deputy Warden of the Order.

***RESOLUTIONS

32/2. The Conference adopted the Report.

32/3. The Conference amended standing orders as follows:

754 Warden of the Order. (1)(i) There shall be a Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order, being a member of the Order appointed by the Conference.

(ii) There shall be a Deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order, being a member of the Order appointed by the Methodist Council in accordance with SO 315(1A).

(2A) The deputy Warden shall assist the Warden of the Order in fulfilling the Warden's functions and responsibilities. Subject to clause (5) below the Warden shall delegate to the deputy Warden the discharge of such of those functions and responsibilities as the Warden, with the agreement of the Methodist Diaconal Order Leadership Group, thinks fit.

(4) **Subject to clause (5) below**, if the Warden is temporarily unable to fulfil all or any of the duties of the office because of accident, illness, absence from the country, sabbatical leave or other cause, the President may appoint a **the deputy Warden or another deacon in the active work**, ~~being a deacon in the active work~~, with authority to fulfil those duties which the Warden is unable to perform.

~~(5) The Warden may at any time appoint a person to assist him or her in such way as he or she may think fit.~~

~~(6) Unless the assistance is purely clerical or administrative, any appointment made under clause (5) above shall comply with the following requirements:~~

~~(i) the person appointed shall be a deacon in the active work;~~

~~(ii) if the person appointed is to act publicly on behalf of the Warden, the appointment shall not take effect until it has been approved by the Methodist Council;~~

~~(iii) the duties to be performed by the person appointed shall not include duties expressly required to be performed by the Warden by any provision of the Deed of Union.~~

754(5)

Nothing done under clause (2A) or clause (4) above can empower any person other than the Warden to perform any act expressly required by the Deed of Union to be performed by the Warden.

743 Ministerial Development. (1) (a) This Standing Order applies to:

- (i) every presbyter or deacon in circuit or district appointment, every District Chair, ~~and~~ the Warden **and deputy Warden** of the Methodist Diaconal Order;

752 Meetings

(2) Subject to any invitation given under clause (3) below, the Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order shall preside at every meeting of the Convocation. If because of an emergency the Warden is unable to be present, then the ***deputy Warden shall preside. If neither the Warden or deputy Warden are able to preside then the*** members present shall invite the President or Vice-President, if present, or, if both decline, one of their number, to preside.

180 Officers and Members

(4) The Deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order is hereby appointed an officer of the committee.

315 (1) Other Ministerial Staff Appointments Amending this to read “or other body within the control of the Methodist Council ***or (if a deacon in Full Connexion) as the Deputy Warden of the Methodist Diaconal Order***”

32/4. The Conference established a Methodist Diaconal Order Leadership Group and amended Standing Orders as follows:

SO 755 Methodist Diaconal Order Leadership Group

- (1) The Conference shall each year appoint the Methodist Diaconal Order Leadership Group upon nominations from the Methodist Council.***
- (2) The Group shall consist of seven persons, comprising a former President or Vice-President appointed as chair, two presbyters, two deacons and two lay persons.***
- (3) The Group shall meet as frequently as need be, but at least once a year.***
- (4) The responsibilities of the Group shall be to:-***
 - (i) advise and support the Warden and the deputy Warden on the performance of their duties under the Deed of Union and Standing Orders and generally in the exercise of their functions.***
 - (ii) oversee any such arrangements as from time to time may be required for consulting the Methodist Diaconal Order on matters referred to it by the Conference or the Council.***

SECTION C

REVIEW OF MISSION ALONGSIDE THE POOR

Report

1. The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference that a review of the Mission Alongside the Poor programme (MAP) be undertaken.
2. The Council recommends the following terms of reference for the review:
 - (i) To review the aims and objectives of MAP in terms of the Conference’s clear commitment to supporting churches across the Connexion in responding to the needs of people and communities experiencing poverty.
 - (ii) To review the scope and scale of MAP to ensure that its aims are in line with the issues being faced by churches across the Connexion.
 - (iii) To review the name and nature of the programme.

- (iv) To consider the scale of financial resource available to the Connexional Grants Committee for supporting MAP and the sources of funding from which grants to the MAP programme are made.
- (v) To consider the size and nature of grant support in order to ensure that the programme continues at a meaningful level in relation to the actual and potential demand.
- (vi) To consider the Conference and the Council's previous reports in relation to poverty and inequality in order to ensure that MAP programme reflects and is congruent with the Conference and the Council's previous commitments.

*****RESOLUTION**

32/5. The Conference directed the Methodist Council to undertake a review of the Mission Alongside the Poor programme with the terms of reference as set out in paragraph 2 and to report to the Conference no later than 2016.

**SECTION D
INTER FAITH**

Report

1. The Council received a report on the progress made in the area of inter faith work, following Notice of Motion 210, adopted by the 2013 Conference. The Council heard that work continues within the Network, Queen's, Touchstone, and the Methodist URC Inter Faith Relations Reference Group and wider Connexional Team. The Council noted the aim that, by strengthening the network of advocates and practitioners and learning from our own experiences within an Inter Faith context, it will allow the Church to stay in the hard places, inspire those who have no real interest in Inter Faith relations and offer something distinctively Wesleyan and Methodist from the riches of our tradition to a multi-faith and multi-cultural world.
2. The Council discussed the priorities for the budget that is available for this area of work, and indicated that the focus should be on strengthening the network, with some money available for training. The Council directed the Team to undertake further work based on these priorities.

*****RESOLUTION**

32/6. The Conference received the Report.

**SECTION E
SCOTLAND**

Report

The Council received a report following the consultation relating to the ending of the Connexional Liaison Officer for Scotland (CLOfS) post; in light of Notice of Motion 110 (2013). A working group had taken this work forward, and confirmed that all aspects of the role had been examined and where appropriate had been taken on either by Methodists in Scotland and Shetland, by connexional representatives in Scotland and Shetland particularly the Chairs of the Districts, by the relevant members of the Connexional Team or through partnership working with others in Scotland. The Council appointed a new working group to consider issues that may arise following the forthcoming Referendum on Scottish independence.

***RESOLUTION

32/7. The Conference received the Report.

SECTION F

BELONGING TOGETHER

Report

1. The Council discussed the findings and recommendations of the *Belonging Together* project, in the light of Notice of Motion 202, adopted by the 2013 Conference. The Council engaged in discussion as to how the recommendations could be implemented.
2. The Council agreed the following recommendations, and commends them to the Conference:
 - i. The production of the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) toolkit as a priority for the Connexional Team.
 - ii. The engagement of that toolkit as a necessity throughout the life of the Methodist Church.
 - iii. The incorporation of EDI and the learning from *Belonging Together* into the developing pathways for training in relation to all ministries of the Methodist Church.
 - iv. The ongoing work relating to ethnically distinct fellowship groups and congregations to be supported through the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network.
 - v. The role of the EDI Committee to include carrying on the Belonging Together legacy and further development of the work undertaken during the project where appropriate.
 - vi. Drawing on the wealth of experience from the Belonging Together Partnership Group and the research that was carried out during the project.
 - vii. Continuing support for the Belonging Together Ministers Group through the EDI Committee.
 - viii. An examination of representation on various groups and governance bodies to be on the agenda of the EDI Committee.
 - ix. Support for 3Generate as it continues to seek to be as diverse and representative of the whole Church as possible.
 - x. Additional resources (people, finance and equipment) will be made available wherever possible.
3. The Council affirmed that *Belonging Together* is not an additional task but an ethos that needs to be evident in every activity and on every agenda of the Methodist Church. The steps outlined above are only a continuation of a development that has been ongoing for many years. These steps will hopefully not only act as signs to the whole Church of what is desired, but will also be the means of transforming the Methodist Church into a place where all are welcome, are truly valued and are able to participate fully in the life of the Church.

- The Council directed that the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network reports to the Council in April 2015 on the work relating to recommendation (iv) and, once formed, the EDI Committee reports on the work relating to all the other recommendations.

*****RESOLUTION**

32/8. The Conference received the Report.

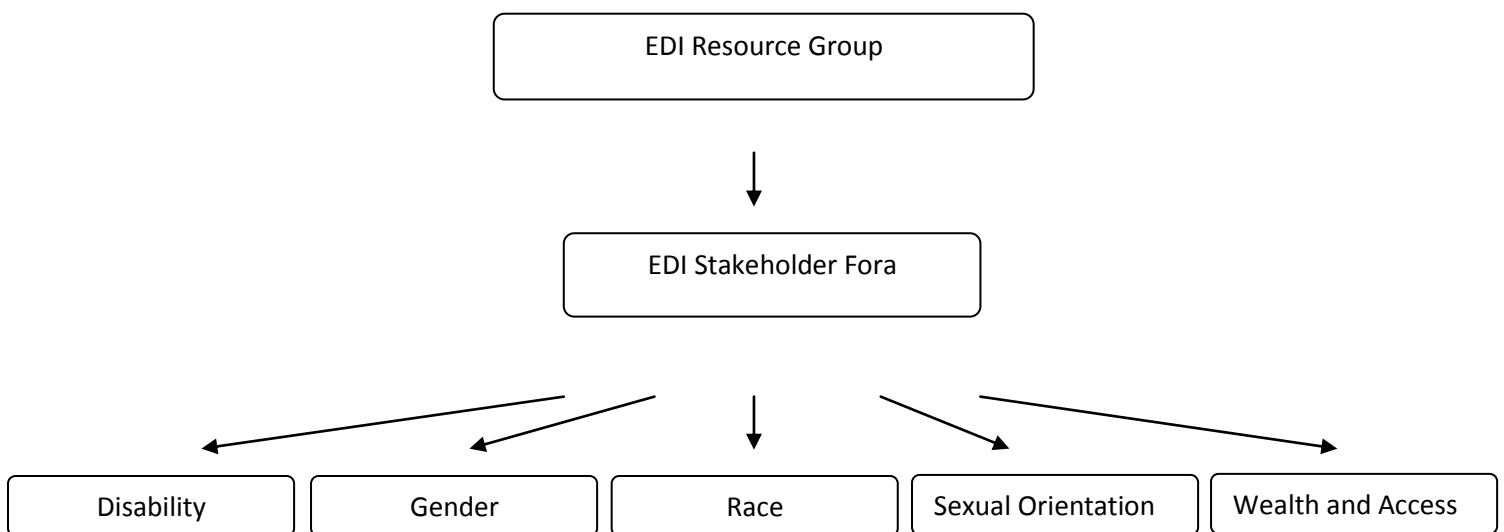
SECTION G

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION (EDI)

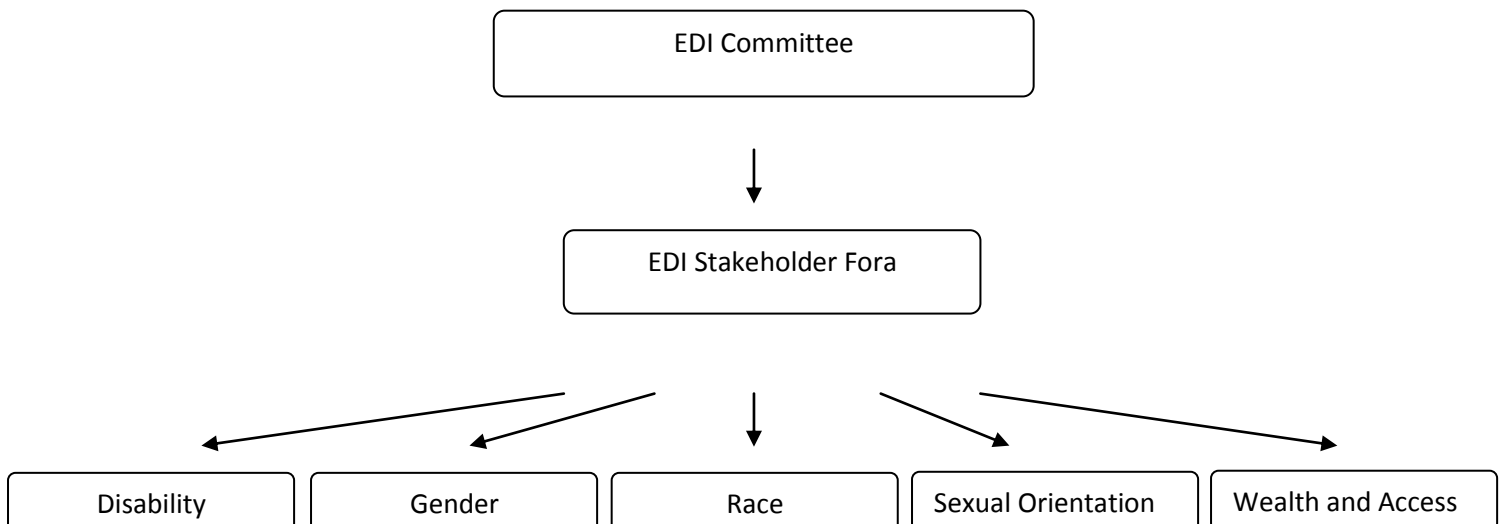
Report

The Council discussed the future arrangements for the consideration of EDI matters, and recommends the following structure to the Conference.

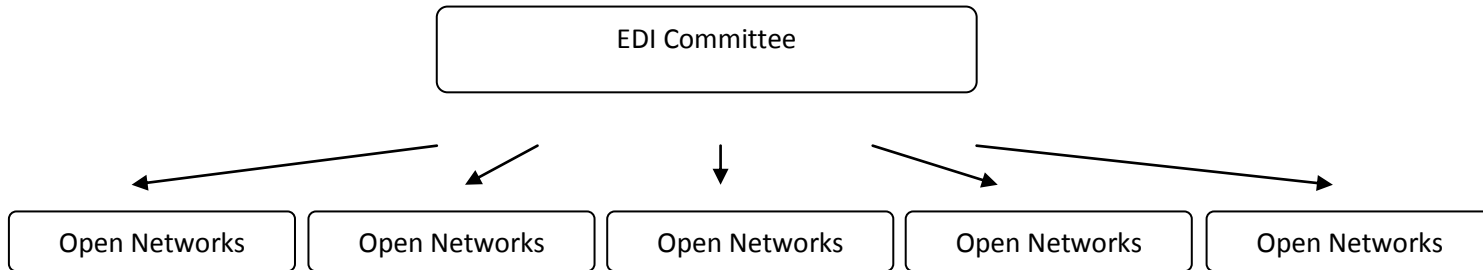
The following diagram outlines the current EDI Architecture:



The following diagram illustrates the transitional arrangements. Under these transitional arrangements, the EDI Resource Group will be replaced by the EDI Committee, with the EDI Stakeholder Fora remaining until 31 August 2015, to support work on the EDI Toolkit and the theology underpinning this work.



The following diagram illustrates the permanent architecture, which will consist of the EDI Committee and be supported by open thematic networks as identified in the 2010 *Towards an Inclusive Church* report. The themes will be based on the priority actions identified in the April Council 'Towards an Inclusive Church Update 2013'.



*****RESOLUTIONS**

32/9. The Conference adopted the transitional and permanent EDI Architecture as set out in the Report.

32/10. The Conference amended SO 336 as follows:

336 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

(1) *The Methodist Council shall annually appoint an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, to discharge the following duties:*

(i) supporting the work of the council in all matters relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by providing expert resources, advice and guidance.

(ii) assisting the council by scrutinising reports and policies which have regard to equality, diversity and inclusion.

(iii) assisting the council in identifying areas of activities that require improved awareness and understanding of inclusion.

(iv) supporting the council in the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion across the connexion.

(v) developing learning and development programmes and any other resources as directed by the council.

(2) *The Committee shall report annually to the Methodist Council.*

(3) (a) *The Committee shall consist of;*

(i) the chair appointed in accordance with sub clause (c) below;

(ii) a member of the Senior Leadership Group of the Connexional Team;

(iii) a person aged 18 or over nominated by the Methodist Children and Youth Assembly;

(iv) a member of the Methodist Council;

(v) five other persons chosen to ensure that the committee has expert knowledge, experience and skills in matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion, one of whom shall be a chair of district.

(b) A member of the Connexional Team shall be the convener of the committee but not a voting member.

(c) The Chair shall be appointed by the Methodist Council to serve for six years.

(d) The other members of the committee shall not serve for more than six years in succession.

(4) The Committee shall be responsible for making nominations to the Council for persons to fulfill SO102(1)(i)(g)

SECTION H

CONNEXIONAL GRANTS COMMITTEE

Report

The Council agreed to recommend to the Conference that there should be a change to SO 213B(6)(i), to enable the Council to determine policy in relation to the work of the Connexional Grants Committee (CGC). The Council noted that it would be appropriate for the CGC to bring proposals on policy to the Council in the light of insights into needs and developments in the Connexion, which the Committee has gained from its engagement with the awarding of grants. The Council felt, however, that the determination of policy should be the responsibility of the Council, where appropriate debate can take place and final policy be decided.

***RESOLUTION

32/11. The Conference adopted the report and amended standing orders as set out below:

SO 212(2A) The council shall be responsible for formulating the grants policy to be implemented by the Connexional Grants Committee.

*SO 213B(6)(i) to formulate and implement a **the** grants policy in line with the decisions of the council and the Conference **adopted by the council.***

SECTION I

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE – RECONCILIATION

The 2012 Conference passed the following notice of motion:

The Conference acknowledges the immense amount of work that has been done on the Complaints and Discipline process of the Church. As set out in Standing Orders, the need for this process stems from the imperfect nature of human beings. The principles of the Complaints and Discipline system include the statements that

(v) the process should be fair;

(vi) the person or body making the decision at each stage should be competent to do so;

(vii) there should be a means of correcting any errors that may be made. (SO 1100(3))

Errors can be addressed to some extent through the appeal process. There is also some provision to address concerns about the process (SO 1155), and provision to express concern about individuals involved in the process (SO 1103(6)). The appeal process can also allow for re-

hearing of complaints, but if errors are discovered outside of the appeals process there does not seem to be means of correcting these. So there does not appear to be 'a means of correcting any errors that may be made.'

Within or without the appeal system there is no provision in Standing Orders for apologies to be offered by individuals or on behalf of the Church when errors have been made. If this were possible it could reduce the time and stress involved in the process and facilitate reconciliation.

'Through the complaints and discipline process members of the Methodist Church are accountable to the Church in matters of faith and behaviour. The Church seeks to enable healing and reconciliation to take place through that accountability whenever possible. The Church also responds to the call through Christ for justice, openness and honesty, and to the need for each of us to accept responsibility for its own acts.' SO 1100(2)

Seeking a further step in the journey towards a complaints process grounded in God's love, built on trust and understanding, and seeking reconciliation, the Conference therefore directs the Methodist Council, in consultation with the Law and Polity Committee, to ensure that a review is undertaken of the reconciliation opportunities within the Complaints and Discipline process. This should ensure that account is taken of lessons learned in the process so far and seek to ensure that:

- i. any errors are able to be identified and corrected at the earliest possible time in the process and*
- ii. a range of opportunities are given for reconciliation and all parties enabled to accept responsibility for their own actions.*

The Conference directs that a report and any Standing Order amendments be brought to the Conference no later than 2014.

Report

1. On analysis, there are a number of opportunities, at various stages, for reconciliation processes to be activated within the complaints and discipline procedures.
2. SO 1100 sets out the principles of the church's complaints and discipline processes. One of these principles is that, 'Through the complaints and discipline process members of the Methodist Church are accountable to the Church in matters of faith and behaviour. The Church seeks to enable healing and reconciliation to take place through that accountability whenever possible.' SO 1100(2). SO 1100(3)(iii) requires that the possibility of reconciliation should be explored carefully in every case in which it is appropriate. By requiring every District to establish a district Reconciliation Group (SO 1111(1)(i)) assistance is provided in the process of achieving reconciliation as the Group exists to provide advice to either a recipient or a local complaints officer about the possible means of resolution. The Group itself (and Synods are permitted to have a joint Group that serves more than one District) may be able to provide expertise or it may be able to provide contacts for people or organisations which may be able to provide the relevant advice and assistance with possible means of reconciliation.
3. The Conference has never sought to provide a set a pattern for the way in which such groups are to go about their work. The manner in which a Group is to discharge its functions is a matter to be decided by the relevant District and it is important that Synods pay careful attention to this important aspect of district life.

4. Stages at which reconciliation may, or should, be considered.

- 4.1. A recipient of a complaint may, in the course of considering how to deal with the complaint (at the informal stage) consult the district Reconciliation Group, additionally the recipient may suggest to the parties that they may wish to consider the possibility of seeking a mediated settlement. Of course, some complaints are inherently unsuitable for mediation. This would include complaints alleging behaviour which, if established, may constitute a criminal offence (eg abuse).
- 4.2. Unless the complaint is an employment complaint a Local Complaints Officer must under the provision of SO 1121(2)(iii) consult the district Reconciliation Group in order to explore the possibility of resolving the complaint by a more formal means.
- 4.3. A complaint referred to the connexional Complaint Panel may not be summarily dismissed without consideration of whether or not any reconciliation between the parties is or might be possible (SO 1123(5)). Responsibility rests with the lead member of a Complaints Team to decide what steps might be taken to try to achieve reconciliation.
- 4.4. SO 1124(7) requires a complaints team, when it is satisfied that it has taken all necessary steps to consider the complaint, to consider three particular questions, one of which is whether or not there is merit in the complaint, could the situation be helped by some form of reconciliation. SO 1124(8) and (9) sets out the detail of a possible form of reconciliation:

(8) If the complaints team is of the opinion that a form of reconciliation agreed by the complainant and the respondent would help the situation, the team must consider with them whether a form of reconciliation which the team believes is suitable in all the circumstances can be agreed. A suitable form of reconciliation may, but need not, include any of the following:

- (i) an acceptance by the complainant and the respondent that the other person has honestly interpreted admitted facts differently;*
- (ii) an admission of fault by any person;*
- (iii) an acknowledgment by the complainant or the respondent of hurt inflicted on or loss suffered by the other;*
- (iv) a commitment by the complainant or the respondent not to repeat conduct which has caused hurt or loss;*
- (v) a commitment by the complainant or the respondent to take or not to take certain action;*
- (vi) an offer of appropriate restitution by the respondent, where possible;*
- (vii) an agreement by the complainant and the respondent to meet face to face;*
- (viii) an agreement by the complainant and the respondent to participate in a formal act of forgiveness and reconciliation.*

(9) If the complainant and the respondent agree to a form of reconciliation but thereafter:

- (i) either of them fails to act in the manner then agreed;*
 - (ii) either of them becomes aware for the first time of a material fact or material facts which:
(a) he or she did not know and could not reasonably be expected to have known before agreeing to the form of reconciliation; and
(b) might reasonably have affected his or her decision whether or not to reach agreement;*
- or*
- (iii) either of them becomes aware for the first time of a procedural error in the course of the complaints team's consideration of the complaint which:*

- (a) *might reasonably have affected the complaints team's decision that the agreed form of reconciliation was suitable; or*
- (b) *might reasonably have affected his or her decision whether or not to reach agreement then the person aggrieved by the failure (where paragraph (i) applies) or becoming aware for the first time of the fact or error (where paragraph (ii) or (iii) applies) may apply for reconsideration of the complaint under Standing Order 1126 within three weeks of becoming aware of the relevant matter.*

5. Notwithstanding that the existing procedures contain adequate reconciliation opportunities already embedded within the processes there is one amendment to standing orders which would facilitate a more effective outcome. This would be to stipulate that any team appointed under SO 1155(6) to deal with complaints about the process should be chaired by someone with appropriate legal knowledge/experience and a familiarity with standing orders, that is a person appointed under the provisions of SO 231(3). This would ensure that the range of existing opportunities was used to its full extent, and that the reconciliation process was conducted in a manner consistent with the overall scheme of standing orders.

***RESOLUTION

32/12. The Conference adopted the Report and amended standing orders as set out below:

1113 Connexional Reconciliation Group

[...]

(2) ***With the exception of persons falling within SO 231(3)*** ~~no~~ person may be appointed a member of the connexional Reconciliation Group who holds an office or is a member of a group (other than a district Reconciliation Group) or panel appointed under this Section or under Standing Order 231.

1155 Complaints about the Process

(6)(a) On receiving a reference under this Standing Order the convener must appoint a team of three members of the Group, ***one of whom must be a person falling within Standing Order 231(3)***, to act in accordance with the provisions of this Standing Order and must appoint one member of the team as the contact member.

[...]

SECTION J COMPLEXITY AND STRATEGY

Report

The Council received a report on progress in relation to NM 204, adopted by the 2013 Conference. The Council noted that, since this matter was before the Conference, a number of pieces of work have been or are being undertaken which it is anticipated will assist the Council in addressing different aspects of the points which are raised in the motion:

- a. The Connexional Team is reinstating more detailed work on the production of projections to assist the Stationing Committee in monitoring the likely availability of appointments as set against the availability of presbyters and deacons (both probationers and those in Full Connexion).

- b. The Faith and Order Committee, having consulted with the Ministries Committee, will undertake a broad piece of work on the nature of Ministry in the Methodist Church.
- c. The Faith and Order Committee, in consultation with the Methodist Diaconal Order has begun work as directed by the 2013 Conference to undertake work on the theology and ecclesiology underpinning the diaconate in Methodism, its place within the British Connexion and its place within the universal church. [Daily Record 5/5/8]

The Council will, therefore, appoint a working party to explore the matters raised by NM 204 (2013) once further work has taken place on these other matters.

*****RESOLUTION**

32/13. The Conference received the Report, in response to NM 204 (2013).

**SECTION K
MINISTRIES COMMITTEE**

Report

1. The Ministries Committee reported to the Council on all aspects of its work. The Council directed that the sections of the report concerning Fresh Expressions and pioneer ministry should be included here in full.
2. **Fresh Expressions**
 - a. A gathering of the Fresh Expressions Partner Forum in 2013 affirmed the commitment of partners to develop and sustain the work into a third phase from April 2014 to 2019.
 - b. In January 2014 the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins became the new Chair of the Fresh Expressions Board. The Ministries Committee wishes to express its gratitude to the Revd Andrew Roberts for his work as Director of Training for Fresh Expressions as he takes up a new role in the Bristol and West Midlands Region of the DMLN.
 - c. In April 2014 Bishop Graham Cray will retire as Archbishops' Missioner and Team Leader for Fresh Expressions, to be replaced by the Revd Canon Phil Potter. Bishop Graham has made an immense contribution to Fresh Expressions during his time in office and the Methodist Council is asked to convey its thanks to him and its greetings to Canon Potter.
 - d. 24/7 Prayer has become an Associate Partner of Fresh Expressions, whilst WYWAM (World Youth with a Mission) has become a full partner, seconding Kevin Colyer as a half time member of the team. Mr Colyer has written the Share booklet on self-support for pioneers. The Church of Scotland has appointed the Revd David McCarthy as their Fresh Expressions Development Worker.
 - e. The current data indicates that 104 vision days have now been held across England, Wales and Scotland with over 7,200 people being introduced to the vision of fresh expressions. Internationally, vision days have also been presented in Australia, Canada, the United States and New Zealand with over 1,500 attendees.
 - f. There has been a significant renewal of interest in 'entry level' learning. The *Mission Shaped Intro* course (*msi*) has been published as a book and DVD, with additional

participants' workbooks, a resource which is likely to extend its usage and generate revenue.

- g. The *Mission Shaped Ministry* course (*msm*) continues to grow and remains one of the most significant mission training programmes in the UK. The one-year learning experience has been presented 103 times in the UK with over 3,150 participants. It has also been presented in Australia, Barbados, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, South Africa and the United States. Bespoke training packages continue to be provided for a variety of partners and events including a range of theological colleges.
- h. A significant piece of research, funded by the Church Commissioners, has been published by the Church of England. Entitled, *From Anecdote to Evidence: Findings from the Church Growth Research Programme 2011-13*, an executive summary is available to download at <http://www.churchgrowthresearch.org.uk/UserFiles/File/Reports/FromAnecdoteToEvidence1.0.pdf>.
- i. One stream of the research (available for download at <http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk/sites/default/files/churchgrowthresearch-freshexpressions.pdf>, conducted by the Church Army's Research Unit is reported on in more detail here. The research provides an in depth study of fresh expressions in ten dioceses between 1992 and 2012, covering a range of socio-economic settings and a spectrum of church traditions. Twenty different models of fresh expression were noted. The study indicates that fresh expressions account for 10% of total church attendance in these dioceses, and 15% of church communities. Total attendance at fresh expressions across these dioceses is equivalent to an additional medium sized diocese of 20,000 people. The numbers added over 2006-2011 reversed the decline in seven out of ten of the dioceses. In a further two of the ten dioceses, decline was almost reversed. Appropriateness to local context is the key and different models connect better with different social groups. The great majority start from and stay within a parish (91%). Two fifths are network rather than neighbourhood based, addressing cultural groups unreached by existing work, but the attendance at network fresh expressions is mainly typical of the surrounding area. The vast majority are all age, with 41% of attendance being under 16. As reported in interviews, 25% of those who attend are Christians, 35% are de-churched and 40% non-churched. The non-churched are the largest and fastest growing group within the population and the most significant mission field, so this is particularly encouraging. Planting teams are mainly small, most being between 3 and 12 people, showing that this is well within the reach of many churches. On average, for every person sent as part of a team, another 2.5 have been added. There is a low level of transfer growth and 78% of these fresh expressions are taking intentional steps to encourage discipleship, not just attendance. The other striking feature was the large number of lay leaders who had not had a previous formal role, or who had not previously been involved in leadership.
- j. Many of these trends are reflected in the Methodist *Statistics for Mission* figures. In 2012, there were 46,000 people in 1,552 Methodist fresh expressions of church meeting monthly or more often - with nearly 8,000 lay volunteers supporting the work. In both the Methodist Church and the Church of England, the greatest momentum in planting has been in the last three years. Some 44% of the fresh expressions studied in the Church Army research were launched between 2010 and 2012. Fresh expressions are proving to be an effective means of church growth in the member churches. This level of research has at present not been replicated for Methodist Districts and progress urgently needs to be made to do so. The following is present in the report to encourage and inform our learning.

3. Pioneer Pathway

- a. Although the concept of pioneer mission and ministry is not new, it has become particularly prominent since the publication of the *Mission Shaped Church (MSC)* report in 2004, the establishment of the *Fresh Expressions* initiative and the development of VentureFX. The importance of pioneering was highlighted by *MSC* and one of its key recommendations was the need to be intentional about identifying and releasing those individuals who have the calling and gifts of a pioneer. The 2012 Conference received a report from a joint Anglican and Methodist working party, *Fresh Expressions in the Mission of the Church (FEMC)*, which reiterated the need for pioneer ministry to be better enabled as fresh expressions of church continue to develop and *The Fruitful Field Project* report also affirmed the need to include appropriate pathways for those who are pioneering fresh expressions of church (para 113.2).
- b. The Ministries Committee set, as an early priority for the DMLN, the development of pathways for pioneer ministries. A working group identified some key principles for a pioneer pathway:

Pioneer ministry should be considered as a focus of ministry (both lay and ordained) not an order of ministry.

The need to affirm pioneer ministry in all its forms but with a particular focus on those working to form new ecclesial communities.

A recognition of the diversity of contexts, people, and approaches within which pioneering takes place.

An awareness that pioneering is evolving and organic, bearing in mind that an imposed, centralised structure is inimical to its nature.

The context of pioneering is of fundamental importance – pioneers should be found where they are working.
- c. The over-arching aim in designing a pathway for pioneers, whilst encouraging pioneering in the broader context, is to identify and release into missional activity significant numbers of lay and ordained people, for whom pioneering is the primary focus of their ministry, who are:

Well equipped

Well supported

Affirmed and embraced within a Methodist context

Effective in disciple-making mission
- d. The Ministries Committee has approved the development of a pathway for pioneers, commencing in September 2015, but running in a pilot phase in 2014-15, focusing initially on lay pioneers and existing ordained presbyters and deacons who have pioneering as a primary focus of their ministry. The experience of this initial phase will form the basis for organic development of this pathway as further work is completed in partnership with the Faith and Order Committee on the relationship between pioneering ministry and various issues connected with authorised ministry (eg selection, initial ministerial training, oversight, deployment etc).
- e. The pathway will have the following key features:
 - The pathway will emerge organically as a piece of collaborative development across the Connexion under the oversight of a project development team chaired by the Director of Learning and Development (Pathways).

- The establishment of a 'Fresh Ways' hub within each region, facilitated by members of the regional staff team but drawing in others with suitable expertise as appropriate. The hub will cover the breadth of the fresh expressions and pioneering landscape, but will engage with specialists and generalists differently.
- A regional officer, working closely with districts and circuits and drawing upon other appropriate expertise, will have responsibility for facilitating the hub in their region, encouraging and identifying those for whom pioneering is a primary focus of ministry, then supporting them and helping them to engage with an appropriate process of formation.
- Each region will be supported to develop a network of such pioneers as a community of practice and the local basis of their ongoing formation. In each region a regular gathering of this learning community will take place, modelled on the existing regional gatherings organised by VentureFX, with a focus on a common rhythm of life, holding them together as a community of mutual learning, prayer and support. Pioneers are likely to learn and develop most effectively through a process of formation which relies heavily on engagement with a supportive network of peers.
- The development of a network of mentors or coaches with the capacity to engage others in a process of reflective practice.
- Access to formal learning opportunities - connexionally, a coordinator will draw on a suite of learning opportunities, including courses offered by The Queen's Foundation and Cliff College, together with other agencies such as Fresh Expressions, and will work with the regional coordinators and hubs to determine the most appropriate approach for each individual. The *Mission Shaped Ministry* course will be available in each region as an essential part of that suite of learning opportunities.

4. Fund for Training

Report

As a result of the decisions of the 2012 and 2013 Conferences the Ministries Committee recommended to the Council that the purposes of the Fund for Training be adjusted to include support of the Learning Network in its entirety including the two centres (Cliff College and the Queen's Foundation). The Council concurred with this recommendation and also agreed to recommend to the Conference that the purposes of the Fund should be expanded to provide for the development (including capital expenditure) of the centres.

***RESOLUTION

32/14. The Conference adopted the report and amended SO 362(4)(iii) as follows:

(iii) the **improvement and** maintenance of **trust property**, management and staffing of the Methodist **training institutions** ~~theological colleges, and the Methodist contribution to the cost of joint theological colleges;~~

(iiiA) Contributing to the improvement and maintenance of property, management and staffing of joint theological colleges.

5. Oversight of Candidates, Student Ministers and Probationers

The 2013 Conference directed the Council to consider whether the practice of destroying files relating to candidates/student ministers should continue. The Council concurs with the view of the Ministries Committee that it is essential for the church to hold information with sensitivity and in such a way as to ensure that support and care is offered to all those in Full Connexion. The Council therefore recommends that all files relating to the period of candidating, initial ministerial training and probation be retained and stored within personal connexional portfolios for ministers.

32/15. The Conference directed that files relating to the period of candidating, initial ministerial training and probation be retained and stored within personal connexional portfolios for ministers.

6. Memorial M6 (2013) Configuration of initial ministerial training

Report

The Council was charged with bringing a further reply to M6 of the 2013 Conference.

M6 Configuration of initial ministerial training

The Darlington District Synod (R) (Present: 104; Voting: 83 for, 3 against) draws attention to the contents of the report MC/13/38 to the April 2013 Methodist Council on the implementation of the recommendations of The Fruitful Field Project report to the Conference of 2012, from which it is clear that some of the key objectives set out in The Fruitful Field Project and adopted by the Conference will not be achieved. Specifically:

- There will not be a unified staff team for the Discipleship and Ministries Learning Network because tutors at the Queen's Foundation will not be employed as part of the Network.*
- The control of Methodist training at the Queen's Foundation will continue to be indirect, because its existing governance structure will remain in place.*
- Cliff College will also continue to employ its own staff and (as originally envisaged) will not offer initial ministerial training.*
- In consequence, there will be no single Network and no centre under direct Methodist control which provides initial ministerial training.*

It is the Synod's understanding that the advantages intended to flow from the substantial dismantling of existing ministerial training arrangements and their replacement by the proposed Network arrangements therefore cannot be achieved. This calls into doubt the assessment that the adverse consequences of such dismantling, which were noted in The Fruitful Field Project, are a price worth paying for those advantages.

The Synod therefore requests the Conference to set up an urgent review to reconsider the issue of how ministerial training should be configured with the aim of establishing an alternative, robust configuration for Methodist ministerial training, building on existing strengths and partnerships, rather than by dismantling them.

Reply

The Conference thanks the Darlington Synod for its memorial and notes the Synod's concerns.

The Conference directs the Methodist Council, in consultation with the Ministries Committee, to initiate an appropriate process through which a review of ministerial training is conducted in line with the request of the memorial, to ensure that the vision outlined by the Ministries Committee in the Fruitful Field Project is delivered.

The Conference directs the Council to bring a report to the 2014 Conference.

The Council was assured that it could have confidence in the provisions put in place for the training of ministerial students from 2013 and the excellent work taking place at the Queen's Foundation in this regard. The Council noted that these provisions will, as a matter of routine, be inspected this connexional year by the Quality in Formation panel (an ecumenical inspection process) and by an inspection as part of the validation by Durham University for the Common Awards process. The Council further noted that it would be helpful to locate the proposed review of initial ministerial training within the wider context of provision relating to candidating and probationer studies and other developments in the field of formation in order to ensure that the focus of the review is on the provision of training, rather than specific institutions.

The Council is of the view that:

- a) The Memorial should be read in the light of previous discussions held and decisions confirmed at the 2013 Conference;
- b) A review of ministerial training at this time would be both difficult to undertake and might be unproductive in the light of the major changes that are taking place at this time;
- c) The Ministries Committee, believing in the importance of reviewing all processes, will on behalf of the Methodist Council put in place a review process to report to the Conference in 2017 once the new processes are fully established.

*****RESOLUTION**

32/16. The Conference received the Report.

SECTION L

NOMINATION OF SECRETARY OF THE CONFERENCE

The Council, having been informed that the Revd Dr Martyn Atkins wished to leave the post of Secretary of the Conference and General Secretary in 2015, agreed the nomination process for the next Secretary of the Conference.

The Secretary of the Conference and General Secretary is appointed as if holding office under the provisions of SO 313; that is, when there is a vacancy, the Council is required to bring a nomination to the Conference accompanied by a reasoned statement indicating the qualifications of the person nominated. In the case of all nominations made under SO 313 the Council is required to complete its work as early in the connexional year as possible (SO 313(6)). In the first instance the nomination will be for a specified period not exceeding six years.

The Council appointed a Nomination Panel as follows:

The President or a recent Past President:

The Vice-President or a recent past Vice-President:

Two Chairs of District:

The Revd Alison Tomlin

Dr Daleep Mukarji

(who shall Chair the panel)

The Revds Stephen J Burgess and

	Jennifer A Hurd
The Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee:	Professor Peter Howdle
A Connexional Treasurer:	Mr Andrew Gibbs
A representative of the Faith and Order Committee:	The Revd Dr Martin Wellings
A representative of the Law and Polity Committee:	Mr David S Walton
A representative of the Methodist Diaconal Order:	Deacon Susan Culver
The Chair or a member of the Conference Business Committee (Representative Session):	Mrs Ruth Pickles
A person from the Children and Youth community:	Ms Rebecca Belshaw
A Superintendent Minister:	The Revd Kathryn Stephens
A member of the Methodist Council:	Mr Sandy Laurie
A Circuit Steward:	Ms Janet Arthur
A Synod Secretary:	The Revd Carolyn Seaton

It was agreed that the panel could be joined by an adviser each from the Church of England and the United Reformed Church.

The panel was directed to undertake the following tasks:

- a) Prepare the job description based on the decisions of the Conference in respect of the nature of the post.
- b) Determine the nature of the discernment process, means of recruitment and method of selection by which a nomination will be made and to consider the various ways of undertaking this task.
- c) Determine the timetable for advertisement, short listing, and interview in such a way as to endeavour to bring a nomination to the Council in October 2014.

The panel is meeting after the Conference and so is not yet in a position to report.

*****RESOLUTION**

32/17. The Conference received the Report.

Update Report: Larger than Circuit

The 2013 Conference appointed the Revd Loraine N Mellor as convener of the Larger than Circuit Working Party, and appointed the Revd Paul Wood as convener of the group charged with reviewing the role of the District Chair. On 1 September 2014, the Revd Paul Wood will become a member of the Connexional Team. The Conference is asked to note, therefore, that the Revd Loraine Mellor will become the convener of both groups. This will enable both groups to continue to work together closely.

*****RESOLUTION**

C/1. The Conference received the Report.