

## Aspinall Robinson Trust and oversight of other funds held for the benefit of the Methodist Diaconal Order (MDO)

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<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Action Required</b>	Decision
<b>Draft Resolutions</b>	See Report
<b>Alternative Options to Consider, if Any</b>	N/a

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	The Council is asked to resolve to apply to the Charity Commission for the purposes of the Aspinall Robinson Trust to be widened and for oversight of some MDO funds to be delegated to the Connexional Allowances Committee (CAC).
<b>Main Points</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The balance of the Aspinall Robinson Trust continues to rise as the existing purposes no longer match the context of the MDO.</li> <li>• Permission is required from the Charity Commission to alter this.</li> <li>• Oversight of this and another Benevolent Fund will pass to the CAC to be used alongside the funds already delegated to it.</li> </ul>
<b>Background Context and Relevant Documents</b>	This work originated in the MDO review.
<b>Consultations</b>	MDO Leadership Group Chair of CAC Charity Commission

### Summary of Impact

<b>Financial</b>	Will enable more effective use of connexionally-held funds for the MDO
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## Aspinall Robinson Trust ('the Trust')

1. The MDO Leadership Group met on 7 September 2015 and considered a paper on funds held at TMCP. This included some draft new purposes for the Trust that had been adapted from the purposes of two existing funds which are under the control of the Connexional Allowances Committee (CAC). (The Methodist Medical Benevolent Fund and the FSPD - Fund for the Support of Presbyters and Deacons - see SO 364).
2. The Leadership Group reminded themselves that the origins of the Trust date back to the bequest of a house in Worthing in 1947 from Sister Mabel Robinson to the Wesley Deaconess Order which was used as a home for holidays and recuperation. The fund is currently restricted to the following purpose: 'Recuperative holidays for Deaconesses and other Methodist lady workers'. The narrowness of this restriction means that very little is spent each year, so the balance of the fund is steadily growing.
3. It is recognised that significant changes have occurred in the constitution of the Diaconal Order.
4. In 1993 the Methodist Conference agreed that the Order was both a religious order and an order of ministry. This meant that deacons could no longer be treated as lay people. As a consequence of these changes it has become difficult to apply the terms of the bequest.
5. Having received advice from the Charity Commission, the MDO Leadership Group agreed that it would recommend to the Methodist Council (the managing trustee body for all of these funds) that it should apply to the Charity Commission for the purpose of the Trust to be widened as follows (this is based on the purposes of the Fund for the Support of Presbyters and Deacons as defined in SO 364(1)):
6. In future the fund shall ....

.... provide financial assistance at the discretion of the Council or of any committee or officer to whom it may delegate its powers in this behalf, to:

- a) supernumerary deacons and deacons who have been permitted or directed to become supernumerary;
- b) deacons in the active work or without appointment, probationer deacons and student deacons;

wherever they may be experiencing:

- a) acute financial need;
- b) need as a result of illness or impairment or the illness or impairment of any member of their immediate household, for the purpose of enabling them to continue in or resume the active work or to complete probation and enter the active work or to continue their ministerial formation and training;

and also:

- c) To give financial assistance to Deacons suffering from stress and exhaustion to enable them to pay for appropriate recuperative treatment to facilitate recovery.
- d) To fund an initial private medical consultation, if it is not available at an early date through the NHS.
- e) To offer an annual grant towards recuperative breaks.

Details of all applications to or use of the fund are to be shared with the Warden of the Diaconal Order. Any grants over a threshold (to be agreed between the CAC Chair and MDO Leadership Group) should include approval by the Warden.

**7. Other Funds under the managing trusteeship of the Methodist Council**

The group also received again the following note on other Funds that relate to the MDO: At a meeting held in March 2015 (present: Deacon Sue Culver, Deacon Ian Murray, the Revd Richard Andrew, Ms Maureen Sebanakitta and Mr Nick Moore) support was indicated for the MDO Leadership Group's intention that subject to a widening of purposes of the Mabel Robinson Trust, the following actions would be pursued:

**7.1 Benevolent Fund Deaconesses (Fund Code 851):**

This fund to be placed under the oversight of the Connexional Allowances Committee.

**7.2 MDO Surplus Funds (Fund Code 720):**

This fund to be used to support the life of the MDO as a Religious Order, and would be overseen by the MDO LG.

**7.3 Anticipated New Fund with proceeds of sale of MDO Centre (c£580k):**

This fund to be used to support the life of the MDO as a Religious Order, and would be overseen by the Leadership Group.

8. The Chair of the CAC has indicated the committee's willingness to take oversight of the two funds proposed above, noting that the MDO is represented by a Deacon (currently Ian Murray) within its constituted membership. It will seek input from the MDO Warden as required when considering applications from members of the MDO.

**\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**74/1. The Council resolves that an application be made to the Charity Commission that the purposes of the Aspinall Robinson Trust be widened as per the wording shown in paragraph 6.**

**74/2. The Council resolves that oversight of the Trust be delegated to the Connexional Allowances Committee.**

**74/3. The Council resolves that oversight of the Benevolent Fund Deaconesses (Fund Code 851) be delegated to the Connexional Allowances Committee.**

**74/4. The Council resolves that oversight of the MDO Surplus Funds (Fund Code 720) be delegated to the Methodist Diaconal Order Leadership Group.**

**74/5. The Council resolves that oversight of the fund created with the proceeds of sale of the MDO Centre be delegated to the Methodist Diaconal Order Leadership Group.**