

Minutes

Minutes of a meeting of the Methodist Council held online 19-20 October 2023

- Present:** The President, the Vice-President and 42 voting members as follows:
Joanne Anderton, the Revd Richard M Andrew, Marianne Barrett Rogers, the Revd Moira Biggins, Mark Braithwaite, the Revd Helen D Cameron, the Revd Deborah L Caulk, the Revd Steven R M Cooper, the Revd Joanne Cox-Darling, the Revd Simon C Edwards, the Revd Ann Fox, the Revd Jennifer M Gill, Carolyn Godfrey, Doug Godfrey-Swanney, Peter Gregson, Matthew Hays, the Revd Sonia M Hicks (Chair), Bet Holmes, Carolyn Hothersall, the Revd Stephen Ingrouille, the Revd Jonathan R Hustler, David James, the Revd Marie-Anne Kent, Joseph Lambert, David Matthews, Val Mayers, Deacon Karen McBride (except items 23.4.13-23.4.19), Keith Norman, the Revd Charity Nzegwu, Hellen Okello, the Revd Romeo R Pedro, Sheila Pollard, Bridget Quint, the Revd Calvin T Samuel, the Revd Luke G S Smith (except items 23.4.13-23.4.19), Sandie Smith, the Revd Rebekah Stennett, the Revd Howard J Stringer (except items 23.4.14-23.4.19), Jenny Taylor, the Revd Marcus Torchon (except items 23.4.6-23.4.10), Elizabeth Ward, the Revd Michaela A Youngson.
- Apologies:** Stephen Arnold, Anne Bolton, Gill Dascombe, Eleanor Dixon, the Revd Helen R Kirk, Daleep Mukarji, the Revd S Mark Slaney, the Revd Graham Thompson.
- Substitutes:** Anna Malnutt (in place of Gill Dascombe), the Revd Andrew Lunn (in place of Helen Kirk), the Revd Jongikaya Zihle (in place of Mark Slaney).
- Observers:** The Revd Philip Brooks (the United Reformed Church), the Revd Mark Rowland (Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee), Richard Armiger (Head of Ministries and Learning), Jude Levermore (Head of Mission), Matthew Tattersall (Executive Director of Finance and Resources), Jillian Moody (Director of Communications), Tom Hart (Youth President), Laura Kent (Legal Counsel) for items 23.4.6 and 23.4.7.
- In attendance:** Jane Bates (Minutes), Sharon Hassanali (Administration)
- Letters:** The Council sent a letter of condolence and concern to Samar Hashweh at the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem.

The Secretary of the Conference clarified the understanding of confidentiality in respect of the Council's papers, confirming that those papers which are not on the website are to be understood as being confidential. For this meeting (as well as any papers for the closed session), that applied to MC/23/64, MC/23/69 and MC/23/72.

23.4.1 Minutes

The Council approved the minutes of the meetings held on 25-27 March 2023 and 11 May 2023 as a correct record of those meetings.

23.4.2 Matters arising [MC/23/62]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/23/62. Further to minute 23.3.2 of the May 2023 meeting of the Council, he reported that the Manchester and Stockport District Synod voted in favour of joining with the new North West England District at its Synod held on 28 September. 'Light touch' consultations are now underway with the other Synods in the North West as agreed by the May 2023 meeting of the Council.

62/1. The Council received the report.

23.4.3 Decisions made and actions taken since the last meeting of the Council [MC/23/63]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/23/63, noting the additions to the report which had been circulated via the Additions and Corrections sheet.

63/1. The Council received the report and ratified the actions reported.

23.4.4 Report of the Strategy and Resources Committee (SRC) [MC/23/64]

In the absence of the Chair of the SRC, David Matthews presented MC/23/64.

64/1. The Council received the report.

64/2. The Council recommended to the Conference that the role of Connexional Treasurer be removed, and directed the Law and Polity Committee to bring the necessary amendments to Standing Orders to effect that change.

23.4.5 Connexional Team update [MC/23/65]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/23/65.

Additionally, he reported that the issues with Camden Council have now been resolved in respect of the building work at 25 Tavistock Place so that greater progress can now be made.

65/1. The Council received the report.

The Head of Mission provided the Council with an update on the Methodist Liaison Office in Jerusalem in the light of the present situation in Israel/Palestine. In particular, the Council was informed that the Coordinator of the Methodist Liaison Office, the Revd David Hardman, has arrived safely back in the UK along with other expatriate staff and critical incident debriefing protocols are in place. The prayers of the Council were asked for the Palestinian staff member who remains in the West Bank and her family.

23.4.6 Medical Committee [MC/23/66]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/23/66.

The Council considered the issues raised by this and paper MC/23/67 in smaller groups and provided feedback which will inform the next stages of this work including work on the SO amendments.

66/1. The Council received the report.

66/2. The Council recommended to the Conference that the Medical Committee of the Methodist Council should be disbanded, and asked the Law and Polity Committee to advise on and prepare the Standing Order amendments needed to effect this change.

23.4.7 Candidates Health Policy [MC/23/67]

The Assistant Secretary of the Conference presented MC/23/67.

67/1. The Council received the report.

67/2. The Council adopted the Candidates Health Policy as set out in the report.

23.4.8 Special Resolution – consultation with the Council [MC/23/68]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/23/68.

68/1. The Council received the report.

68/2. In accordance with Standing Order 126(1)(c), the Council approved Special Resolution 42/5 of the 2023 Conference to amend Model Trust 26 by deleting the definition of ‘memorandum of consent’ in sub-paragraph (1) and deleting sub-paragraphs (3) and (4).

68/3. In accordance with Standing Order 126(1)(c), the Council approved Special Resolution 57/5 of the 2023 Conference to amend the Model Trusts in relation to the new Connexional Council as set out in this report.

68/4. The Council noted that the consultation for Special Resolution 35/7 of the 2023 Conference (to amend the Deed of Union in relation to the membership of the Conference) will be undertaken by the Law and Polity Committee rather than the Council, in accordance with Standing Order 126(1)(c).

23.4.9 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

23.4.10 District Safeguarding Officers - employment [MC/23/69]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/23/69.

69/1. The Council received the report.

69/2. The Council directed the Strategy and Resources Committee in consultation with the Safeguarding Committee to produce a draft scheme to replace the current model of DSO

employment with a unified connexional safeguarding function as part of the Connexional Team, this scheme to operate with sufficient flexibility to make allowance for significant differences such as the Scottish PVG (criminal records) legislation, the ecumenical safeguarding arrangements on the Isle of Man, and requirements of other legal jurisdictions and to report to the Council in April with firm proposals.

23.4.11 Report from the Safeguarding Committee [MC/23/70]

The Chair of the Safeguarding Committee, Judith Davey-Cole, was welcomed to the meeting to present MC/23/70. The Council noted the addendum to the report, which was circulated on the Additions and Corrections sheet.

70/1. The Council received the report.

70/2. The Council directed the Secretary of the Conference to prepare a policy regarding the processes for the election of the President and Vice-President of the Conference, and to bring this to the Council in April 2024.

23.4.12 Districts in the West Midlands [MC/23/71]

The Chair of the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District, the Revd Rachel Parkinson, was welcomed to the meeting to present MC/23/71.

71/1. The Council received the report.

71/2. The Council noted the proposed amalgamation of the Birmingham District and the Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury District to form a single District from 1 September 2025, and, in accordance with Standing Order 401, directed that a formal consultation with the Circuit Meetings and Synods of the participating Districts take place by the end of the spring Representative Synods, to enable the Council to consider submitting a proposal to the Conference of 2024.

23.4.13 Pensions [MC/23/72]

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources presented MC/23/72, which the Council discussed in small groups. The feedback provided from the groups will be addressed when formal proposals are brought back to the Council.

72/1. The Council receive the report.

23.4.14 Authorisations and Delegations [MC/23/73]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/23/73.

73/1. The Council received the report.

73/2. The Council approved the list of authorisations and delegations with effect from 20 October 2023.

73/3. The Council authorised any one or more of the Secretary of the Conference, the Chair of the Council and the Connexional Secretary to act as the appropriate connexional authority under SO 909 or as the appointed Team member under SO 331(1) in cases of emergency or where the nominated person(s) to whom a particular appointment, authority or delegation has been assigned is/are not available.

73/4. The Council authorised the Chair of the Council to appoint a group of between eight and twelve Council members, of whom any three may be called upon at any time to convene and consider applications made under Model Trust 20(1).

Those appointed are: Mrs Marianne Barrett Rogers, Mr Mark Braithwaite, the Revd Deborah L Caulk, the Revd Dr Simon C Edwards, the Revd Jennifer M Gill, Mr Peter Gregson, Mrs Carolyn Hothersall, Mr Joseph Lambert, Ms Sandie Smith, the Revd Rebekah Stennett, Mrs Jenny Taylor.

73/5. The Council delegated its powers under Standing Order 365(7) to the Secretary of the Conference, or in the Secretary's absence, the Assistant Secretary of the Conference.

73/6. The Council resolved that any of the following members of the Methodist Council be authorised to approve, sign and execute any document to which the Methodist Council is from time to time required to be a party with the intention that any document executed

under this authority will have the same effect as if executed by all of the members of the Methodist Council:

- a. The Chair of the Council*
- b. The Connexional Secretary*
- c. The Secretary of the Conference*

73/7. *The Council resolved that either of the following personnel be authorised to approve, sign and execute any document to which the Methodist Council is from time to time required to be a party in its capacity as employer of the members of the Connexional Team under Standing Order 212(12), with the intention that any document executed under this authority will have the same effect as if executed by all of the members of the Methodist Council:*

- a. The Connexional Secretary*
- b. The Director of HR in the Connexional Team*

73/8. *The Council confirmed that, for property transactions involving the members of the Council as managing trustees, where it is not practicable to convene an emergency meeting of the Council to pass specific resolutions conferring authority on named individuals to sign all documents necessary to effect the transaction, the general delegated authority in Resolution 73/6 may be relied upon in emergency and such action reported back to the Council for retrospective ratification at its next meeting.*

23.4.15 Nominations and appointments [MC/23/74]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/23/74, noting the additions and corrections circulated to the Council.

- 74/1.** *The Council appointed the committees, trustees, governors, management bodies and representatives as set out in the report.*
- 74/2.** *The Council co-opted the following members to the Committee for the Discernment of Ordained Vocation under the terms of Standing Order 320(2A): Paula Dawson, Richard Goldstraw, Julie Morton, Chris Sandy, Denise Tomlinson, Helen Webster and Jackie Wright.*
- 74/3.** *The Council adopted the nomination by Epworth Education Trust Trustees of Mr James Lockwood, Mr Luke Cowell and Mrs Lesley Brookbanks for a period of four years concluding 31 August 2028.*
- 74/4.** *The Council appointed a scrutiny group of Simon Edwards, Jenny Taylor, Rebekah Stennett to consider the responses received from the Circuits in the Birmingham and Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury Districts to the consultation under SO 401(2) and to ensure that the views of the Circuits are appropriately reflected in the proposals put to the District Synods and to present a summary report to the Council.*
- 74/5.** *The Council appointed a scrutiny group of Mark Braithwaite, Deborah Caulk, Carolyn Hothersall to consider the responses received from the Circuits in the Plymouth and Exeter and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Districts to the consultation under SO 401(2) and to ensure that the views of the Circuits are appropriately reflected in the proposals put to the District Synods and to present a summary report to the Council.*
- 74/6.** *Acting on behalf of the Conference, the Council appointed the Methodist Diaconal Order Support and Advisory Group: Ms Rachel J Lampard (chair), Ms Nancy Acquaah, Deacon Dawn Canham, the Revd Adrian Burdon, the Revd Catherine Gale, Deacon Claire Gill, Caroline Hutchings*

23.4.16 Southlands appointments [MC/23/75]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/23/75.

- 75/1.** *The Council received the report.*
- 75/2.** *The Council appointed the Southlands Liaison Group and the Southlands Methodist Trust as set out in the report.*

23.4.17 Update on Part 11 review [MC/23/76]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/23/76.

- 76/1.** *The Council received the report.*

23.4.18 Workplan and update on work from the Conference [MC/23/77]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/23/77, with the addendum printed on the Additions and Corrections sheet.

77/1. *The Council received the report.*

77/3. *The Council received the report and directed that those interviewing applicants for positions on connexional committees shall undertake training in interview methods.*

Resolution 77/2 was postponed while clarification was sought on the detail of that work.

23.4.19 Conference Scrutiny Committee [MC/23/78]

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources presented MC/23/78.

78/1. *The Council received the report.*

78/2. *The Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Conference Scrutiny Sub-Committee and directed the Law and Polity Committee to prepare the Standing Order amendments to give effect to it.*