

Methodist Heritage Committee Annual Report

Contact Name and Details	Sarah Friswell, Chair of the Heritage Committee, T: 01284 748726
Status of Paper	Final
Action Required	Decision
Resolutions	<p>40/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>40/2. The Council;</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">A) approves the proposals of the Methodist Heritage Committee in relation to a connexional policy on managing Methodist historic artifacts as laid out in Appendix 2</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">B) delegates to the Heritage Committee responsibility for finalising guidance documents to support the implementation of the policy.</p> <p>40/3. The Council requests that the Law and Polity Committee draft any necessary changes to standing orders that may be required to implement the Collections Management Policy.</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	The Methodist Heritage Committee's Three-year Development Strategy 2011–14 will conclude in August. This paper presents its key achievements and brings outline proposals for the next five years. In particular this paper brings to the attention of the Council the Committee's work on developing a policy and guidance for managing artifacts, which will require related changes to standing orders.
Main Points	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activities and achievements in delivering the Three-Year Development Strategy. 2. A proposal for strategic direction for the next five years. 3. The need and proposals for a Connexional Collections Management Policy, to be supported by a (volunteer) Methodist Collections Advisor.
Background Context	<p>MC/11/12 Report of the Methodist Heritage Committee</p> <p>Sets out the 2011–14 Development Strategy and Funding Plan</p>
Consultations	Methodist museum curator/managers; the Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives, District and Circuit Archivists; a number of collectors of Methodist memorabilia; Connexional Conservation Officer.

Summary of Impact – Collections Management Policy proposals

Standing Orders	To be referred to Law and Polity Committee
Financial	Historic assets may be lost to the Church: objects of missional, cultural and/or financial significance.
Legal	May be issues of ownership of artifacts to resolve.
Wider Connexional	Confirmed: This policy affects museums and local churches.
Risk	Historic assets may potentially be lost to the Church: objects of missional, cultural and/or financial significance.

Methodist Heritage Committee Annual Report

Achievements of the three-year development strategy 2011–14 and Historic Artifacts Collections Management Policy proposals

It is the vision of the Methodist Heritage Committee that 'Methodist Heritage' will become a recognised brand name of the Methodist Church, synonymous with a warm, Christian welcome and excellence in interpretation, collection management (including of its historic buildings, artifacts and archives) and in scholarship in the Church's history.

For the local church, the heritage assets of Methodism should support the members' understanding of their Methodist identity and be a recognized tool for engagement and discipleship among their own community and outreach to their neighbours.

Methodist Heritage Committee's 3-year Development Strategy: Vision statement, June 2011

1. Background

- 1.1. In 2008 the Methodist Conference report 'Methodist Heritage & Contemporary Mission' set out a rationale and framework for ensuring the future of four 'named' heritage properties¹ of importance to the Methodist Church. Within two years, the remit of the resulting Heritage Committee and its Officer had been widened, primarily to incorporate archiving.
- 1.2. The Committee's first three-year development strategy 2011–14 was approved by the Methodist Council and endorsed by the 2011 Conference. This approach has delivered improved stability for the four named or 'key' sites and the beginning of significant developments to enable them to fulfill the mission potential envisaged in 2008.
- 1.3. The Committee has begun a programme of work to improve the Methodist Church's care and increase access to Connexional archives, in the course of which the Committee has recognised that there is far less policy direction or 'grassroots' guidance on church artifacts.
- 1.4. The Heritage Committee is charged under SO 337 (1)(ii) and (iv), and 936 to oversee all Methodist archives and other historical materials and to advise managing trustees and others responsible for such material. These standing orders relate to the identification and management of our collections of historic artifacts of significance (also known in the sector, Europe-wide, as 'moveable religious heritage').
- 1.5. The management of historic artifacts is an increasingly difficult issue as chapels close and amalgamate and managing trustees are faced with complex and emotive decisions on retaining or disposing of the furnishings, fittings and objects belonging to former congregations. District and Circuit Archivists are called upon to help, but are not generally experts in such items and have little Church direction to fall back on.

¹ The four main sites are: The Old Rectory, Epworth(EOR) – childhood home of John Wesley and of his family until his father's death in 1735; The New Room / John Wesley's Chapel, Bristol (NRB) – the first-ever purpose-built Methodist building; John Wesley's House & Museum of Methodism at Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London (JW's Hse & Mus) – John Wesley's home for more than a decade at the end of his life; Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum (EB) – explores the life, faith and influence of Primitive Methodists. All four are nationally 'accredited' museums. The Wesleyan properties are all Grade I listed buildings. The Primitive Methodist chapel & museum is Grade II listed.

1.6. As in all its work, the Heritage Committee is anxious to encourage local churches to use those objects which are retained for mission; be that on their own premises or by placing them in the context of other collections (such as Methodist or local museums), where they can be accessed and shed light on the development of the movement and the discipleship message of Methodism.

2. Strategy from 2011

2.1. The Heritage Committee's six strategic priorities for 2011–14, and the successful achievements of this strategy are summarised at Appendix 1.

2.2. The delivery of this strategy has been supported by the central services budget for the Heritage officer's salary and the Committee's costs (including an annual payment to the University of Manchester Library for enhanced services on the Connexional archives)². It has also been underpinned by 'core' funding for the four 'named' or main heritage sites in the form of annual grants equivalent to the salary of the site's manager/curator. This manager is the site trustees' key, and in most cases only, full-time, paid employee. The Methodist Council recommended that at least five years of funding should be provided. Three-year grants were awarded by the Connexional Grants Committee for 2011/12 – 13/14. Two further years of funds were awarded in November 2013 for 2014/15 and 2015/16.³

2.3. As envisaged in 2011, with this 'core' support in place, all four heritage sites are now developing major improvement schemes, albeit with very different third-party financial backers and scales of operation. New displays and interpretation at the Museum of Methodism are telling the Methodist story more effectively and engaging increasing audiences; while the 'Hearth Project' at Epworth Old Rectory has exposed the original rectory's fireplaces and is re-presenting and re-interpreting the home the Wesleys' knew. A new access scheme for disabled people, as well as improved catering, shop and study facilities, at Englesea Brook Museum are helping them to offer hospitality and the Gospel message to more diverse groups of visitors. While an ambitious plan to build an education centre is underway at the New Room. The sites are increasingly offering educational programmes for schools, study days for adults, and a wide range of activities and events that put their sites and the Christian message at the heart of their local communities.

2.4. Key sites' visitor numbers 2010–13

Site	2010	2011	2012	2013	NOTES on count
EB	<i>Count in Connexional years</i>	2,904	4,604	6,261	All onsite visitors and audiences at talks and events
EOR	4,623	4,667	5,449	4,942	All onsite visitors and audiences at EOR events, plus audiences at outreach events such as local shows and talks about EOR
JW's Hse &	9,650	11,552	11,910	13,643	All visitors to the Chapel and museum including groups, exc. those attending a service or entering

² A similar annual payment is made to the SOAS Library for work on the MMS collection, but this is funded from the World Mission Fund.

³ There is a proposal in the central services budget before this Council that these latter two-year grants are not awarded, but replaced by this 'core' funding becoming an annual budget item from the Connexional Priority Fund.

Mus					just to pray. NB Jan and Feb 2014 have been the busiest winter months ever.
NRB		25,567	24,120	24,000	Part of the reason for the downward trend is that NRB closed on a number of occasions to accommodate conferences, filming and other external events, with a positive effect on finance, it does mean that they are not able to welcome as many visitors!

3. What next? A proposal for the next five year

3.1. The Heritage Committee is now developing 'Heritage 2.0', the strategic direction for Methodist Heritage for the next five-year phase of development. Detailed delivery proposals will be brought to the Council in October 2014 following further consultation and will take into account of the changes that the Church's support for its Heritage interests has created in the past six years.

3.2. Proposed strategic outcomes

3.2.1. Reflecting its dual tasks of the preservation of Methodism's heritage, and its use for mission, it is proposed that the Heritage Committee's next strategy be structured to deliver three outcomes:

3.2.1.1. Improved conservation – encouraging the Church to value, engage with, and take responsibility for, its heritage, particularly at the local level, and to use professional best practice to identify and care for what we have of value and keep it safe for future generations, with a focus on increased use and access (physical and virtual).

3.2.1.2. Transforming discipleship – ensuring we are presenting heritage resources (people and places, artifacts and archives) so the Church worldwide can learn about its history to deepen understanding of our unique identity, and appreciate the value of our heritage to our mission planning and engagement in God's mission, particularly evangelism; and to enable communities outside the Church to discover Methodism and the relevance of its Gospel message, and for faith to be nurtured.

3.2.1.3. Living a generous life – seeking to encourage and enable people to donate time and talent to Methodist Heritage; and exploit all opportunities (directly or indirectly) to generate income to support the work.

3.3. Proposed focus areas

3.3.1. This new strategy builds on the Committee's successes and focus areas to date, but seeks greater integration and local ownership of them – the effect of connexionalism on strategic thinking. Thus we propose to seek to deliver the three outcomes across three areas of work:

3.3.2. Heritage places – over time we hope to reduce the concentration on the four key sites and encourage all our historic places to offer more mutual support (eg on business development) as a network, with greater local 'ownership' of the value of Methodist heritage; embedding the MH brand and encouraging a connexional interpretation strategy.

- 3.3.3. Collections** – holistic thinking about our archives and artifacts (and buildings?) as a connexional collection to be shared, with increasing access, physically and online, particularly to support the Church as a learning organisation.
- 3.3.4. Communication & promotion** – continuing to support ‘internal’ communication among our networks and spreading best practice, encouraging Districts and Circuits to understand the value of their heritage to mission, and promoting Methodist heritage externally to the widest possible audiences beyond the Church, both ecumenically and in appropriate secular settings.

4. Collections Management Policy proposal

- 4.1.** The Methodist Heritage Committee is directed under SO 337 to oversee all Methodist ‘historical material’ and to advise managing trustees and others responsible for such material, and to ‘establish and maintain the list’ of artifacts, publications and records of historic significance to the Church, as provided for in SO 212 (11), and to monitor and report to the council on compliance with SO 212 (11) and SO 936.
- 4.2.** As the last major piece of work to be delivered under the umbrella of the 2011–14 strategy, the Heritage Committee wishes to address these duties by proposing a Connexional policy on the management of such object collections and to provide supporting guidance to help trustees and others to establish the ‘value’ of the objects in their care, for them and/or the wider community.
- 4.3.** A proposed policy statement is set out at Appendix 2. This policy takes into account the demands of the national museum accreditation scheme on our key sites, and the restrictions imposed as a result by their local statements of collection development and care.
- 4.4.** The lists of accessioned objects at the key sites / accredited museums are proposed as the core, but not total extent, of items to form the list provided for under SO 212 (11).
- 4.5.** As a first step towards creating and making accessible to the Church and wider public the list provided for under SO 212 (11), the industry-standard electronic museum cataloguing platform MODES was purchased in spring 2013 for each of the four key heritage sites/accredited museums and training arranged for their staff and volunteers. All four museum’s accession registers are being transferred to this platform. A user-friendly search portal will be commissioned to allow online searches of the resulting database from the Methodist Heritage website, mindful of the security of the collections so identified.
- 4.6.** The Heritage Committee has developed a draft ‘toolkit’ of guidance to support the implementation of the policy⁴. This recommends and guides all chapels and churches on how to make inventories, offers grids to help trustees to assess the significance of objects and decide what to do with them as a result, and gives outline advice and will signpost to other resources on how to make decisions on acquisition and disposal, conservation, display and interpretation of artifacts.

⁴ Copies of the draft guidance documents are available from the Methodist Heritage Officer: hibbardj@methodistchurch.org.uk The input and comments of any council members would be gratefully received.

- 4.7. Given the Council's support for the proposed collections management policy, the Heritage Committee requests the Council's approval to consider further, consult on and test the draft guidance documents, with a view to having them available alongside the policy.
- 4.8. The Heritage Committee wishes to encourage a connexional approach to moveable heritage. In particular objects are to be shared. To facilitate loans we propose that the requirement in Standing Orders to get approval from the Council for loans is removed.
- 4.9. Likewise, to facilitate efficient management of objects and make practical and timely use of the guidance, the Heritage Committee requests that the power to approve acquisitions and disposals be delegated to it. The Heritage Committee would report any decisions made under this delegation to the council.
- 4.10. In order to support the implementation of this policy and dissemination of best practice across the Connexion, the Committee proposes that a volunteer role for a 'liaison officer for Methodist collections' be devised, and appointed with the approval of the Council. This role would mirror that of the liaison officer for Methodist archives and collaborate with him/her, and be recognised as an expert advisor to the Church on Methodist moveable heritage and its management. This person would be a member of the Heritage Committee.

5. **Standing order changes**

- 5.1. This policy relates to or has implications for the content of SO 015 Archives; SO 212 (11) Methodist Council: particular functions; SO 337 Methodist Heritage; SO 943 Closure of Chapels; and SO 936 Historic Artifacts.
- 5.2. The guidance documents supporting this policy will allow the Connexional team to respond with practical advice to trustees' enquiries on the disposal of non-structural artifacts of historic significance in accordance with SO 943 Closure of Chapels.
- 5.3. Amendments to the existing standing orders may need to be drafted, where necessary to implement the policy.

*****RESOLUTIONS:**

- 40/1. **The Council receives the report.**
- 40/2. **The Council;**
 - A) **approves the draft policy on Methodist Church Historic Artifact Collections Management as laid out in Appendix 2**
 - B) **delegates to the Heritage Committee responsibility for finalising guidance documents to support the implementation of the policy.**
- 40/3. **The Council requests that the Law and Polity Committee draft any necessary changes to standing orders that may be required to implement the *Methodist Church Historic Artifact Collections Management Policy*.**

Appendix 1: Heritage Development Strategy 2011–14 – key areas of work & achievements

Key area	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
1. Key sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connexional ‘core’ funding for the operation of the main four heritage sites for 2011–14 has released capacity to engage in significant developments and mission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EB refitted museum with 650 hours of volunteer support; pioneered <i>My Methodist Ancestors</i> Connexional community archives online ➤ EOR major property maintenance backlog tackled; Susanna’s hearth excavated; improving disabled people’s access and seeking funds to reinterpret the house ➤ JW’s House redecorated and the Museum of Methodism refitted – supported by a ‘love gift’ of \$1m from Kwanglim South Korean MCh ➤ NRB planning to build extension in Horsefair Courtyard for educational facilities and programmes, hospitality and museum display – secured first round pass towards £2.3m from HLF, with £1.4m pledged from District. • Ongoing grant support awarded from Connexional Grants Committee for 2014–16. • Reports submitted to CGC give strategic context and offer support/raise concerns relating to ‘Heritage & Mission’ grant applications. • Sites’ Practitioners’ Forum – ‘termly’ meetings for site managers for networking and training. • Heritage Officer has attended c.75% of key sites’ management meetings to share Connexional developments and support flow of information. • Developing tour itineraries and contracts for delivery of tours; aims to deliver income to sites, Heritage central services budget and MH Fund. Group visits promoted at travel trade shows and in annual print and online directories. 28k circulation of <i>Methodist Heritage Handbook 2012/13</i> (vs. <700 of nearest similar guide in 2009). • Retail consultant engaged to audit shop offer and to advise on shared buying in 2012. Developing memorabilia lines using MH brand. 		
2. Connexional archives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renegotiated Deposit and Service Level agreements with UML (MARC @ John Rylands) and SOAS Library (MMS Special Collection). • Started adding sections to Methodist Heritage website to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ support access to UML, SOAS and County Record Office collections and manage public expectations of what is digitized and how it may be seen ○ advise on finding and depositing Connexional archive materials ○ support access to ‘Missionary History’ including starting work on a publicly accessible version of database of missionaries, oral history catalogue access and archive of History Project papers. • Increasing interest in family history: three community archives established (<i>My Methodist Ancestors</i> network) and published guide <i>A Methodist in the Family?</i> • Overseeing appropriate dispersal and deposit of historic collections from Wesley College, Bristol. • Surveyed historic materials remaining at MCH (e.g., MAYC archives) and advised on appropriate deposit elsewhere; intend to start work with SOAS on developing project to weed and transfer MMS records from basement store. • Liaised with Connexional Team Admin on management and deposit of modern records at MARC; also MWiB. 		
3. Regional hubs: heritage centres and historic chapels	<p>Provided support by site visits, attending meetings, email correspondence and letters and comment in support of grant applications for regional trails and historic chapels Connexion-wide. Particular focus on: Fletcher Memorial Church, Madeley; ‘Pennine Dales’ (NE) trail; ‘Railways & Religion’ trail, Cumbria; Tolpuddle Martyrs’ Chapel, Dorset; Wesley Cottage, Trewint, Cornwall; Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford; and in Wales, Brecon.</p>		

4. Policy development	a. Collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MODES software installed at key sites 2012/13; electronic catalogues being created from 2013, which will have a public access portal from the MH website. • Connexional Collections Policy proposed.
	b. Interpretation	Sites are being encouraged to adopt the MH brand and focus interpretation on geographically relevant aspects of the Methodist story, signposting on to other sites to fill in gaps and take up themes. Exemplified by new exterior signage at Wesley's Chapel and the emphasis in the 2013/14 museum refit there on reinterpretation on John Wesley's story and Methodism's growth in 18thC London.
	c. Capacity building	'Telling our Story' training developed with ESD 2012/13; pilot sessions being delivered and downloadable version of the resources to be prepared 2013/14.
5. Communication and collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Heritage Handbook</i> – 2nd edition published June 2012 – design improved; total circulation to spring 2014, 28k; 3rd edition of <i>Heritage Handbook</i> to be published around Easter 2014 – initial print run of 20k / expected 18-month requirement 30k. • <i>Heritage News</i> bi-annual newsletter in print (500 addresses >2.8k copies) and online (>2.3k addresses) • Methodist Archivists' Network Meeting – annual event established in 2011 for all Circuit and District archivists • First-ever Methodist Heritage Sites' Network residential conference, Cornwall 2013, <i>The World & the Parish</i> • Community archive network of three websites, <i>My Methodist Ancestors</i>, established 2012/13; launched to 14k family history enthusiasts at <i>Who Do You Think You Are? Live 2013</i> exhibition at London Olympia • 'Wesley & Well-being' display, featuring John Wesley's book <i>Primitive Physic</i> and linked to Olympic & Commonwealth Games themes, piloted 'touring' exhibitions in 2012 to promote collections; arranging Scottish tour of panels for 2014. 	
6. Engaging with the wider Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage Committee contributed to Fruitful Field consultations; and is now making links with D&M Learning Network with venues and visit destinations, for sources of resources and expertise, and to encourage scholarship. • Committee members and expert network offered support to Connexional Education Team in developing RE schemes of work. • Exhibition materials contributed to Connexional celebrations of Leeds District MMS 200th anniversary, October 2013 (and follow-up commemoration in Brecon, May 2014, of the death of the Revd Dr Thomas Coke). • Heritage Officer attended MCSA's Heritage Indaba in 2012, and UMC's General Commission on Archives & History in 2013. • Heritage Officer <i>ex officio</i> trustee of Churches Tourism Association; attends Historic Religious Buildings Alliance and All Party Parliamentary Group on Historic Churches; in close contact with British ecumenical and US UMC equivalents, and Places of Worship team of English Heritage; attended 2013 conference in Utrecht on 'Moveable Religious Heritage' of the Europe-wide association 'Future for Religious Heritage'. 	

Appendix 2 Proposed Methodist Church Historic Artifact Collections Management Policy

1. Overarching principles

- 1.1 The Methodist Church is committed to protecting, advocating and advancing the interests of Methodist Heritage throughout the Connexion, with a particular focus on the role of Methodist heritage as a tool for the contemporary mission aims of the Methodist Church.
- 1.2 This includes the responsible and effective management of historic artifact collections both inside and outside accredited Methodist museum collections where their heritage significance has a clear missional value.
- 1.3 This policy follows the framework set out in PAS 197:2009 Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management. See <http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/code-of-practice-for-cultural-collections-management/>
- 1.4 The policy is informed by the Church's Standing Orders 212 (11) (Methodist Church: Particular Functions), 337 (Methodist Heritage) and 936 (Historic Artifacts).
- 1.5 This policy also relates to the SO015 Archives and SO 943 Closure of Chapels.
- 1.6 This policy applies to artifacts and other historic materials that are model trust property and that the Methodist Council judges to be of historic significance to the Church.
- 1.7 Historic artifacts refers to objects (usually portable) that have been assessed to be of Methodist significance through their cultural and missional value at a site, community or Connexional level that are not either archives or structural features – examples would include crockery, furniture, paintings and Bibles.
- 1.8 The Methodist Church is committed to managing its artifacts in accordance with the Museums Association Code of Ethics. Accredited museums within the Methodist Church accredited under the UK Museums Standards Scheme will follow their accreditation compliant policies, plans and procedures for development, management and access to their collections.
- 1.9 The Methodist Church will observe due diligence to ensure that historic artifacts are acquired and disposed of legally and ethically.

2. Collections development

- 2.1 Accredited Museums will adhere to the terms of their Collections Development Policies in relation to acquisition and disposal from their collections.
- 2.2 Local Churches and other Methodist heritage sites should follow the connexional guidance documents when considering the acquisition or disposal of an historic artifact. Any potentially Connexionally significant acquisitions should be referred to the Heritage Committee for information and decision where necessary.
- 2.3 It is strongly recommended that the Church's guidance on assessing significance and taking appropriate action thereafter is used to help trustees and others to identify historic artifacts of site, local, and connexional, Methodist significance to inform appropriate management and care.

3. Collections Information

- 3.1 Maintaining accurate, secure and consistent information about historic artifacts is essential if they are to be cared for properly and used to their fullest potential.
- 3.2 Accredited Museums will adhere to the requirements of the Accreditation Scheme in relation to the maintenance of Spectrum primary procedures for the documentation of their collections.
- 3.3 The aim is for collections information across the museums to be shared through a publicly accessible, searchable database (using MODES software).
- 3.4 Local Churches that care for historic artifacts are encouraged to follow the Church's guidance to complete a simple inventory record for all the artifacts in their care, regardless of age or wider significance, but particularly for any items of historical value (see 2.3 above).

4. Collections Care and Conservation

- 4.1 A well informed and planned approach to caring for historic artifacts is fundamental to ensuring their long term preservation and potential for use.
- 4.2 Accredited museums will be responsible for maintaining and implementing 'Care and Conservation' policies, plans and procedures in line with the requirements of the Accreditation Scheme.
- 4.3 Churches and other Methodist heritage sites should follow the Church's guidance that signposts good practice ecumenically and across the heritage sector for the ongoing care of the types of historic artifacts they may have in their care, for example books, furniture, oil paintings, ceramics or precious metal and pewter ware.
- 4.4 The Methodist Heritage Committee should be consulted for advice when remedial conservation or restoration work is being considered for historic artifacts of Connexional significance.
- 4.5 It is strongly recommended that any remedial conservation work should be carried out by a conservator or conservation practice included on the Institute of Conservation (ICON) Register.

5. Using the Collections for Mission (Collections Access)

- 5.1 Promoting access to Methodist historic artifacts through, for example, display, research and loans, is part of their core purpose for the Church and is central to them being used to tell the stories of Methodist heritage and to realize their missional value.
- 5.2 The expectation is for the Methodist Church's historic artifact collections to be used in a dynamic and proactive way across its network of museums, churches, heritage sites and with partners to ensure that the unified story of the Methodist movement from the 1720s to the present day is interpreted for the widest possible audience.
- 5.3 The Methodist Church is committed to facilitating the widest possible access to collections information using digital portals as appropriate, for example through MODES on www.methodistheritage.org.uk or via posts on www.mymethodisthistory.org.
- 5.4 Guidance on loans, display, interpretation and digital access, will be developed and promoted to the Connexion in accordance with sector best practice.