

Minutes

Minutes of a meeting of the Methodist Council held on 25-26 January 2023 via video conferencing

- Present:** The President, the Vice-President and 45 voting members as follows:
Mrs Joanne M Anderton, the Revd Richard M Andrew, Mr Stephen Arnold, the Revd Karen Beecham, the Revd Paul H Booth, Mr Mark Braithwaite, the Revd Dr Adrian Burdon, Mr David Burton, the Revd Deborah L Caulk, the Revd Steven R M Cooper, Ms Eleanor Dixon (except for items 23.1.15-23.1.16 and 23.1.26-23.1.28), the Revd Simon C Edwards, the Revd Ruth G S Fry, Mr Peter Gregson, the Revd Jeremy H A Hackett, the Revd Sonia M Hicks (Chair), Ms Bet Holmes, the Revd Dr Jonathan R Hustler, the Revd Helen R Kirk, Mr Joseph Lambert, the Revd Angela Long, Mr Andrew Lowe, Professor David Matthews (except for items 23.1.10-23.1.16), Mrs Val Mayers, Deacon Karen McBride, Mr Alister McClure (until 23.1.16), Dr Daleep Mukarji, the Revd Gillian M Newton, Mr Keith Norman, Mrs Helen Norton, Dr Hellen Okello, Mrs Sheila Pollard, Miss Bridget Quint, the Revd Mark Roberts, the Revd Dr Calvin Samuel, Deacon Kerry Scarlett, the Revd S Mark Slaney, Ms Sandie Smith, the Revd Rebekah Stennett, the Revd Howard O Stringer, Mr Doug Swanney, the Revd Timothy A Swindell (from 23.1.17), Mrs Jenny Taylor, the Revd Dr Marcus Torchon, the Revd Michaela A Youngson
- Apologies:** The Revd Dr Joanne Cox-Darling, Ms Barbara Easton, Mr Carl Fairclough, the Revd Leslie Newton, the Revd Charity Nzegwu, Ms Verity Wild
- Substitute:** The Revd Delyth Liddell (in place of the Revd Charity Nzegwu)
- Observers:** Mr James Carver (Youth President), the Revd Philip Brooks (the United Reformed Church), the Revd Mark Rowland (Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee), Ms Jude Levermore (Head of Mission), Mr Matthew Tattersall (Director of Finance and Resources), the Revd Dr Andrew D Wood (Head of Ministries)
- In attendance:** Ms Jane Bates (Minutes), Ms Sharon Hassanali (Events Coordinator), Ms Jill Moody (Director of Communications), Ms Laura Kent (Legal Counsel)
- Letters:** The Council sent a letter of greeting and concern to the Revd Leslie Newton.

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, that applied to MC/23/1, MC/23/3, MC/23/4, MC/23/5, MC/23/8, MC/23/11, MC/23/12, MC/23/13, MC/23/17, MC/23/18.

23.1.1 Minutes

The Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17-18 October 2022 as a correct record.

23.1.2 Report from the SRC [MC/23/1]

The Chair of the SRC presented MC/23/1.

1/1. The Council received the report.

1/2. The Council received the report of the Property Development Committee.

1/3. The Council approved the draft terms of reference for the Resourcing Committee.

23.1.3 Report from the Connexional Team [MC/23/2]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/23/2, noting a correction to paragraph 3 as follows: for 'Alternative MWB Liturgies' read 'additional orders for Holy Communion'. It was reported that the move from 25 Marylebone Road to the temporary offices at Church House Westminster was almost complete.

Since the report was written, the Action for Hope implementation officer has been recruited and the post is funded externally.

2/1. The Council received the report.

23.1.4 Risk Management Update [MC/23/3]

The Connexional Secretary presented MC/23/3. A number of corrections were noted to the policy that had been circulated, and a revised version will be shared with the Council. A training video will be circulated to the Council, in fulfilment of paragraph 17 of the policy.

3/1. The Council received the report

3/2. The Council adopted the revised Risk Management Policy.

The Council reviewed and received the corporate risk register.

23.1.5 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

23.1.6 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

23.1.7 Proposed amalgamation of Districts [MC/23/6]

Peter Gregson, representative of the Cumbria District presented MC/23/6. The Revd Dr Sheryl Anderson, Chair of the Liverpool District, was present for this item and responded to the discussion.

6/1. The Council received the report.

6/2. The Council noted the proposed amalgamation of the Bolton and Rochdale, Cumbria, Lancashire, and Liverpool Districts to form a single District from 1 September 2024, 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 2023.

The Council agreed that resolution 6/3 should not be put to the vote. It noted that a scrutiny group of the Council will be appointed by the March meeting in order to review the feedback from the Circuit Meetings and the Synods.

23.1.8 141 Meadow Grove, Dublin [MC/23/7]

The Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice presented MC/23/7.

7/1. The Council received the report.

7/2. The Council approved the principle of selling 141 Meadow Grove, Dublin and authorises the Director of Property Support and the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice to progress the sale on the Council's behalf.

23.1.9 Confidential session

23.1.10 Warm spaces

The Head of Mission updated the Council on the provision of warm spaces and the Council discussed the following questions in small groups:

- How might we help Warm Welcome spaces move from the provision of a service to the development of community (even Christian community)?
- How do we build the voices of those with lived experience of poverty into the develop of the provision?
- What is the Methodist Church's role in preventing the need for Warm Welcome spaces next year?
- Have you found the connexional/ecumenical support helpful in the development of Warm Welcome spaces?

23.1.11 Safeguarding training [MC/23/10]

The Director of Safeguarding, Tim Carter, presented MC/23/10.

10/1. The Council received the report.

The Council noted that proposals will be brought to a future Council meeting regarding the responsibilities of the Safeguarding Committee and whether it should be enabled to sign off on policies such as this.

23.1.12 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

23.1.13 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

23.1.14 Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) report [MC/23/14]

The Revd Delyth Liddell, acting chair of the JDS Committee, presented MC/23/14.

14/1. The Council received the report.

The Secretary of the Conference reported that he is working with Janet Arthur (a member of the Strategy and Resources Committee) on the application of the Equality Impact Assessment to the work of the Connexional Team (minute 22.3.6 from October 2022 refers).

23.1.15 Nominations Committee [MC/23/25]

The Secretary of the Conference presented MC/23/25.

25/1. The Council received the report.

25/2. The Council authorised the Interim Nominations Committee (INC), should it feel it appropriate, to nominate one or more of its members to the Nominations Committee without their needing to be interviewed again.

25/3. The Council directed the INC to propose to the Conference the name of a Chair of the Resourcing Committee.

25/4. The Council directed the INC to produce a role description for the Chair of the Connexional Council.

25/5. The Council authorised the SRC to invite those whose term would normally end in 2023 to remain on the SRC until 2024,

25/6. The Council appointed the Revd Dr Nicola Price-Tebbutt and Ms Verity Wild to the Interim Nominations Committee and authorises further appointments to be made by electronic vote of the Council.

25/7. The Council directed the INC to work with the Oversight and Trusteeship Task Group on its own terms of reference.

23.1.16 Queen's Foundation Partnership Agreement [MC/23/13]

The Head of Ministries presented MC/23/13.

13/1. The Council received the report.

13/2. The Council re-approved the Partnership Agreement with The Queen's Foundation, Birmingham, as amended.

Some questions that were raised will be shared with the Ministries team and can be borne in mind as the work moves forward.

23.1.17 Matters arising [MC/23/19]

19/1. The Council received the report.

23.1.18 Decisions made and actions taken since the last meeting of the Council [MC/23/20]

20/1. The Council received the report and ratified the actions taken.

23.1.19 Nominations and appointments [MC/23/21]

21/1. The Council appointed David Jones and the Revd Nicholas A Oborski to the Safeguarding Committee.

21/2. The Council appointed Sheryl Young as a non-executive director of Methodist International Centre Ltd.

21/3. The Council appointed the Revd David Goodall to the Pay and Grading Sub-Committee.

- 21/4. ***The Council appointed a scrutiny group of the Revd Leslie Newton, Mrs Val Mayers and Mr Alister McClure to consider a reinvitation for a member of the Connexional Team.***
- 21/5. ***The Council nominates Mr Dudley Coates to the Conference to serve as Chair of the Conference Business Committee for the Conferences of 2024, 2025 and 2026.***
- 21/6. ***Pursuant to SO 1113, and acting on behalf of the Conference, the Council appointed the Connexional Reconciliation Group as follows:
The Revd Paul Booth, Mrs Angela Macquiban, the Revd Patricia Olivent-Hayes, Mr Graham Russell***

In addition, the Council appointed the Revd Rachel Parkinson to attend the Oversight and Trusteeship Task Group in place of the Revd Leslie Newton.

23.1.20 Arthur Smith Trust [MC/23/22]

- 22/1. ***The Council received the report.***
- 22/2. ***The Council directed the TMCP Board to pass a resolution under section 281 of the Charities Act 2011 to release Trust 12464B and transfer it to Trust 21508.***
- 22/3. ***The Council directed the TMCP Board to pass a resolution under section 275 of the Charities Act 2011 to amend the purposes of Trust 12464C in favour of the Methodist Diaconal Order.***
- 22/4. ***The Council directed that, following the Charity Commission's approval to the change in purposes, the TMCP Board passes a resolution under section 281 of the Charities Act 2011 to release the capital from Trust 12464C and transfer the capital to the main Diaconal Order trust 18241.***

23.1.21 Methodist Schools Appointments [MC/23/23]

- 23/1. ***The Council adopted the re-nominations by Methodist Independent Schools Trustees of the Revd Stephen Burgess and the Revd Dr Calvin Samuel for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2026.***
- 23/2. ***The Council adopted the nomination by Methodist Academies and Schools Trustees of Mrs Janet Carolyn Glass for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2026.***
- 23/3. ***The Council adopted the re-nominations by Methodist Academies and Schools Trustees of Mr Steven College, Dr David Kershaw and Mrs Annette Foster for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2026.***
- 23/4. ***The Council adopted the nomination by Epworth Education Trust Trustees of the Revd Stuart Ellis, Mr Steve Myers and Mr Gareth Roberts for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2026.***

23.1.22 EDI data analysis [MC/23/24]

- 24/1. ***The Council received the report.***

23.1.23 Annual report and accounts [MC/23/15]

The Connexional Treasurer and the Director of Finance and Resources presented MC/23/15.

- 15/1. ***The Council received the Annual Report and Consolidated Accounts.***
- 15/2. ***In accordance with SO 212(1), the Council approved the Annual Report and Consolidated Accounts for the year ended 31 August 2022, and directed that a unified statement of connexional finances be presented to the Conference as required by SO 360.***
- 15/3. ***The Council authorised the Chair of the Council to sign the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities and, along with the Connexional Treasurer, the Letter of Representation addressed to the external auditors and the Balance Sheet within the financial statements.***

- 15/4. The Council authorised the Chair of the Council and the Connexional Treasurer to make any non-material changes to the presentation of the financial statements subsequent to Council approval.**
- 15/5. The Council established a task group consisting of the Connexional Treasurer, the Connexional Secretary, the Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee (ARAC), a member of the Council (Ms Jenny Taylor), and a member of ARAC, to conduct a tender process to appoint an external auditor for the 2022/2023 accounts onwards.**

23.1.24 Audit and Risk Assurance Committee [MC/23/16]

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee presented MC/23/16.

- 16/1. The Council received the report of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.**

23.1.25 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTE

23.1.26 Financial Planning [MC/23/17]

The Director of Finance and Resources presented MC/23/17.

- 17/1. The Council received the report.**
- 17/2. The Council approved the financial planning parameters set out in the paper.**
- 17/3. The Council approved the amended budget-setting process.**

The thanks of the Council were expressed to the Finance team.

23.1.27 Asbury House [MC/23/8]

The Head of Mission presented MC/23/8.

- 8/1. The Council received the report.**
- 8/2. The Council approved the sale of Asbury House, Birmingham and authorised the Director of Property Support and the Conference Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice to progress the pre-sale investigations and subsequent sale on the Council's behalf.**

23.1.28 Methodist Church 2032

The Secretary of the Conference invited the Council to consider the anniversary of Methodist union, and the Council discussed in groups whether we celebrate, what we celebrate and how we celebrate.