

Composition of the Conference

MC/23/35

Date of meeting	25-27 March 2023
Contact name and details	The Revd Michaela Youngson, Assistant Secretary of the Conference ASC@methodistchurch.org.uk
Resolutions	35/1. The Council receives the report. 35/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the allocation of seats at the Conference as set out in the report and asks that the Special Resolution process be initiated in respect to the required changes to the Deed of Union.

Further to decisions of the Conference of 2022, the Methodist Council appointed a task group whose purpose is to recommend to Council the distribution of the 225 seats which will make up the full voting membership of the Conference. The Conference resolved that synod elected members of the Conference be no less than 70% of the overall body. This paper is the report of that task group.

The group recommends that the category of Conference-elected be abolished, to be replaced by members of the Connexional Council. The continuity and experience offered by the present Conference-elected representatives would, in future, be provided by the members of the Connexional Council. This proposal would ensure that a good proportion of the Connexional Council were members of the Conference, particularly once those who are representatives in other capacities are taken into account, whilst not requiring it of each member of the Council. In the table below, the Council is represented by seven of its members plus its Chair. Those currently serving as Conference-Elected representatives would fulfil their terms of office; the Conference will be asked to suspend or to amend SO 103 and, no further elections would then need to take place save for one in 2023 for a presbyter to serve in the 2024 Conference. Where there are future reductions, then the total number of representatives will be achieved by an increase in the synod-elected category.

The reduction in representatives from the Irish Conference, and the proposed removal of Conference-elected representatives will both require changes to the Deed of Union. These changes could therefore not come into effect before 2025. However, the Connexional Council will not be in place by the 2024 Conference, and it is therefore assumed that the 2024 Conference will be a transitional year, whilst still maintaining the total number directed by the Conference as well as the representation of the Synods. This is shown in the table below, although the precise numbers are indicative only as the final number of Synod representatives cannot be determined until the number of dual qualifications is known.

Role/Category	2023	2024	2025	Deed of Union change
Presidency	6	6	6	
Secretary	1	1	1	
Assistant Secretary	1	1	1	
COLCP	1	1	1	
Record Secretary	1	1	1	
Journal Secretary	1	1	1	
Memorials Cttee Convenor	1	1	1	
Chair of Rep Session Business Committee	1	1	1	

Chairs of District	25 [<i>this number is reduced due to dual qualifications</i>]	26 [<i>assuming some dual qualifications</i>]	28 <i>This number may drop by 2025 to approx 22</i>	
Warden of the Diaconal Order	1	1	1	
Irish Methodist Church Reps	4	4	2	Yes
Global Relationships	2	2	2	
UMC Reps	2	2	2	
Conference Elected	9	7	3	Yes
Connexional Council	0	0	7	
Youth Assembly	4	2	2	
Chair of the Methodist Council	1	1	0	
Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee	1	1	0	
Connexional Council Chair	0	0	1	
Forces Chaplain	1	1	1	
Connexional Treasurer	1	0	0	
Connexional Secretary	1	1	1	
Mission Partners	2	1	1	
EDI representatives	6	3	3	
Representative of Faith and Order	1	1	1	
Law and Polity	1	1	1	
Stationing Committee	1	0	0	
Methodist Women in Britain	1	0	0	
Synods	229	158	158	
Totals	306	225	225	

Ecumenical Associate Members 4
Global Relationship Associate Members 12

The remaining non-District representative categories represent those groups within the life of the Church who by dint of the nature of their role are highly unlikely to be elected by synods (ie Forces Chaplains and Mission Partners), and those who represent a special relationship between the Church and our partners (ie UMC and Irish Methodist Conference representatives). It is hoped that as the JDS strategy is embedded in the life of the Church and Districts elect diverse groups of representatives, it will become unnecessary to have a separate category for EDI concerns and the Youth Assembly, however the group feels that it remains helpful to the church at this time to retain these categories.

The Council is asked to recommend this allocation to the Conference, and to ask the Conference to initiate the Special Resolution process in respect of the proposed changes to the Deed of Union.

***RESOLUTIONS

35/1. The Council receives the report.

35/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the allocation of seats at the Conference as set out in the report and asks that the Special Resolution process be initiated in respect to the required changes to the Deed of Union.