**CANDIDATING FOR ORDAINED MINISTRY**

**DISTRICT CANDIDATES’ COMMITTEE**

**D.6 BRIEFING NOTES FOR MEMBERS OF THE DISTRICT CANDIDATES’ COMMITTEE**

1. **INTRODUCTION**
	1. Thank you for agreeing to act as a member of your District Candidates’ Committee. The work you do is a vital and significant part of the Candidating process, and the committee’s collective judgement will be shared with the Connexional Candidates’ Committee.
	2. You are asked to operate with three small groups each discerning responses to two of the criteria. The remaining three criteria are discerned by the full committee.
	3. You are encouraged to run a training and preparation session with your committee members in advance of the Committee.
	4. Feedback on any aspect of the process is always welcome. Please email candidates@methodistchurch.org.uk.
2. **GRADING SYSTEM**

All aspects of the process use the following grading system:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 Exceeds the criteria | 2 Meets the criteria | 3 Does not yet meet the criteria | 4 Does not meet the criteria |

Grade 3 indicates that there is potential for the candidate to develop in this area.

Note that portfolios graded 3 or 4 are deemed to be unsatisfactory. Grade 3 is likely to be given because of a technical matter such as exceeding the word count, though there may also be other reasons for this grade to be given.

1. **STUCTURE OF THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE’S WORK**
	1. Standing Order 451 states that the committee shall consist of:
		* Chair
		* Secretary
		* Not less than 10 or more than 13 members of whom not less than 5 will be lay, not less than 3 will be presbyters, and at least one a deacon.

It is important that your Committee falls within these parameters. If there is a reason why your committee might not be of the required size, it is important that you email the candidates’ office as soon as possible to discuss this.

* 1. Your committee is asked to divide into three small groups of between 2 and 4 members of the group. Each small group considers specific criteria (see sample questions later in this document):
		+ Small Group A – criteria 3 and 4
		+ Small Group B – criteria 5 and 6
		+ Small Group C – criteria 7 and 8
	2. The other members of the committee:
		+ In advance : Your DCC may choose to identify some members to focus particularly on the portfolio, the set book (Frances Ward, *Like There’s No Tomorrow: Climate Crisis, Eco-Anxiety and God*) and the creative presentation.
		+ At DCC: When the small groups are meeting, these members review all the paperwork together, plan the meeting of the full committee, and identify questions on the remaining three criteria: 9, 1, 2.
	3. Supporters
		+ Candidates may be accompanied by
			- the Superintendent of the Circuit that is sending forward the candidate or the presbyter who has pastoral charge of the candidate; and
			- A person who has been significantly involved in the candidate’s process of vocational discernment.
		+ These supporters have the right to attend and witness the deliberations of the full committee concerning the candidate and to speak when the candidate is under consideration, but not to vote. They do not attend the small group interviews but may attend the full committee. Usual practice is that the superintendent or presbyter in pastoral charge stays when the candidate has left the full committee in order for the committee to hear if they have seen an accurate presentation of the candidate. The superintendent or presbyter then leaves the committee.
		+ The District committee usually appoints one or more chaplains who remain with the candidates while they are waiting for their various interviews, and lead prayers with the committee and candidates. The chaplains are not present in any of the interviews, but offer a confidential listening ear to the candidates.
	4. Timing. Each District can structure their work in the way they find most effective. Possible timetable:
		+ The Full Committee meets all candidates with chaplain(s) for prayers.
		+ Each Candidate makes their creative presentation to the Full Committee.
		+ Each Candidate meets each small group in rotation. Each small group interview is 20 minutes, with the group then having about 10 minutes to agree and write their report.
		+ The Full Committee hears from each Small Group and finalizes their questions.
		+ Each Candidate is interviewed by the Full Committee with their supporters present.
		+ The superintendent or presbyter in pastoral charge remains for a few moments after the candidate has left and can be asked if the committee have seen an accurate presentation of the candidate. They leave, having answered that question.
		+ Committee decision.
		+ Chair communicates the decision to each Candidate in the presence of those who are supporting them and the chaplains.
	5. The DCC is asked to explore with candidates the extent to which they meet the criteria. If it is judged that they do not meet the criteria, the Committee are asked to note any actions that they can take to meet the criteria at another stage in the process. A grade is asked for each sub-criteria with an overall grade for each of the nine criteria.
	6. Please consider that a candidate who scores 3 in almost every section is probably a grade 4 overall.
	7. Voting. If you are a member of the DCC, you are asked to make a decision on each candidate. There should be no need to abstain. Neutral votes are counted in the percentages which are significant later in the process, and therefore they can have an impact that may not be realized at the point the vote is taken. The reasons why people have felt the need to abstain in the past include:
		+ They have already voted on the candidate. However there is no rule preventing anyone from voting on a candidate more than once at any stage of the process. If a DCC member wishes only to vote once, they are asked to do this at DCC, which may mean they do not vote at their circuit meeting.
		+ They know the candidate. However, if there is a conflict of interest with a particular candidate, then that member of the DCC should not be present at any stage of that candidate’s interview and therefore they will not be recorded as present in the final voting. If your relationship with the candidate is not close enough to warrant a conflict of interest, there is no need to abstain from voting.
		+ They cannot decide. It is part of the discipline of the DCC that all members come to an informed decision. With the amount of information before the DCC, it should always be possible to reach a decision.
	8. In small group preparation:
		+ Consider the evidence in the candidates’ paperwork relating to each criteria being considered by the small group.
		+ With small group members, decide on the roles that each person will primarily play (questioner / recorder / time keeper).





* + - Consider the layout of the room where you will meet the candidates, how you will make introductions, and the place of prayer in your small group.
		- Determine specific lines of questioning / questions, giving particular attention to questions relating to areas for further exploration that fall within the remit of the small group.
		- If there is plenty of evidence from the written material, indicate this to the candidate and maybe ask only one question.
		- Please complete the forms as fully as you can because this material will be used later in the process.
		- If you hand-write the forms, please either type them up later or make sure they are legible so that the District Candidates’ Secretary can type them later.
	1. In the Full Committee
		+ Make sure the Committee receives the summary from the Small Groups and identify where there are areas to follow up.
		+ Decide on the roles that each person will primarily play (questioner / recorder / time keeper). These can change for different questions.
		+ Determine specific questions, to attend both to any issues that the small group conversations have raised, and to the three criteria being addressed at the Full Committee.
		+ Identify one person to respond to the presentation and to ask the opening question.
	2. Reports. The DCC secretary types the reports, asks the candidate to read them and add their own comments if they wish to make any, and then submits the forms to the candidates’ office by the deadline date.
1. **SAMPLE QUESTIONS**
	1. **SMALL GROUP A**

**Criteria 3 Relationship with God**

* + - How do you address God when you pray? Can you explain why?
		- What really excites you about God?
		- When do you feel closest/most distant from God?
		- What difference does it make to your experience of worship when you are leading rather than participating?
		- What feeds your spiritual life?

**Criteria 4 Personality and Character**

* + - Can you give an example of something you have done well, and something which was not successful?
		- How did you feel?
		- What did you learn?
		- What strategies would you put in place to maintain balance and quality in your life?
	1. **SMALL GROUP B**

**Criteria 5 Being in Relationship with Others**

* + - In ministry you will encounter a wide variety of people. How well do you generally get on with people? Whom do you find most difficult?
		- What does it mean to love your congregation?
		- What is the difference between being a minister and a friend to members of a congregation?
		- If a member of your congregation holds theological/social views diametrically opposed to your own, how would you be an effective minister to them?

**Criteria 6 The Church’s Ministry in God’s World**

* + - Please give an example of mission/evangelism that you have experienced?
		- How were you involved in the above, and what did it teach you?
		- Please share your views about [a contemporary news topic]?
		- What opportunities have you had to engage with people of other faiths? How has this impacted on your understanding of the Gospel?
		- How can the church make life better for people on the margins of society?
		- How have/could you be a voice for change in an inward-looking circuit?

* 1. **SMALL GROUP C**

**Criteria 7 Leadership and Collaboration**

* + - In observing ministers at work, how would you describe the leadership styles you have seen?
		- What is your understanding of the role of lay persons in Methodism? What does ‘lay ministry’ mean?
		- Identify some ‘lay leadership’ models in Methodism.
		- What do you understand about ‘being under discipline’?
		- Give an example of when you have worked as part of a team. What did your enjoy about it? Were you able to inspire or enable others?
		- What have you done which could be described as ‘creative’?
		- How would you describe your style of leadership?

**Criteria 8 Learning and Understanding**

* + - You learned a lot when training to become a local preacher / worship leader [as appropriate]. What did you learn theologically?
		- What excites you about study and learning?
		- What television programmes do you enjoy watching? [After this answer] What do you learn about God from them?
		- Can you give an example of an issue on which you have changed your mind? What influenced the change?
		- ‘Theology isn’t important, it’s what the church *does* that matters’. How would you respond to such a statement?
	1. **FULL COMMITTEE**

**Criteria 9 Communication**

* + - What is God doing in your life at the moment?
		- If you were doing this presentation to a different group (e.g. young people, work colleagues) how would you adapt it?
		- What methods of communication do you find most comfortable or effective?

NOTE : you will be able to assess these sub-criteria through the candidate’s paperwork and the whole of your time with them in DCC.

**Criteria 1 Vocation (Call and Commitment)**

* + - What have other people said about your sense of call to ordained ministry?
		- How do you feel about the idea that the Methodist Church can choose to station you anywhere in the country?
		- What elements of ordained ministry do you think will be most demanding of you?
		- What sacrifices do you see for yourself and your family in ordained ministry?
		- Can you offer three words which indicate your potential strengths for ministry?
		- What weaknesses do you feel you have which might be addressed in training?
		- What does it mean to be a representative of the Church? Can you give an example?
		- What changes have taken place in your inner life since you started candidating?
		- How do you express your sense of call to ordained ministry?
		- (For diaconal candidates) What does it mean to you to be a member of a religious order?

**Criteria 2 Vocation (Ministry in the Methodist Church in Britain)**

* + - How is the British Methodist Church structured?
		- What is the purpose of the Methodist Church?
		- What makes Methodism different from other denominations?
		- What do you see as the strengths of the Methodist Church?
		- Can you tell us about a project/initiative you have engaged in in the Methodist Church?
		- What frustrates/excites you about the Methodist Church?
		- Why do you think the Methodist Church has two orders of ordained ministry?
		- What do you think ‘diversity’ means in the life of the Methodist Church?
		- What challenges would you anticipate facing within the diversity of the Methodist Church?