

Ministries Committee

MC/23/40

Meeting date	25-27 March 2023
Contact Name and Details	The Revd Gill M Newton, Chair of the Ministries Committee chair@sheffieldmethodist.org
Action Required	Decision
Resolutions	<p>40/1. The Council receives the report.</p> <p>40/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the proposed approach regarding a Discernment Process for Senior Posts, as outlined in the report.</p> <p>40/3. The Council recommends to the Conference that the final sentence of Standing Order 715(1) which reads "For (iii) above" is removed.</p> <p>40/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that from 2023 onwards the length of probation for all probationers in part time appointments shall normally be three years, and proposes changes to Standing Order 721(2).</p> <p>40/5. The Council approves the appointments relating to the new candidating scheme, as listed in Appendix 1 to the report.</p>

Summary of Content

Subject and Aims	To bring the Methodist Council up to date with the work of the Ministries Committee.
Main Points	The Learning Institutions; Lay Ministries; Matters relating to Ordained Ministries; Student Matters.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 The Ministries Committee is charged with responsibility to keep in constant review the life of the Methodist Church as it relates to Ministries, to indicate what changes are necessary or what steps should be taken to make the work of the Church more effective, to review the formational and support needs of those who exercise ministry on behalf of the Church, and to report annually to the Methodist Council. Many of the pieces of work currently being undertaken are interdependent with each other and with previous decisions of the Church, for example the 2020 Conference Report *Changing Patterns of Ministry* continues to shape the work being undertaken on future candidating processes and on the review of how we go about stationing ministers. The Ministries Committee pays particular attention to the contexts in which ministry takes place, and has spent time and care considering how global factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted upon ministers in terms of their well-being and the nature of their work.
- 2 The Ministries Committee is accountable through the Methodist Council to the Conference for:
 - (i) developing and supporting the processes relating to the oversight, accountability and professional development of those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
 - (ii) developing and supporting programmes for nourishing, equipping and resourcing those engaged in the ministries and offices of the Church;
 - (iii) developing and supporting the Church's structures and resources for learning, training, scholarship, research and development;
 - (iv) in collaboration with other bodies, supporting the development of structures that enable the use of various forms of ministry as resources for mission within Circuits and Districts;
 - (v) overseeing connexional policy regarding its ordained ministries, including that relating to the processes for offering as a candidate, the oversight of students and probationers, and stationing, but without adjudicating on individual cases, which shall remain the task of the bodies appointed to fulfil that responsibility. (SO 32A1(2))To that end the Ministries Committee has met twice since the 2022 Conference on 13 September 2022 and 4-5 February 2023, and will have a further meeting on 11 May 2023.
- 3 The Committee reports on its work in the following sections:
 - The Learning Institutions and Continuing Development in Ministry (CDIM).
 - Lay Ministries
 - Matters relating to Ordained Ministries
 - Student Matters

THE LEARNING INSTITUTIONS AND CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT IN MINISTRY (CDIM)

- 4 The Committee received annual reports from the Queen's Foundation and Cliff College. Both institutions are working intentionally to incorporate the Justice, Dignity and Solidarity (JDS) strategy.

The Queen's Foundation

- 5 The Queen's Foundation has continued, on behalf of the Methodist Church, to receive all candidates accepted by the Methodist Conference for initial ministerial training. The intake for 2022-23 comprised 15 student ministers, eight allocated to the full-time pathway and seven to part-time, with two provisionally allocated to the Circuit-based Learning Pathway (CBLP) for later in their training. Of the new cohort, three are student deacons and twelve student presbyters; nine are women and six men; four are of Global Majority or UK Minority Ethnic Heritage.
- 6 Most student ministers are studying on accredited programmes from Durham University's Common Awards suite, as part of their overall formational programme. At the beginning of the academic year 2021-22, 44 were working at CertHE or DipHE level in Theology, Ministry and Mission; one was working towards the BA; one was on a Graduate Certificate programme; 13 were studying for Masters degrees; four were working at doctoral level and two were on bespoke non-accredited programmes.

During 2021-22, 11 students were being supported with particular learning needs, or physical health needs, many of them through public DSA (Disabled Students' Allowance) provision. The DSA support for students is one of the main benefits of the Foundation's status as Office for Students Approved Provider.

- 7 With regard to the Circuit-based Learning Pathway, a review of the pathway conducted during 2021-22 by the Director of Learning for Ministry was extremely positive and resulted in the Ministries Committee affirming that the pathway should continue as a clear third training pathway, beyond its initial five-year pilot phase.
- 8 In 2021-22, Queen's worked with 40 probationers on the programme of probation studies designed to build on their pre-ordination training. In September 2021, an additional 14 former probationers were working on their studies post-ordination.
- 9 Methodist staff appointed to Queen's continue to make contributions to the life of the Connexion beyond initial ministerial training and probation studies. During the year three Methodist tutors have also been members of the Faith and Order Committee (including working parties on particular topics), one is on the New Places for New People Guiding Team, and another on the *Holiness* editorial board. Methodist tutors also contribute to societies and conferences and to scholarly research in a range of disciplines. Queen's staff, including Methodists, have contributed significantly to work on diversity and racial justice for the Church of England, for Common Awards (Durham University) and for the Society for the Study of Theology; as well as being part of the Theological Educators' Conference and conferences in specific theological disciplines.
- 10 The Centre for Black Theology (CBT) continues to go from strength to strength in terms of offering new pathways and attracting student numbers. It respects the need to work alongside Black Majority (usually Pentecostal) churches in both official and unofficial ways, whilst acknowledging that Black experiences of Christianity are broader than this; exploring the extent to which to foster 'Black only' groups within the learning experience and when to encourage or require a diversity on the pathways of study students choose.
- 11 Queen's is grateful for the generosity of the Methodist Church in enabling it to carry through the ambitious Partnership in Theological Education Project with two partner institutions in Rwanda and Sri Lanka so that students who are working towards their planned doctoral studies on the programme have visited for residential periods.
- 12 The work which has been undertaken on the Vision Statement and Aims – which has included consultations with students, staff and governors past and present – has proved instructive in clarifying what it means to be such a diverse body. The Foundation believes God is wanting it to celebrate and work with diversity without any single group/tradition dominating. In this way it models as a community what it means to be a diverse Church, in an even more diverse society. The new Vision Statement is as follows:

Queen's strives to be a diverse, challenging, Gospel-focused community, shaping people for God's mission in the world.

As a community, gathered and dispersed, Queen's strives to:

- practise deep attentiveness to Jesus Christ
- live by the Holy Spirit's leading
- stimulate joyful, challenging exploration of the riches of the Bible and Christian traditions
- create a lively, extended prophetic community of worship, prayer and action
- provide searching, supportive pathways of formation and training for discipleship and ministry
- listen to voices which are often not heard, to enable the less confident to find their voice and flourish.

Cliff College: A Global Centre for Evangelism and Missiology

- 13 Cliff College is a Methodist evangelical learning community which is rooted in God's Word and Spirit for the purpose of equipping God's people for practical ministry and cutting-edge missional engagement. The education offered at Cliff is theology for the real world – rooted in practice, forged in community, grounded in the authority of Scripture and consistently prompting us to face outwards.

- 14 During 2021-2022, the Cliff College Committee, on the request of the College Principal, commissioned the Methodist Church's Head of Mission and the Director of Learning for Ministry to undertake a far-reaching review of its strategy, structure and delivery to effectively serve as a Learning Institution of the Methodist Church. The recommendations include:
- The College's staffing structure will be amended to ensure a closer working relationship with the Methodist Connexional Team.
 - An annual grant will be paid to Cliff College, from the Methodist Church, that will be linked to the delivery of the Shared Mission Plan. This plan will be reviewed, updated and agreed each year.
 - The development of the new 'Formation in Mission and Ministry' validated diploma will provide a tool for training within the Methodist Church, and the ongoing work on the new degree will also be a great benefit. The Methodist Church will make available HE awards to doctoral scholarships in the areas of work of the three research centres.
 - The current short course programme will be reimagined and will be more fully integrated into the work of the Methodist Learning Network and others within the Connexional Team.
 - Cliff College partnerships will be driven by the objectives of the Methodist Council and will be reviewed to bring them in line with those of the Methodist Church. In particular, the College will foster a deeper relationship with The Queen's Foundation and will develop integrated strategies, with the Methodist Church, in its global work, alongside All We Can, and its work with young adults.
 - A long-term strategy will be developed for Cliff Festival that creates links with other Methodist events and gatherings. The theme for Festival 2023 will be 'Eden Restored' – this theme will give us opportunities to work closely with our partners to explore issues around creation, redemption and what it means to 'Build the Kingdom here'.
- 15 Cliff College continues to value its collaborative agreement with the University of Manchester for the validation of programmes. During the year 2021-2022, validated programmes were delivered by Cliff College as follows: BA in Theology and Ministry (28), BA in Ministry and Mission (38), MA in Mission (59), Postgraduate Research: PhD and PhD Missiology (16). 19 students completed their undergraduate awards during the academic year and graduated in autumn 2022. In this year's National Student Survey, which gathered opinions from final year undergraduates on the quality of their courses, Cliff College received 100% overall student satisfaction.
- 16 During the year, two new programmes have been developed by Cliff College and subsequently validated by the University of Manchester:
- The Foundations for Mission and Ministry programme, with a related suite of standalone CPD (continuing professional development) units will provide credit-bearing training that has been carefully calibrated to serve the realities of practical mission and ministry as well as the priorities of the Methodist Church. The programme has been identified as the training pathway for Local Lay-Pastor.
 - Cliff College's new undergraduate degree, which will replace the current two undergraduate degrees in September 2023. The new degree, titled BA (Hons) Theology and Mission will be dual delivery, making it an innovative programme that will enable students to study for a HE Certificate, HE Diploma or Degree in Theology and Mission both in person at Cliff College and online, using the College's bespoke theological education platform, CliffX.
- 17 Short Courses continue, including Certificates in Women in Leadership, Men's Ministry, Pastoral Care, Social Activism, Family Ministry, Mentoring, Ministry among Older People, Faith in Change and Conflict, Bereavement Ministry, Parenting for Faith, Bible Engagement, Christian Administrative Ministry, Christian Coaching and Pioneer Ministry. In addition, a number of other Short Courses and retreats have been offered, including Godly Play training.
- 18 Online learning is a crucial part of Cliff's overall strategy and continues to grow as a valuable part of Cliff's portfolio of training opportunities, enabling people from around the world to study with us, opening up theological education and vocational training beyond traditional routes. 106 students have completed the College's own online courses over the past year, which include Parenting for Faith, Introduction to Christian Holiness, Creative Bible Reading and Introduction to Evangelism.
- 19 The Samuel Chadwick Centre at Cliff College is an academic research centre that gathers and disseminates the fruits of research in pneumatology, with particular reference to the Wesleyan, Pentecostal and charismatic traditions. The fourth annual Samuel Chadwick Lecture was held on Friday 15 October 2021. Keith Warrington, Reader in Pentecostal Studies at Regents Theological

College delivered the lecture on 'The Holy Spirit and the New Testament.' A formal response was given by Dr Andy Boakye, from the University of Manchester.

- 20 The Bible, Gender and Church (BGC) Research Centre is a collaboration between Cliff College and the University of Manchester, focusing on Biblical and practical gender studies, and how these intersect and inform the lives of women and men in the contemporary Church. The Centre hosted an online seminar in November 2021, entitled 'Preaching Problematic Passages: How to Teach Difficult Texts with Sensitivity.' The BGC Research Centre was awarded a grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to fund a project entitled 'Abusing God: reading the Bible in the #MeToo Age.' This is an important piece of work, and the award from AHRC is significant for Cliff College's research profile.
- 21 Cliff College's Centre for the Study of Youth, Children and Families Mission and Ministry, *Generation*, has continued to host online and hybrid forums, with three events exploring the topics of children's spirituality, evangelism to youth and sexual ethics. The forums aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice in children's, youth and families' ministry, and each one brought together practitioners and academics to explore the topics raised.
- 22 TheologyX, the College's online learning platform, has welcomed a number of other TheologyX partners, including the Methodist Church in Ireland, who worked with the Innovation Team to deliver a course entitled 'Joining with God's Mission.' There are currently 46 active courses on TheologyX, and nearly 5,000 registered users on the platform. In the past year, the Creating Safer Spaces Advanced Module has been completed by 3,516 individuals, representing nearly 14,000 learning hours for this course alone, and highlighting the value and place of online learning within the Methodist Church's work.
- 23 Cliff College has provided training for nine Mission Partners and Accompanying Volunteers. It continues to support a significant number of partner churches and is developing work in Sierra Leone, Argentina and Cuba.
- 24 The College is again grateful for the annual grant it receives from the Methodist Church, which not only supports the ongoing work of the College, but also enables us to support the work of the Connexional team in many ways. We will continue to work alongside, and strengthen our relationships with, our partners in the Connexional team and Learning Network to develop a range of opportunities that support the learning needs of the Church in this rapidly changing landscape.

HE Awards

- 25 The Committee oversees the HE Awards which are given to Methodists, lay and ordained, seeking to pursue higher degrees in a theological or missiological subject. The disbursement of this annual fund is overseen by a HE Awards Panel, working with the Directors of Learning for Ministry, and Research and Scholarship. The Committee was encouraged and excited by the range of subjects being studied, the passion for thinking and learning theologically and how it might impact the life of the Methodist Church. A total of 38 people are being funded by the Church to pursue higher degrees: 26 at Doctoral level and 12 at Masters. For 2nd year funding, 13 students are at doctoral level and 8 at Masters. The range and depth of the scholarship work is impressive and has included enquiry into matters at the heart of current Connexional priorities, such as work on JDS issues, circuit structures, Methodist discipline, and Wesleyan theology and mission. In June 2023 two research conferences will be held in person at Cliff College with a day for MA students and a day for PhD students (not just those receiving HE Awards), resourced by exponents of academic writing. Efforts are also being made to feed the fruits of scholarship back into the Church, with follow up discussions with all those who complete, about how the work can be shared, trying to develop communities of scholarship and help the life of the Church in different ways.

Methodist-related Education Institutions

- 26 The Director of Learning for Ministry has continued to work intentionally with Methodist-related institutions to ensure that the Connexional Team is nurturing and promoting their research programmes and encouraging HE Awards applicants wherever possible at least to consider pursuing their study through one of them. The Committee agreed to the establishment of doctoral scholarships at the three Methodist institutions, working with the two Network Centres and the University of

Roehampton- At Cliff, this could be for a piece of research connected to one of its three research centres; at the University of Roehampton it will be attached to a place in the DTh programme. The scholarships will be in addition to the current HE Awards programme and will cover tuition fees for the full course of the degree, subject to satisfactory progress, up to a maximum of six years part-time study. It may be possible to consider a full-time programme, with matching funding from the institution, or elsewhere. Applicants will need to demonstrate congruence with the mission and priorities of the Methodist Church in their proposal. Also, in common with recipients of the regular awards, the recipients will be expected to engage with the wider Methodist research community (eg through the annual Research Conference) and participate in an annual review with the Directors of Learning for Ministry, and Research and Scholarship, as well as to offer annual progress reports from their supervisors. It is hoped that this scheme will be a helpful way to strengthen the connections between the Church and its theological institutions, as well as to demonstrate and deepen the Church's commitment to higher learning and research, *both* as a missional presence within the academic sphere and also as a stimulus which informs and inspires its witness, mission and common life.

LAY MINISTRY

Local Preachers and Worship Leaders

- 27 The Ministries Committee encourages and supports local preachers and worship leaders, who have a vital role to play in the regeneration of the life and mission of the Church. The statistics below show a continuing decline in the number of active preachers, broadly in line with previous trends and demographic reality. There is however no sign of any reduction in the number of active or trainee Worship Leaders, perhaps reflecting increasing opportunities for participation in worship, and the prevalence of Local Arrangements. New guidance on the possibilities presented by Local Arrangements is proposed to encourage churches to see these as opportunities for developing the whole Church as a worshipping community.
- 28 It is ten years since development of the Worship: Leading and Preaching (WLP) course commenced. The online resources have been updated and simplified and all students are now using version 3 (WLP3). This marks a significant milestone in a continuing process of simplifying access to training and removing obstacles to learning for local preachers and worship leaders. 50 portfolios have now been completed in WLP3 and feedback continues to be positive from both students and tutors. Work is now focused on refreshing the content of the course.
- 29 In collaboration with the Learning Network, the portfolio of online training opportunities for local preachers and worship leaders has been expanded, and now consists of:
- Online Inductions for all newly enrolled students, tutors and mentors. These seek to orientate people to the course and address anxieties about online study.
 - Explore Online, which now provides quarterly online group learning opportunities especially for those with no local tutor group. Worship Leaders can complete their four modules in a year, Local Preachers can complete their eight modules in two years.
 - WLP for Tutors, Mentors and Local Preachers' Secretaries, enabling a rapid introduction for those taking on these roles or considering doing so.
 - Study Skills for Students. A series of six online webinars. This programme emerged from work conducted by the Board of Studies and the JDS Strategy team.
 - Further Skills for Tutors - an online series tackling specific topics such as theological reflection, culture and language in educational practice. This was produced in response to requests from Tutors and Mentors in consultation with the JDS Strategy team.
- 30 Other programmes seeking to improve access to training for local preachers and worship leaders include:
- Summer School at Cliff College, which allows students to participate in group work for two modules in an intensive week at Cliff College.
 - The WLP in a Year programme, which provides a blend of residential weekends and online learning with the needs of potential ordination candidates in mind. A cohort of 12 students are enrolled for 2022-23. Demand will be monitored closely as the new process for candidating becomes established.

- With the support of the Forces Board, a training pathway for those in the Armed Forces. The East Solent and Downs Circuit acts as the host circuit and their Tutor provides remote support to students, with Army chaplains acting as Mentors.
- 31 A silent retreat for local preachers was held at Launde Abbey, Leicestershire in May 2022, which was fully subscribed. A second event is being held at Whalley Abbey, Lancashire in March 2023. The intention is for this to be held annually for the spiritual refreshment of local preachers and worship leaders. Work continues to encourage Local Preachers' Meetings to make maximum use of these vital gatherings as places of encouragement and growth. A major focus for 2023, in collaboration with the Evangelism and Growth Team will be on developing the depth and quality of public worship in changing times. The library of session plans for the Continuing Local Preacher Development (CLPD) use in Local Preachers' Meetings continues to expand and further resources are planned.
- 32 As of January 2023, there were 5,477 active local preachers recorded on the connexional database, a decline of 4% from 5,698 the previous year. Of those in training, 375 had a Note to Preach (2021: 376), and there were 483 persons On Trial (2021: 492) as local preachers.
- 140 portfolios were successfully completed on the Worship: Leading and Preaching course in 2022, compared with 156 the previous year. Of these, 16 were from worship leaders (2021: 10), who have successfully completed modules 1-4. 63 were Portfolio LPA, (2021: 75), and 61 were Portfolio LPB, (2021: 71) indicating completion of LP training. A total of 42 portfolios were completed on the new WLP3 version of the course, the remaining 98 being on the WLP2 version, which has now closed.
 - During the year, 54 new students enrolled for WLP as worship leaders and 152 as local preachers.
 - The number of new local preachers admitted during 2022 was 83. This compares with 219 in 2021 but is comparable with typical numbers from previous years. The high number in 2021 was skewed by factors such as opportunities to complete studies during lockdowns, the end of the Faith and Worship course and a backlog of Recognition Services due to COVID.
 - The number of local preachers who died and were included in the Remembrance Book in 2021 was 281. The list for 2022 is in preparation and will be presented at the 2023 Conference.
- 33 The Ministries Committee approved a Guidance Note for Welcoming Lay Preachers from Other Traditions. Standing Order 566A makes provision for Lay Preachers or Readers from "Other Churches" who have become members, to be recognised as local preachers. The responsibility for discerning the call of a local preacher lies with the Local Preachers' Meeting, on behalf of the Circuit Meeting. The new guidance should make a significant difference in enabling circuits to make fair and equitable decisions.
- 34 The Ministries Committee approved an outline proposal for the provision of local preacher and worship leader training materials in Chinese languages (Mandarin and Cantonese) suitable for use in the current context.
- 35 The provision of materials in Welsh remains a Conference commitment and the Ministries Committee endorsed a proposal for continuing provision of local preacher and worship leader training in Welsh language, based on a phased approach taking account of available resources and likely demand.

Local Lay-Pastors

- 36 Competencies for the role of Local Lay-Pastor were adopted by the Conference. The Ministries team with colleagues in the wider team have worked hard to provide guidance to circuits on the Methodist Church Website.

VOCATIONS

Developing Vocations

- 37 In 2019-20 developing vocations was identified as an urgent and important piece of work for the Church by the Ministries Committee and the Methodist Council. Since then, there has been a number of strategic steps to prioritise vocations within the workplan of the Connexional Team, and to build confidence in the Church to encourage vocational exploration, and to keep this as a priority for both the Ministries Committee and the Methodist Council. These have included:
- Appointing a member of the Connexional Team to coordinate the work across the Connexional Team, keep the brief high on the Church's agenda, and ensure there is space for creative response to the Church's needs.
 - Research about barriers which prevent people from candidating; and a subsequent review of candidating.
 - Using the concern about candidate numbers to pay attention to underlying issues within church life, especially ministerial wellbeing.
 - Love This Calling campaign;
 - Creation of resources to equip church leaders, individuals and groups to create a culture of celebrating vocations, identifying church vocations and teaching methods of discernment.
- 38 Over the past 3 years the approach to Developing Vocations has changed and developed. Our key strategy now is to embed a cohesive approach to developing vocations within the breadth of the Connexional Team. There is now a Connexional Team Developing Vocations Community of Practice. This is a meeting where colleagues, with a significant part of their workplan which focuses on vocations, meet together. They inform strategy and share updates so that no one works in silos. Developing vocations is also in workplans for the Learning Network and Children Youth and Families (CYF). Less formally it weaves through the work of Evangelism and Growth, Global Relationships and JDS teams.
- 39 Key actions which are operating across the Connexional Team include:
- A piece of work exploring the Church's response to the very low numbers of British people of global majority heritage offering for ordained and lay ministries.
 - The new candidating process element, Explore, which is about vocational exploration and will be open to anyone wishing to reflect on their calling. The work will include producing the vocational exploration resources, recruitment and training of accompanists, setting up the new systems for candidates, and communicating the new processes to the Church.
 - The Leadership year led by Children Youth and Families is now open to all young people, and not just Youth Reps.
 - The Evangelism and Growth team is working with those exploring a vocation as evangelist, young evangelist, pioneer and New Places for New People leadership. The Ministries team will work with them to see if any of these people who have a call to ordained ministry are able to candidate now that some restrictions have been removed.
- 40 This work is evolving in many different ways and the Ministries Committee recently received a paper giving a snapshot of some activities which are developing the confidence of our disciples, both lay and ordained, in scattered settings as well as gathered churches.

Discernment Process for Senior Posts

- 41 A sub-group of the Committee produced some proposals which will be included in the 2023 Conference report on Oversight and Trusteeship. The following paragraphs are included here for the purposes of the Council report.
- 42 The 2022 Conference directed the Ministries Committee to continue its work on discernment for senior roles and to report to the 2023 Conference, to consider how vocations for leadership in the Church can be appropriately, identified, fostered and coordinated with processes of appointment. In September 2022 the Ministries Committee appointed a sub-group to take this work forward. The Group looked at two areas for consideration by the Committee, one is a broad overview of the background and issues in leadership development for senior posts facing the Church in these times, the other are specific proposals for the discernment and support of those who feel called to this work.

- 43 It was felt important that some description of “senior posts” was attempted and they are identified as leadership roles in *Districts* (Chairs, Deputy / Assistant Chairs, Synod secretaries / senior lay roles in District leadership teams) and *Connexion* (Chairs / Deputy Chairs of Committees, Secretariat of the Conference, senior leadership roles in the Connexional Team). Discussion took place as to whether Superintendents and Circuit Stewards should be included. This would widen the scope of the work considerably, and resources for these groups are available via superintendents’ conferences and circuit stewards’ development.
- 44 The **discernment** required in our current context of uncertainty and complexity (what some writers call “liminality”: the times between something ended and something not yet ready to begin) is no longer best served by being based simply on competencies but rather attention needs to be given to individuals’ strengths. The group defined strengths as a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of thinking, feeling or behaving that is authentic and energising. Such key strengths might include:
- * mental, people and change agility
 - * thriving in situations of complexity, uncertainty and expanding horizons of knowledge and wisdom
 - * those who relish working with others, and have a proven record as team builders
 - * those who are effective at learning from experience
- Some in the Group talked about these as “lead” indicators of suitability for senior posts (pointing to what the person might become) rather than “lag indicators” (drawing predominantly on what the person has already done in other roles).
- 45 It is critical that the diversity and experience of persons identified in ordained and lay roles should be given greater attention. Success in any process supporting discernment will lead to a Church with a diverse senior leadership.
- 46 The group felt strongly that the discernment and support of those called to these roles, as indeed to any leadership within the Church, is a long-term commitment. It is a process that stretches for the ordained from initial formation in ministry, through training, probation and continued development and, for lay persons, an ongoing review of those identified say as circuit stewards and synod officers. The question was asked as to whether the Explore programme being developed for the new candidating process might be a good model but acknowledge that there is little capacity to develop this currently.
- 47 The group felt it important to offer some resources for those who are identified as called to roles or who have been appointed. The group recommends two leadership-learning resources:
- a development of an existing pilot programme, the **Leadership Learning Space (LLS)**. This programme, developed by Loraine Mellor and Nigel Pimlott has worked with two cohorts of people from a wide range of roles, lay and ordained. The group first meet in person onsite and then commit to meeting online once a month – there is input via reading sources and presentations by those in leadership inside and outside the Church. The group also pray together and share their leadership journeys. There is a high premium placed on applying learning to the working context of participants and on learning from shared experience. The programme is currently on its second cohort, so there is learning to be gathered from its work. This could become a 'rolling programme' rather than separate cohorts so that people might dip into it at various points in ministry, allowing them to respond to leadership opportunities as they arise.
 - an **Open Access** resource which could be provided at modest cost by The Queen’s Foundation and Cliff College. This would enable further learning, and accountability for the learning process by participants within a flexible and adaptable format. Areas covered might include competency and confidence in technical and adaptive leadership, building and leading teams, leading in times of crisis, building teams, handling risk and failure, feminist and black theology approaches to leadership.
- 48 There should be an expectation that those appointed to senior roles would engage with these resources and that feedback be offered on their learning (much as is currently offered to those in supervision training). Mandatory leadership training will enable the senior leadership in the Church to be formed and fitted in a consistent way for the emerging challenges and opportunities of our current and future context.
- 49 At this stage the group is uncertain about the value of identifying a senior leadership cohort in advance (eg a list of approved candidates for nomination). It felt that identifying such a cohort might be

resource intensive and impractical, and wondered if it would not be more effective to see this work as an “offer” to those considering senior leadership and an expectation on those appointed. It is possible to identify those with the needed gifts and graces from those in formation, those who engage with leadership learning (and events such as the May Conference at Cliff), those who apply for posts and those identified by District leadership teams.

Implementing the new Candidating Scheme

- 50 Council members will be aware that a new candidating process is being implemented following the decision of the 2022 Conference. This has started with applicants applying between January and April 2023 for ‘Discerning Ordained Vocation 1’ (DOV1). The ‘Explore’ programme will be launched in September 2023. There is now an implementation plan, with the work scoped out. Candidating is no longer envisaged as a three-stage process as Explore is to be a stand-alone discernment process for people seeking to explore vocation in as wide a way as possible, not just in the context of candidating for ordained ministry. Explore is being tied in with the Vocations strategy. Ongoing work includes the recruitment and training of accompanists, including a number from existing District Candidates Committee membership. All who wish to explore ordained ministry will carry out DOV1 and then DOV2 (which is the candidating element) The Ministries Committee noted that this is a significant piece of work for the Connexional Team within a tight timeframe. The Chair additionally notes that there are significant capacity issues, especially given that there are a number of other significant pieces of work to be done by the same Officers within the Team. This piece of work needs to be done with attention and care so that candidates are served well by the Church. The review of candidating had been a root and branch process and it was recognised that the 2022 Conference resolutions would have a far-reaching impact on other parts of the processes of the Church. There would be a particular impact on the role of local preacher which can now be fully valued as a lay office within the Church rather than being regarded by some as a stepping stone to ordained ministry.

Implications of the New Candidating Process on Student Training and Probation

- 51 Following consultations with MCPOC, the Ministries Committee and the Stationing Committee, the Ministries Committee directed the Connexional Team to do further work on adapting profiles for probationer presbyter appointments and diaconal appointments in order to take note of the fact that not all probationers will have previous experience of preaching, proclaiming and worship leading. The Ministries Committee directed that connexional training be developed for worship development groups, and that this is taken forward by the Ministerial Coordinator for Oversight of Ordained Ministry, in conjunction with the Ministries Team. The Ministries Committee referred the issue around authorisations to preside for probationers to the Faith and Order Committee as part of its wider work in reviewing authorisations.

Candidating Numbers

- 52 The Ministries Team is keeping these numbers under regular review.

Criteria and Competencies for Ministry

- 53 The Ministries Committee approved the revised criteria and competencies for Ministry which reflect the impact of various Conference decisions and the priorities of the Church in recent years, notably the Justice Dignity and Solidarity strategy, Changing Patterns of Ministry and the Review of Candidating. The Ministries Team also checked that safeguarding was appropriately included. Further consultations have also been held with the Queen’s Foundation.

MATTERS RELATING TO ORDAINED MINISTRY

Stationing Review Group

- 54 The remit of the Stationing Review Group is to carry out a root and branch review of all processes related to the stationing of ministers (presbyters and deacons) in the Methodist Church in Britain. The Group will present a final report to the 2024 Conference with recommendations for changes to those processes. The first meeting of the group was held in January 2023 and the group plans to meet

approximately every two months. The Group will consult widely with both lay and ordained Methodists alongside input from ecumenical partners.

Initial Stationing Appointments and Local Specific Contexts (Limited Deployability)

- 55 The Ministries Committee addressed some complex questions raised about initial stationing in local or specific contexts. The Committee appointed a task group comprising members of MCPOC, the Queen's Foundation, and the Ministries Committee to review the emerging wider issues around the offer of candidates for local or specific contexts, consulting with others as necessary, and reporting back to the Ministries Committee in September 2023.

Candidates and Occupational Health Assessment Reports

- 56 All recommended candidates from 2024 onwards will have an Occupational Health assessment. Where any adjustments are needed for that candidate to be able to study and to minister, these will be outlined in the assessment. External legal advice has been received, and a policy is being prepared by the Legal Counsel to establish clearly what adjustments are reasonable and what are not, to include cost implications. The Ministries Committee requested that members of the Well-being team, the Law and Polity Committee and MCPOC agree the policy that clearly identifies which adjustments are reasonable for a candidate for ordained ministry to be able to study and to minister. The Ministries Committee directed MCPOC to set up a standing sub-committee to apply the policy commencing 2023-2024. The Ministries Committee directed that guidance on this process be added to the candidates' guidance documents for 2023-2024.

Flourishing / Well-being in Ordained Ministry

- 57 The Ministries Committee received a further report and noted the implications of this work for the ongoing work of the Committee and the Ministries Team. The Committee was pleased to see how much had been implemented by the team on behalf of the Church, whilst recognising this is always a work in progress.

Voices of Identity

- 58 There is ongoing work around the "voices of identity" project which has gathered the voices of ministers in specific contexts and situations and learning for the Church continues. There are some ministers noting isolation in their work and the project has been started to draw those groups together. The project was established so that participants might continue to run the groups if they think it might be helpful. The Committee noted the fruits borne to date, the main themes emerging, and the places of cross over and intersection with other aspects of its work, in particular that of ministerial wellbeing and the stationing process.

Handbook for Methodist Ministers in Circuit Appointments

- 59 The Ministries Committee scrutinised and gave its approval in principle to the issuing of a Ministers' Handbook, pending review by various stakeholders. This completely redrafted handbook was overseen by the Director of the Ministries Team, who is charged with the responsibility for editing and keeping the handbook up to date. The Committee directed that the Ministers' handbook should be updated on an annual basis and published in an electronic format. The content of the updated handbook would be presented to the committee for review every five years.

Guidance for Superintendents

- 60 The Ministries Committee adopted a guidance note to Superintendents and District Chairs about appropriate ways to encourage ministers in addition to the circuit staff to offer their gifts within circuits, and for circuits to receive those gifts and to be enriched by them. This guidance is self-explanatory and is a revision of a guidance note issued in 2016. It relates to ordained ministers who, although often stationed to a circuit, are not members of the staff appointed to exercise pastoral responsibility in

that circuit. The Committee directed that the guidance be circulated to Superintendents and District Chairs.

- 61 The Ministries Committee also adopted a guidance note on the preaching ministry of ministers who have resigned from Full Connexion and directed that it be circulated to Superintendents and District Chairs.

Appeals Review Group

- 62 The Appeals Review Group of the Ministries Committee has been looking to make the Appeal processes relating to decisions about what might be termed initial ministry (ie the acceptance or not of candidates; the continuance or discontinuance of students; the continuance or discontinuance of probationers; and decisions about the transfer or granting of “recognised and regarded” status to ministers of other churches) as coherent and consistent as possible.
- 63 Amongst those cases, decisions about the discontinuance of students or probationers are very similar to decisions to remove people from Full Connexion after they have been ordained. The latter is one of the possible outcomes of discipline cases and is analogous in many cases to what in employment terms would be described as deprivation of livelihood.
- 64 There are therefore grounds for arguing that there should be coherence and consistency between the appeals which the Conference is charged to consider and those in discipline cases which lead to removal from Full Connexion. This is particularly the case with regard to the grounds for any appeal, and the status of any report to the Conference (eg is the Conference able to rehear an individual case?). Coherence and consistency do not require absolute similarity between all appeals, but any divergences should be rationally defensible as due to the requirements of particular contexts.
- 65 However there is a review of the discipline processes underway at the behest of the Conference, and it is making very slow progress. That means that the progress of the Review Group has been stalled, and the group was too short of time to bring fully worked out proposals to the 2024 Conference. The Ministries Committee agreed that the Review Group should delay its report to the Conference for a year and wait to obtain information from the Discipline Review.
- 66 The Ministries Committee also recommended that the final sentence of Standing Order 715(1) which reads “For (iii) above” be removed reflecting the redundancy of District Candidates Committees.

Future of Processes for Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches (MOCCs)

- 67 The pause on the MOCC processes has been in place since January 2022 pending a review of the application, discernment, stationing and induction processes for MOCC ministers. It is expected that MOCC applicants will be able to apply again from January 2024, which, if they are recommended, could lead to them being stationed in appointments starting September 2025.
- 68 There are 15 ministers living in Britain with British passports or a current visa who potentially wish to apply to transfer as R&R or into Full Connexion. It has been suggested that this might be the time to consider whether we could process these MOCC applicants who are already in Britain because the process will be more straightforward and economic than for other MOCC applicants. If we permitted these 15 ministers to apply, we would need to extend the application period to the end of March (instead of the end of February) and continue the process as it is designed currently. That could lead to them being matched to appointments in February 2024 and starting their stations in September 2024.
- 69 There is a considerable challenge for subsequent years with a further 57 ministers who are interested in applying plus any others who might make contact during the forthcoming year. The proposal is that they will all be contacted once the decision has been made to reopen the process in January 2024. They will be told that there are limited appointments available, so they are advised only to apply if they feel strongly called to serve in Britain. Home churches from where there are a number of applicants would also be asked if they could work with the ministers so that they are absolutely sure this is the right step to take.

- 70 The Ministries Committee directed that MOCC applicants currently resident in Britain, who do not need a visa sponsored by the Methodist Church in Britain, be permitted to apply in February - March 2023, with a view to those recommended starting appointments in September 2024.
- 71 The Ministries Committee recommended that the other potential MOCC applicants who have enquired since the start of the pause on MOCC processes will be contacted in Autumn 2023 as outlined above.
- 72 The Ministries Committee affirmed that the work of the Section 73 review group is to cease and be subsumed into the Stationing Review.

Ministers of Other Conferences and Churches (MOCCs) – General

- 73 Due to the various complexities arising with MOCCs applications, the Ministries Committee directed that, for MOCC ministers applying to extend their R&R status, that R&R status is granted for five years subject to the minister being in an appointment, and that this does not have to be extended whenever a minister changes appointments within that five-year period. This is being reported to the Law and Polity Committee.

Ministerial Candidates and Probationers Oversight Committee (MCPOC)

- 74 There has been a high number of issues for MCPOC to address concerning candidates, students and probationers. Issues have included: changes in personal circumstances, changes in training pathway or probation studies, changes to supervision arrangements, concerns around the impact of itinerancy, length of probation for those in part time appointments, inhabiting the particular order of ministry, challenges in appointments, changes within probation appointments, eligibility issues for candidates, applications for local context appointments for candidates.
- 75 The Ministries Committee recommends to the Council that from 2023 onwards the length of probation for all probationers in part time appointments shall normally be three years and proposes changes to Standing Order 721(2). MCPOC would like this to be in the Standing Orders so that those in part time appointments do not feel they have somehow failed by having three years of probation, but it will instead be seen as part of the expected process.
- 76 MCPOC presented a list of people who they have appointed to various groups, some of which were already existing and others that have come into being with the candidating scheme. The Ministries Committee approved the appointments relating to the new candidating scheme, as listed on the Appendix 1 to the report, and presents these appointments to the Council.

Supervision Research

- 77 In 2021 the Methodist Conference adopted the Reflective Supervision Policy and agreed it would be next reviewed in 2026. To inform any changes to that policy it has been agreed that a new piece of research will be commissioned. This research will seek to give a clear picture of where the Methodist Church now stands in terms of offering reflective supervision to those involved in ordained and lay ministry and offer both quantitative and qualitative evidence around that. It is anticipated that it will also lead recommendations for next steps in the development of the policy. The Ministries Committee approved an outline proposal for this research and directed the Ministries Team to proceed with this work under the oversight of the Supervision Reference Group. The Committee directed that the outcomes of discussions are embedded within the research scoping process and considered alongside others as they become clear.

OTHER MATTERS

- 78 The Committee wishes to note that there is a huge amount of work being undertaken by the Ministries Team and there is a number of pieces of work which are not mentioned here simply because they are not yet completed.

*****RESOLUTIONS** (with paragraph references)

40/1. The Council receives the report.

40/2. The Council recommends to the Conference the proposed approach regarding a Discernment Process for Senior Posts, as outlined in the report.

(paragraphs 41-49)

40/3. The Council recommends to the Conference that the final sentence of Standing Order 715(1) which reads "For (iii) above". is removed, as follows.

715 Appeals. (1) The candidate or a Connexional Secretary, or with the candidate's consent the candidate's Superintendent or Chair, may, by notice given in writing to the secretary of the Ministerial Candidates Selection Committee within fourteen days of notification to the candidate in writing of the decision of the committee and specifying the ground(s) of appeal, apply for a review of the recommendation of the committee, on one or more of the following grounds:

- (i) that the procedural provisions of this Section have not been correctly followed;
- (ii) that there are facts which were not available to the committee and which are such as to make its recommendation inappropriate;
- (iii) that the judgment of the committee, as conveyed to the candidate in the official letter informing the candidate that his or her offer has been declined, is questioned in writing by both the Superintendent and the Chair of the candidate.

A reasoned statement to support the appeal shall be supplied by the appellant(s). ~~For (iii) above to be a ground of appeal, the district Candidates Committee must have recorded a majority in favour of the candidate of 75% of those present and entitled to vote.~~

(paragraph 66)

40/4. The Council recommends to the Conference that from 2023 onwards the length of probation for all probationers in part time appointments shall normally be three years and proposes changes to Standing Order 721(2).

(paragraph 75)

40/5. The Council approves the appointments relating to the new candidating scheme, as listed on Appendix 1 to the report.

(paragraph 76)

Appendix 1 - Appointments Approved by MCPOC January 2023

There are various people being recruited to run the various elements of the new candidating scheme and related aspects of work. These need to be appointed formally. In consultation with the Officer for Legal and Constitutional Practice, it has been agreed that MCPOC approves the names and makes the appointments and reports these to the Ministries Committee who will include this in their annual report to the Conference. This will give the flexibility for appointments to be made by MCPOC mid-year if needed (which are likely to be needed while we develop the scheme).

In a usual year, the appointments will be made at the December MCPOC meeting so that they can then be taken to the February Ministries Committee.

However for this year, as the scheme is being implemented, members of MCPOC are asked to approve these appointments by email so that they can then be taken to the February 2023 Ministries Committee and the March 2023 Council.

P = presbyter

D = deacon

L = lay

Accompanists for explorers and DOV1 applicants

Alan Coustick P

Jane Fulford L

Donald Ker P

Sue Male P

Andrew Orton P

Val Reid P

During this implementation year, more will be appointed throughout the year and names will be brought to each meeting of MCPOC

DOV1 Retreat Team

Roger Walton P

Cathy Bird P

Carys Woodley D

Mabel Nyazika L

Vincent Jambawo P

Michelle Legumi D

Jasmine Devadason L

Tara Goodall L

Pam Reid L

Lynne Sylvester-Tonge D

6 from this group will run the retreat(s) in any one year

DOV1 Advisory group

Paul Nzacahayo P

Corinne Brown D

Alan Eccles L

Sue Wigham P

Sarah Wickett D

Steve Hienno L

Rose Westwood P

Andrew Carter D

Rachel Starr L

Karen Stefanyszyn L (reserve)

They will operate in 3 teams of 3 members (P, D, L in each team)

'Where Now' retreat team (for candidates who are not recommended for training)

Rachel Borgars P
Clive Timehin L
Jen Woodfin D

Candidates' portfolio readers

Philip Luscombe P
George Bailey P
Diane Clutterbuck P
Malcolm Stevenson L
Stephen Burgess P
Michael King L
Neil Harland L

Ordination retreat team

Kathryn Stephens P
Farai Mapamula P
Ian Worsfold P
Stuart Earl P